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Motivation and Productivity

MOTIVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

By SAUL W. GELLERMAN

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For
Henry and Peter
and their generation

Author's Preface

ACTION IS THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING. IN BUSINESS AS in every other human activity, nothing of any consequence happens until an individual wants to act. What he accomplishes depends to a considerable extent on how much, and on why, he wants to act. That much is obvious; beyond that point the nature of human motivation becomes complex and subtle.

All men have purposes, and these purposes affect the way they work This is why there has been such a growing volume of research by social scientists on the motives of people at work. This research has motives of its own: It began with a wave of humanitarianism in industry in the late 1920's; since World War II it has been spurred by an interest in increasing productivity; and more recently the field has attracted students who consider companies and organizations as worthy objects of study in their own right.

This book has three main purposes: to draw together the most significant achievements in the study of work motivation; to present a theory that puts most of this research into a single, understandable perspective; and to show the practical implications of all this research and theory for management policy. In presenting the viewpoint of other writers, I have tried to state their ideas as authentically and sympathetically as possible, even though I may not always agree with them, and above all I have tried to express their ideas, which were often addressed in their original form to a professional audience, in terms that laymen could readily understand.

There is so much research in motivation that any attempt to be encyclopedic would easily have stretched this book into several long, probably boring, volumes. It has been necessary to pick and choose among many valuable studies to determine which should have a place in this book, and I have often had to make an omission regretfully. The selected materials represent, in my best judgment, either "older" studies (ten years old or more) that have lasting significance or recent material that makes an important contribution to the understanding of work motivation.

Ever since Hawthorne, researchers and theorists have been tracing the many ways in which workers are affected by their managers. There is no longer much doubt that an individual worker's motivation, or lack of it, is at least partially the result of the actions or attitudes of the people who direct his work. It is also clear that his motivation is affected by attitudes and actions of his own, many of which have roots that reach far back into his pre-employment history and even, in some cases, into his childhood. It is the continuing interplay of the motivating environment, which is largely a matter of how an enterprise is managed, with the personal motivations of the individual that produces his long-term motivational trends as well as his momentary ups and downs.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part deals with motivation from the standpoint of the environment, that is, the various kinds of rewards and pressures within which people operate at work. Most studies in this field are concerned specifically with industry and are therefore fairly well known in the literature of management. The second part considers motivation from the standpoint of the individual himself: his needs and purposes and how he acquires them. Most of the studies in this field were done by psychologists who were not primarily concerned with industrial applications, and therefore they may not be well known in management circles even though their implications are very important. In the third part I attempt to show how the environment and the individual interact and, more than that, how most of the studies considered in parts one and two can be integrated by a set of linked ideas that accommodates most of what is presently understood about work motivation. In the final chapters a number of major managerial problems are analyzed in the light of this theory: leadership, recruitment, morale, organizational change, and labor unions.

Since so much of this book represents the work and ideas of other men, it is difficult to single out those to whom I am most indebted. Many of the leading students of work motivation are mentioned in the text. However, I particularly want to thank Chris Argyris, Alan McLean, and David McClelland, all of whom read sections of the manuscript and offered helpful comments. I would also like to thank the editors of the American Management Association, who first perceived the need for the book and then waited patiently for two and one-half long years while it turned, in my hands, from an interesting little project into a labor of love.

In a book that draws so largely on other men's work, it is perhaps fitting that the preface be concluded by another man, too. Robert L. Kahn of the University of Michigan has written a succinct statement of what the professional psychologist owes to management, and it is also a fair summary of what I have tried to accomplish here. The psychologist, according to Kahn,[1]*

> Can help management avoid the dismal sequence of oversold devices, unrealistic expectations, and undiscriminating disillusionment. He can offer the assistance of what research has already learned, and the realistic comfort of knowing when decisions must still be based on managerial intuition.

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* All references in brackets are listed in the Notes to the Text, which appear at the end of the book.

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Part I

The Motivating Environment

Introduction to Part I

DURING THE PAST QUARTER-CENTURY MOST THEORIES ABOUT the motivation of workers have been dominated by what is loosely called the human relations viewpoint. It is today's best-known, most widely practiced and malpracticed theory of why workers behave as they do and how they ought to be treated by management. Like many another popularized concept, this one has been grossly oversimplified and is far better known in various watered-down versions than in its authentic form. The gospel has been spread far and wide, but it usually bears little resemblance to the complex, still-evolving set of ideas that began the process.

Contemporary human relations *practice,* as distinguished from the theory, is suffering from a bad case of superficiality. It probably deserves much of the barbed comment that has been heaped upon it by professional iconoclasts in the business press and by some hard-shelled managers who feel that any form of "coddling" workers is a serious mistake.

On the other hand, human relations *theory* has respectable scientific underpinnings and important implications for both management and society. Homilies and gimmicks notwithstanding, there is no easy way to apply it; in fact it has yet to be demonstrated that it can be practiced on a wide scale at all. But there is ample evidence that it *ought* to be applied as widely as possible. The first essential step in this direction is to acquire an understanding of what the theory is all about; beyond that its applications will depend largely on the manager's ingenuity and his tolerance for change.

The best way to understand human relations theory is to trace its development from the moral climate which made its emergence inevitable, through the classical studies on which it is based, to its present exponents and condition. This is what the first part of this book will attempt to do.

That a theory could have gotten such a hold as this one has on the thinking of American management, even if in a diluted form, is evidence enough that it touches a very responsive chord. In retrospect, it is not at all surprising that the human relations idea caught on as quickly as it did. In fact, given the conditions of the American industrial scene prior to the 1930's, it is a fairly safe bet that something like human relations theory would have become popular even if there had been no Hawthorne experiments to launch it.

It was the strong streak of moralism in American culture—the same force that inspired the abolitionists and the muckrakers—that effectively set the stage for the emergence of human relations theory. America seems to have bred its full share of men who find it hard to be indifferent to their consciences. Despite a fashionable cynicism in some quarters, a strong sense of what is right and wrong continues to exert a powerful influence in our business, political, and cultural lives. Many a once-powerful man has learned the hard way that it is wiser to stay within the bounds of common morality than to give the public an appetite for reform.

Reform movements have swept through industrialized America repeatedly. They have, in fact, done as much to mold today's industrial scene as have compulsory education, technological changes, and the free enterprise system itself. They set the tone of eras in which generation after generation of managers grew up, were educated, and then forged their own ideas in the long course of experience. Gradually, American moralism began producing generations of managers who could hardly avoid bringing a social conscience to their work, because it had been woven into their personalities by the environment in which they were raised. These men, through their own inbred sympathies and predilections, were to stamp American industry with its own unique hallmark of enterprise blended with compassion.

Just how sweeping this "capitalist revolution" has been could be argued endlessly. From the perspective of history, at least, we have come a long way since the era of sweatshops and goon squads, and today American capitalism frequently prides itself on its skill in creating viable employee relations. On the other hand, there remains a stubbornly proletarian spirit among many American workers which questions the sincerity with which every benefit is offered and holds that no concessions have been forthcoming from management that

were not wrung from it. Somewhere between these two poles is the position of the human relations researcher, who is likely to feel that management, despite the best of intentions, has been handling its relations with employees in a mechanical way which leaves most of them either bored or skeptical.

But the important point is that the good intentions are there at all. Managers are not, after all, immune to the cultural climate in which they live. Most Americans have a passion for being liked, and most managers, even though they often feel compelled to take a rather callous view of their situation, are not apt to be very happy if their employees are suspicious or resentful of them. The impulse to improve the lot of the workers is now based as much on a relentless sense of what is decent as on the harsh realities of the bargaining table.

Therefore, long before industry became the happy hunting ground of sociologists and psychologists, the time was ripening for a movement which would legitimize the moralistic pangs of managers to give workers a better deal. In fact there were quite a few who didn't wait for the sanction of popularity but simply went ahead and practiced an unself-conscious brand of "human relations" on their own. The facts that these farsighted managers were probably in the minority and that most managers were tacitly sanctioning arbitrary methods of supervision simply by failing to question their validity only added fuel to the fire. By the mid-1930's the emergence of a formal human relations concept awaited only a dramatic demonstration, an articulate champion, and a platform from which he could command the attention of management.

Chapter 1

Mayo and the Harvard Studies

THE BREAKTHROUGH WHICH THE ART OF HUMAN RELATIONS awaited occurred at the Hawthorne works of the Western Electric Company in Chicago in a series of experiments between 1927 and 1932. The champion was the late Elton Mayo, and his platform was the eminently respectable Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. The theory which he evolved from these studies states that workers tend to cluster together into informal groups in order to fill a void in their lives and that this void results from a basic need for cooperation and comradeship which modern industrial organizations had ignored. Further, these informal groups could exert a far stronger pull on the workers' motivation than the combined strength of money, discipline, and even job security itself. Mayo's prescription was to cultivate improved communication so that management and workers would at all times have a sympathetic insight into the minds of one another and to put supervision into the hands of men to whom a respect for their fellow man came naturally. Supervisors were to be trained in the skills of listening, understanding, and eliciting cooperation—quite a departure from the classical image of a "straw boss."

Human relations theory, even in this form, was not Mayo's invention. His findings about the importance of informal groups came as no real surprise to sociologists and other serious students of industry. But if he was not an innovator, Mayo was a remarkably successful evangelist. He put the stamp of scientific respectability on ideas which, when they had been thought about at all, had usually been considered softheaded. He did not stamp out impersonal or arbitrary methods of supervision, but he managed to put the stigma of backwardness on them. Perhaps most important of all has been his effect on other students of industrial motivation. Nearly every major theorist in human relations since Mayo has used him either as a springboard or as a foil against which to develop contrasting ideas of his

own. For this reason any serious examination of what is currently known about the motivation of people at work must begin with Mayo, more specifically with the studies that provided his own points of departure.

The first of Mayo's four major studies took place in 1923–1924 at a Philadelphia textile mill. The problem he investigated was excessive labor turnover in a department where work was particularly monotonous and fatiguing. The workers tended to sink into a dejected, disconsolate mood soon after being assigned there; eventually they would lose their tempers for no apparent reason and impulsively quit. Prior to Mayo's arrival, a number of attempts by "efficiency engineers" to stem the tide with incentive payment schemes had fallen flat.

At first Mayo thought the reason for the workers' behavior must be physical fatigue, so he instituted a series of rest periods during the workday. In the course of trying to schedule these periods in the most efficient manner, management experimented with allowing the workers to do the scheduling themselves. The effect was dramatic: Turnover fell sharply to about the same level as that for the rest of the plant, productivity shot upward, and the melancholy moods disappeared.

Mayo interpreted these results as being partly a matter of eliminating fatigue but mainly due to having allowed the employees to participate in the managing of their own work. The moodiness, as he saw it, had resulted from having to work in a dehumanizing environment; that is, as the bored and isolated servants of rows of impersonal machines. When the monotony was not only broken, but broken by a process in which the workers themselves had an active part, a very important transition took place. Men who had previously been "solitaries"—unable to communicate with each other and almost unaware of any common interests—were welded into a group. What's more, this group moved into a sort of partnership with management rather than into opposition to it. Mayo had thus stumbled upon the very keystones of what later became known as human relations theory. His great contribution was his recognition that the emergence of a group spirit was not a mere accident but rather a crucial piece of the motivational puzzle that had previously been lacking.

The second and best known of these studies took place at the Hawthorne works of the Western Electric Company. It began with a

relatively routine series of efforts by company engineers to increase production by means of better illumination. Using standard experimental procedure, they varied the level of lighting in certain workrooms, keeping track of the rate of production in these experimental rooms and also in a "control" room where illumination was not changed. Despite the neat procedure, the results were somewhat exasperating. Regardless of whether the lighting was brighter, dimmer, or constant, production went *up* in every one of the rooms under study.

This was the point at which Mayo and the Harvard researchers were called in. Wading through the morass of factors that could have caused the rise in productivity, they were soon to leave illumination far behind. They began, however, with a similar experimental procedure, this time varying rest periods and the length of the workday instead of the lighting. In order to prevent presumably "extraneous" factors—such as motivation—from influencing the results, the researchers made a special effort to get the workers to cooperate evenly in all groups. As a matter of fact, the workers were asked to assent before any of the experimental conditions were varied.

The output curve soared again, seemingly without regard to how the length of rest periods and workdays were changed. Clearly, whatever was causing the spurt in productivity was not being controlled by the experimenters, despite their elaborate efforts to keep everything except the length of work and rest periods constant. But that was precisely what had gone wrong. The research team realized that in trying to maintain the scientific purity of the experiment they had inadvertently ignited a powerful, dormant motivator. Mayo writes:[2]

> The major experimental change was introduced when those in charge sought to hold the situation humanly steady . . . by getting the cooperation of the workers. What actually happened was that six individuals became a team and the team gave itself wholeheartedly and spontaneously to cooperation in the experiment.

By singling a few workers out from many to participate in an experiment, the Mayo group had given them a sort of "elite" feeling among themselves; when this was compounded by giving them control (through assent) of their own workday, morale soared and production with it. The experimental group was operating under motivational conditions that were vastly different from those in the rest of the plant: These workers were treated as if they were important

and unique. They had a major voice in deciding on the management of their own time, and they were insulated (by the researchers) from the routine demands and restrictions of management. The evidence was beginning to mount, in other words, that in "treating workers like human beings," allowing them to coalesce into natural groups and relieving these groups of impersonal controls, motives were being harnessed which could improve production dramatically.

In an effort to pin down the nature of these motives more precisely the Harvard research team embarked on the interview phase of the Hawthorne study, which was a truly heroic project, requiring more than 20,000 interviews. The object was to find out what was on the workers' minds and what relationship, if any, this had to their productivity.

This interview program, of course, went well beyond the bounds of the small experimental groups in which the research team had inadvertently created a team spirit. Branching out into other departments, the interviewers discovered a radically different climate prevailing elsewhere in the plant. They encountered apathy, enmity, and frustration. Mayo considered these attitudes to be the result of impersonal or arbitrary management: By treating the worker as a pair of hired hands whose finer feelings, if any, could be safely ignored, management stripped him of his dignity and deprived him of any reason for *wanting* to cooperate any more than he had to. Management's lack of overt concern for the human aspect of productivity was very neatly defeating its own purpose.

It is interesting to note that while the interviewers encountered many persons who were quite evidently neurotics—that is, persons whose inability to work out a comfortable adjustment was by no means confined to their jobs—Mayo insisted that even with these people the basic difficulty was in their work situation and not in their personal problems. This somewhat cavalier attitude toward the importance of individual differences was characteristic of the early phases of the human relations movement, with its complete stress on the determining influence of the environment. It is well to remember that when these ideas were formulated, behaviorism was in its heyday, and psychologists were sure that they could "engineer" adults to any specifications by properly controlling the experiences of the child.

Most of the workers at Hawthorne welcomed the interviews. Since these were largely one-way affairs, with the workers doing most of

the talking and the interviewers listening sympathetically, a great deal was gotten off the workers' chests. As they ventilated their feelings they were able to view their situations more objectively and, as Mayo put it, "to give themselves good advice." They were able, in many cases, to get along better with fellow workers and with supervisors. The tendency of "solitaries" to move together into cooperative groups was enhanced.

However, this "therapeutic" effect was only one result of the interview program, a secondary one at that. More important from the research standpoint was the gradual discovery of how informal worker groups were created in spite of management's efforts to discourage them, and how these tended, in effect, to nullify the efforts of management to promote greater productivity. These groups evolved production standards of their own to which most members adhered out of loyalty. The threat of ostracism was usually enough to keep the rest in line.

Supervisors were powerless to stop this massive footdragging. For one thing it was very difficult to prove that output was being deliberately limited, since the workers took pride in the ingenuity with which they could preserve the appearance of effort without really trying very hard at all. Attempts to "get tough" with them led only to being intensely disliked, which was neither a comfortable situation for the supervisor to be in nor a particularly productive one, since he would only be singled out for special obstruction.

So it became apparent that the informal group could cut both ways as far as productivity was concerned. When the group associated itself with management (and the benevolent research team *was* management, for all practical purposes, as far as the experimental groups were concerned), productivity rose. It was almost as if a high rate of output was an exultant way of expressing the group's mastery of its own job. But when the group felt itself to be in opposition to management (as happened almost inevitably where the workers were treated impersonally or "bossed" excessively), productivity hovered close to the minimum level that management would tolerate. Any increases above that level were grudgingly withheld. The workers saw no reason to gratify management when it was evidently hostile to them or at least unable to recognize that they had needs for security and dignity which were frustrated in the plant. Restricted output was both a weapon of retaliation and a way of protecting one's job against an untrustworthy management which might be tempted

to speed it up or eliminate it. In the face of this massive social pressure *not* to produce, even the "bribery" of incentive payment schemes had little effect.

This realization was profoundly important because it provided a key to the phenomenally high productivity of some groups and the abysmally low records of others. It also led directly to the basic human relations prescription of befriending the workers' informal groups and doing whatever was possible to place management in a favorable light with them.

The Hawthorne studies were terminated in 1932 because of the severity of the Great Depression. During those years many normal motivational patterns must have been disrupted because work had become a matter of sheer survival, so the more derivative motives such as group membership were luxuries in which most workers could scarcely afford to indulge. However, an entirely different atmosphere prevailed during Mayo's last two major studies. These took place during World War II, when there was a shortage rather than a surplus of labor and the shoe, so to speak, was on the other foot.

Both of the wartime studies were concerned with absenteeism in defense plants, which had reached such proportions by early 1943 as to handicap production and create something of a national scandal. The first study concentrated on three metalworking companies in an East Coast city. Production in these plants was largely determined by what was, or was not, accomplished in their casting shops, so these units were singled out for intensive analysis.

The researchers soon found that the casting shop of one company had a remarkably *lower* absenteeism record than either of the other two, despite the fact that the labor population of the three shops was not notably different and that most other conditions seemed to be in balance. With Hawthorne still relatively fresh in their minds, Mayo's group knew exactly where to look for the causes of this company's good fortune. They found it in a lively team spirit that made the workers *want* a good attendance record for the sake of the group's reputation and in an informal brand of group disapproval which effectively discouraged unnecessary absences. This, in turn, was fostered by insightful management policies: Foremen had been trained for years in a simple but workable technique for preserving the individual worker's dignity. (They were trained to be patient, to listen, and to avoid emotional upsets when dealing with their men.)

Thus the foremen in this particular shop were practicing "good human relations"—not in a very sophisticated form, perhaps, but

well enough to prevent feelings that management didn't care about the worker as an individual and was simply out to exploit him. This policy permitted the men to form natural allegiances toward each other, while still regarding the company in a rather favorable light. In itself, of course, supervisory etiquette was not the entire answer. Mayo found two other policies which strengthened the shop's team spirit still further. All the men were paid on the basis of 24-hour production, so that each shift had a stake in helping the next one rather than in slacking off as quitting time approached. Second, the men of each shift scheduled individual days off largely amongst themselves, which meant that any unscheduled absence threw a monkey-wrench into everyone else's personal plans. The pressure *not* to be absent, and thereby avoid the displeasure of one's workmates, was terrific.

However, absenteeism in the two other plants was high and getting higher. This was not *directly* due to the lack of team spirit or of policies which would have helped it to develop. The direct causes were a variety of inconveniences and temptations which happened to be stronger, on any particular morning, than the worker's motivation to go to work. Mayo's point was that had management in the two other plants been as enlightened about human relations as management in the first, the motivation to get to work *would* have been strong enough to offset whatever obstacles presented themselves on those particular mornings.

Mayo's fourth study took place in an aircraft plant in southern California in 1944. To a much greater degree than in the East Coast plants, the worker population here was in a constant state of flux: People were migrating into and out of the area in droves. Turnover was very high, and so was absenteeism. In the midst of all this instability many plants were expanding their labor force ten- and even twentyfold.

Mayo did find a few departments, however, that were bucking the chaotic trend. These were of three types. The first was the very small group where greater intimacy welded the men together into a team. The second type was the larger group where a nucleus of strongly motivated pacesetters wielded considerable influence over the rest. The example that these men set in showing up for work regularly seemed to discourage absenteeism in the others. Third, and by far the most important as far as Mayo was concerned, was the group whose team spirit was the *deliberate objective* of its managers.

Attendance and productivity records in this last type of group

were phenomenal, and Mayo realized that this was no accident. The men in charge were convinced that solidarity had to be their single most important objective in order to reach their ultimate goal of sustained high productivity. To achieve this they devoted themselves to facilitating the work of their men, to acting as go-betweens for their men and higher management, and to listening to whatever complaints or suggestions the men might have. They did *not* ignore, "boss," or merely control their men.

As a result, the men felt that they were important rather than taken for granted; each man knew that the group's record would suffer if he slackened, and most were determined not to let this happen. In Mayo's eyes, groups of this kind were the prototypes for what industrial supervision must become if conflict, stalemate, and stagnation were to be avoided in the future.

As Mayo analyzed the morale changes that occurred after men began to think of themselves as belonging to a group, he became convinced that he had hit upon a phenomenon whose significance went far beyond the particular plants in which he had observed it. His scope was international, his alarm was great, and his approach a trifle messianic. He began to see all industrial society as a gigantic breeding ground for dissension and strife—even, ultimately, for wars—largely because it was organized in a way which resulted in workers being treated like a horde of soulless automatons who were actuated by economic self-interest and nothing else. As Mayo saw it, work had deteriorated into an impersonal exchange of money for labor. Part of the bargain was the worker's passive acceptance of any method that management might choose for organizing his work, even if this meant fragmenting his job to the point of tedium and regulating it to the point of puppetry. In effect, money was buying not just labor but humiliation as well. Since the system was designed for efficiency and assumed that human needs could be ignored, the result was wholesale frustration and enmity.

For most people there was no way out of this frustration. All that they could do was surrender to it and accept a meaningless, insecure, and somewhat degrading way of life. Mayo found that evidences of this collapsed attitude toward life were widespread among workers. He named it "anomie"; it was characterized by feeling rootless, unimportant, and confused by the indifference of one's environment. Whatever hopes such people may once have had for dignity and

fellowship were usually little more than bitter memories. If these men were docile, they were also woefully inefficient producers and ripe for membership in an output-restricting group.

Mayo traced the genealogy of anomie to the Industrial Revolution, which he evidently considered to have been something of a catastrophe as far as the future happiness of mankind was concerned. In his view, the great damage done by the Industrial Revolution was its destruction of the family as the major productive unit of the economy. Whereas previously workers had been linked by bonds of love, or at least of kinship and common interests, work was now performed by aggregations of strangers whose presence together under one roof was a mere accident of economics. Work would hereafter be socially unrewarding. The desire to belong to a protective group in which the individual could comfortably submerge himself—an immersion which Mayo considered to be essential for human happiness—would be frustrated, with dire consequences inevitably following.

While Mayo's analysis to this point could be substantiated by many specific cases, it obviously contained much sweeping generalization and some very dubious assumptions. The idea that being submerged in a group is a fundamental human need is a particularly glaring example of the latter. However, it is important to realize that the validity of human relations theory, as it has evolved since Mayo, does not stand or fall on the particular interpretations he gave to it. As we shall see, it is possible to account for the facts of the Mayo studies without resorting to either farfetched assumptions or violence to the facts. Even though Mayo's theories have for the most part stood the test of time, the efforts to refute them—there have been many—concentrate most of their fire on those points where Mayo yielded to his own predilection to get out on a limb.

Henry Landsberger of Cornell University, one of today's most astute students of Mayo's work and its effect on subsequent developments in human relations, has pointed out that Mayo's tendency to be dogmatic has actually made it harder for his ideas to get the serious attention they deserve.[3]

> Mayo's work . . . has about it an air of omniscience and finality which, rightly or wrongly, has rubbed many a reader the wrong way Definiteness is bound to be felt as inappropriate when dealing with problems as manifestly complicated as industrial unrest.

Mayo was, after all, a pioneer in a field whose importance we can still hardly begin to calculate. This puts us in his debt. Since Mayo, being human, needed some motivation of his own to pioneer, and since this motivation was evidently a type of evangelistic zeal, we can well afford to take some of his less credible ideas less seriously while we profitably examine the rest of them.

Since management has historically operated under a policy in which workers were expected to accept discipline unquestioningly and to exchange tedium and isolation for money, Mayo deduced that management had made some tacit assumptions about the nature of the worker. Specifically, the worker was evidently considered to have no aspirations to dignity, no natural desire to work cooperatively or diligently unless compelled to do so, and no revulsion to work which was boring or tiresome. His only motivation was evidently the desire to make as much money as he could for as little work as possible, and in this respect it was assumed that he would operate as a completely rational and soulless "economic man." In other words, management's historic organization of work seemed to betray an underlying notion that workers were, on the whole, a rather scurvy lot.

Mayo called this assumption the "rabble hypothesis" and spent most of his mature years attacking it as false, inefficient, and destructive. False because it tarred all workers with a brush that was deserved only by an irresponsible minority. (Mayo went so far as to hold that even this minority was a product of the system and therefore, in a sense, blameless.) Inefficient because it led only to restricted output and other forms of resistance to management. Destructive because for many persons—especially the unskilled, whose security is increasingly undermined by technological advances—it led directly to a devitalizing anomie. Under the rabble hypothesis it seemed inevitable that more and more workers would suffer from feelings of aloneness and ineffectuality which would sap their productivity and ultimately would destroy their willingness to remain a part of the system.

Anomie existed among men before anyone was ever employed in an industrial plant, but that is where it became especially pronounced because of the deadening anonymity that the worker found there. Emotions had to be bottled up, with the result that workers soon became very sensitive to minor events on the job. (Hence the impulsive quitting at the Philadelphia textile mill, for example.) Produc-

tivity could swing erratically in response to minor mood changes. Therefore, the seemingly docile workforce produced by anomie was actually quite inefficient, since workers' attitudes—even momentary or irrational ones—could have a pronounced effect on their productivity.

The human organism, as Mayo saw it, was simply not designed to survive very well in an environment that made little distinction between it and a machine. The consequence of this mass disregard for the individual's need to belong and be appreciated was apathy, carelessness, and a growing number of outcasts who preyed upon society because they could find no niche in it.

Informal associations among workers would form spontaneously, given the slightest opportunity, since the security of belonging to such a group far outweighed the impact of whatever rewards or punishments management could mete out. With management operating under the rabble hypothesis, these groups would inevitably turn into mutual-protection alliances against its bosses. Since management would be perceived as "the enemy," it would be the function of the group to protect the individual by frustrating management. This would lead to contests that neither side could really win but in which each could inflict terrible penalties on the other. Unless the rabble hypothesis could be replaced by a saner basis for organizing work groups, Mayo foresaw a progressive deterioration of industrial society and an eventual Armageddon.

It is curious to note that while this analysis actually helps to explain the rise of American unionism (the bulk of which took place *after* the Hawthorne studies were completed), Mayo neither anticipated unions nor recognized their importance in correcting the conditions he had described. Perhaps the reason for this remarkable lapse was a conviction that the only solution to industry's social problems which had a chance of success was Mayo's solution. For he was not just a Cassandra, and despite his headshaking over the Industrial Revolution he accepted it as a *fait accompli* and proceeded to look for a way out.

The ray of hope he found was that management would not inevitably continue to operate under the rabble hypothesis if its falsehood could be fully exposed. Therefore, anomie was not inevitable either. The growing indifference of workers to their work could be reversed. What was needed was a recognition that men had a natural hunger for close associations with each other at work and that when the

organization of work discouraged this, management's own goals would inevitably be thwarted. Instead of suppressing the instinct for forming groups, management should encourage it; what's more, management should court these groups by showing an active, firsthand interest in each individual member and by giving the group a reasonable share of control over its own work.

Mayo recognized that this could not be accomplished by fiat. No executive could sign an edict that henceforth every supervisor would show a genuine concern for each of his subordinates. Nor was there any foolproof formula that could be followed, cookbook fashion, to convince every worker that management really cared about him and respected him. (As we now know, this lack hasn't prevented a flood of training courses which conceive of human relations as a set of rituals to be repeated unfeelingly, rather than as an attitude toward other people.) As a matter of fact, Mayo and his associates foresaw the futility of making supervision more palatable without also showing enough respect for the worker's own maturity to give him some degree of authority over his own operations. Landsberger notes:[4]

> The authors foreshadowed the failure of attempting to dispel conflict through improved face to face practices some seventeen years before actual studies caught up with them. . . . The success of the (Hawthorne) experimenters' "supervision" resulted from their power in holding at bay management's customary practice of changing job assignments and the like. . . . It did not result from the experimenters' "nice personalities."

At times Mayo seemed to be relying on exhortation to awaken management to the directions he felt it ought to follow. As we have noted, most of his ideas have survived their critics and, if nothing else, have made most managers aware that employees' feelings are just as vital to their enterprise as working capital and reliable machinery. But while Mayo's ideas have spread far and wide, their penetration has been shallow. Clearly, exhortation was not enough. What was really called for was a new breed of manager, someone whose own motivations were geared less to the satisfactions of controlling other people than to the rewards of facilitating group productivity. Unfortunately, having power over others is too often a seductive experience for those who wield it: It takes a remarkably self-controlled person to relinquish any of it deliberately or to realize that he has simply gone through the motions of letting it go.

Since good human relations is, by now, a widely accepted managerial goal, it may seem incongruous to suggest that management hasn't really given itself a chance to see what good human relations can do. Yet Mayo's modern-day disciples are nearly unanimous in agreement that his ideas have had only skin-deep acceptance thus far. The various reasons why this is so will become more apparent as we discuss the theory and research that have developed since Mayo.

However, we can point to the most obvious reason now. Industry has been entirely too enthusiastic in accepting the idea that managers can be *trained* to deal effectively with people. Training can't hurt, but unless the manager is properly motivated, training can't help, either. What's more, not every manager can be motivated to let his guard down and start warming up to people—even to people whose position makes it inevitable that they question the manager's judgment and sincerity. In the last analysis, it was this warmth, rather than any particular style of managing, that Mayo was pleading for.

Chapter 2

The Michigan Studies

MAYO'S WORK LED DIRECTLY TO A NOTABLE SERIES OF STUDIES which were begun shortly after World War II by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. These have culminated in a "modified theory" of how companies ought to organize and think of themselves.

The Michigan studies are considerably more sophisticated than Mayo's. They are characterized by better controls and better measurement, and they probe more deeply into the underlying psychology of individuals. The reports themselves are more closely reasoned and less dramatically written. Consequently, the Michigan studies are less of a joy to read, but considerably more significant for today's management, than Mayo's.

The focus of the Michigan studies is on the attitudes and behavior of first-line supervisors and how these affect the productivity of their subordinates. The technique employed is generally to identify high- and low-producing groups of workers and then to determine the attitudes of these groups and their supervisors toward various aspects of their work. The general finding is that the supervisor's style of operating and his ideas about his job have a fairly consistent relationship to the productivity of his group.

There seems, in other words, to be a definitely right and a definitely wrong way to supervise in many different kinds of companies, at least as far as productivity is concerned. However, the Michigan group has already discovered enough exceptions to its general finding to make it clear that while it has hit upon an important *part* of motivation, it is not the whole of motivation by any means.

That styles of supervision have a demonstrable effect on the individual worker's productivity is no longer in doubt. It is even possible to define in fairly broad terms one style which seems to be more effective than any other in most of the settings that have been studied thus far. But it is increasingly clear that other styles of supervision

also have their place and that researchers at Michigan and elsewhere are faced with the task of discovering which produce the best results under which set of conditions.

What will probably emerge, in other words, is not an all-purpose formula that works equally well under all conditions but rather a complex formula including both a *general* approach to supervision that is effective most of the time and a series of *special* approaches which are more effective under a variety of specific circumstances. We shall first review the studies that led the Michigan group to stress the importance of what it calls "employee-centered supervision" and then the more recent indications that other methods may sometimes be more effective.

In 1947 Rensis Likert and Daniel Katz launched a program of research studies which is still in progress and whose aim is to discover "the conditions making for a high level of group functioning and a high level of individual satisfaction of the group members." The first study in this series took place in the home office of The Prudential Insurance Company of America in Newark, New Jersey. Dealing with the productivity of clerical workers, it brought into play the most sophisticated research methods that had yet been used in motivational research.[5]

At Prudential standard hiring practices and benefit programs had the effect of equalizing both the over-all abilities and levels of satisfaction in each of the company's many clerical units. Nearly all the workers were drawn from the Newark area and had rather similar backgrounds. Consequently, the office was very favorably organized for researchers who wanted to hold constant all those "outside" factors which could have had an effect on the situation they were trying to measure. Another fortunate circumstance was that the productivity records of all sections had been kept for some time, so that it was possible to define with considerable certainty which groups were consistently turning out the greatest volumes of clerical work and which were consistently lagging behind. The Michigan researchers identified twelve high-producing and twelve low-producing groups which were evidently equal in ability, background, and other important respects; they then set about trying to discover what factors in the immediate work environment itself might account for the differences in productivity.

Mayo's studies had, of course, provided a clue. But instead of concentrating so heavily on the tendency of workers to amalgamate

themselves into informal groups, the Michigan group concentrated on the behavior and attitudes of the first-line supervisor. It was through this man, after all, that management's attitudes and policies toward the worker would presumably be transmitted. The supervisor's behavior would be the worker's most immediate and tangible indication of how the company regarded him.

The researchers had prepared a patterned interview which enabled them to collect a considerable amount of information on the ways in which each supervisor actually handled the various kinds of problems that arose on the job. It also provided a factual basis for inferences about the supervisor's underlying attitudes toward the people who worked under him. None of the supervisors knew at the time of the interview that the productivity of his group had anything to do with his being selected for the study; while a certain amount of wariness is normal for all participants in such surveys, it was presumably equal for both groups. For that matter, the interviewers did not know until after they had made their ratings whether the supervisor they had seen was in charge of a high- or a low-producing group. Thus it was unlikely that the team could have unintentionally forced the facts to fit their theories.

Each supervisor was rated solely on the basis of where he had put the emphasis in his own descriptions of how he handled his people on the job. When all the data were in, the Michigan team found that supervisors characterized as "employee centered" were likely to be in charge of high-producing groups and that those characterized as "production centered" were likely to be in charge of low-producing groups. It looked, in other words, as if a direct emphasis on getting the work done was the worst way to get it done.

A man was given an "employee centered" rating if he considered supervision of his people, rather than expediting production, to be his main job. A hard-and-fast line between the two would be difficult to draw, of course, and if either factor had been ignored, productivity would probably have suffered. But it was not a question of forgetting about production: It was simply a matter of emphasis, and in the case of the employee-centered supervisors at Prudential there was little doubt that the subordinates themselves were uppermost in their mind.

As far as supervisory tactics were concerned, the employee-centered men were likely to give their people a general outline of how the work was to be accomplished, leaving the details up to the workers

themselves. They did not keep a particularly close check on how the work progressed after it was assigned. They assumed that their people were responsible enough and capable enough to get things done without the pressure of someone peering over their shoulders. In effect, their subordinates handled the bulk of the department's production problems themselves.

If the classical theories about why supervision is necessary were right, the groups managed by employee-centered supervisors should have been ill-disciplined and inefficient, with goldbricking and socializing running rampant and work being given scant attention. However, of nine such supervisors identified in the study, six had groups showing precisely the opposite pattern. Instead of taking advantage of their supervisors' leniency, the workers in these groups moved the work along swiftly and cheerfully. If anything, the camaraderie had an expediting or lubricating effect instead of channeling the workers' energy into time-wasting activity. All told, the employee-centered supervisor seemed quite likely to be running a happy shop.

A supervisor was rated as "production centered" if he considered his main job to be getting the work done and seemed to consider his people primarily as instruments for doing this rather than as human beings with needs and emotions very similar to his own. He was more detached and non-involved, more "objective," if you will, than the employee-centered supervisor. He did not hesitate to insert himself into the daily flow of work if he saw something being handled in a way he didn't like; in fact, it was by no means uncommon for him to handle some of the work personally when that seemed to be the most expeditious way of completing it. He was quite specific in his instructions and eagle-eyed for any deviations from them. In contrast to the employee-centered supervisor, the production-centered supervisor had a style that was far more active, alert, and driving.

Now, it may seem obvious that the production-centered supervisor was merely doing what management expected of him and in fact was doing it considerably more conscientiously than was his employee-centered colleague. Yet the results belied the impression. Of eight supervisors identified as production-centered in the study, seven had low-producing groups. Here, then, was a paradox: The most efficient way to get clerical work done at Prudential was to keep the personal relations among workers smooth—and let the work take care of itself!

Once again, research was showing that an emphasis on productivity at the expense of the worker's dignity was self-defeating. It was

indicating that the disinterest and lack of responsibility against which firm supervision was directed were likely to be a *consequence* of exactly that kind of supervision rather than the "natural" attitudes of workers toward their jobs. The implication was that trying to improve the productivity of a low-producing group by putting it under more pressure was very much like trying to extinguish a fire by pouring gasoline on it.

There was, of course, a possibility that this interpretation of the results had confused cause with effect, that the employee-centered supervisors could well afford to be relaxed because they happened to have fairly mature and effective groups, while the production-centered supervisors were simply reacting to the sloth and inefficiency of their groups. But the Michigan group concluded that this interpretation could not be taken seriously. To begin with, it hardly accounted for how some groups happened to be high-producing and others low-producing, since all groups had been closely matched for aptitude and other salient characteristics. More importantly, it did not fit the fact that the two kinds of supervisors could be shown to have consistently different personal values and attitudes. The employee-centered supervisors were, in general, cooperative, democratic, and amenable to reason; while the production-centered supervisors tended to be defensive, authoritarian, and arbitrary in their judgments. They were, in other words, two different kinds of people, and they were handling their groups precisely as they might be expected to in the light of their own personalities.

The Michigan group went on to speculate that the differences in productivity had been built up gradually as the supervisor's style and the workers' motivation interacted. For example, an employee-centered supervisor would obtain good results by concerning himself with his people and soft-pedaling questions of productivity; this might encourage him to relax his control of their work even more, which would have a still more salutary effect on their efficiency, and so on. On the other hand, a production-centered supervisor might incur opposition as a result of involving himself too openly in the daily flow of work, and this would adversely affect productivity—which would merely cause the supervisor to press even harder for improvement, and so on. In this manner a vicious circle would be set up in which each side persisted in behaving in a way that brought out the worst in the other. Thus it would be possible for groups that were originally equivalent in all respects to develop very different

production records as the distinction between styles of supervision became more and more marked.

However, the differences between supervisors were not entirely personal. There was some evidence that their own superiors were handling them in a way that contributed to their differing emphases in doing their work. Specifically, if the supervisor had relatively little authority delegated to him, but instead was directed quite closely as to what to do and how to do it, he would focus his attention on the routine operations of his employees and be more or less oblivious of their personal feelings. Thus the chain of interaction between supervisory style and subordinate reaction seemed to extend upward into management as well as downward to the employees themselves.

The Michigan group came out of the Prudential study with strong evidence that supervisory style affected group motivation and vice versa, and that as a consequence of this interaction the most effective style from the standpoint of production was one which was more concerned with the employees' needs for attention and respect than with productivity itself. Further studies of this kind in several other industries and work settings have, in general, corroborated the Prudential findings. Maintenance-of-way section gangs in a railroad company, for instance, showed essentially the same reaction to supervisory styles; so did production workers in an agricultural-equipment plant. Like most research findings, however, the significance of employee-centered supervision seems to grow more complex, rather than simpler, as more is learned about it.

First of all, it seems obvious that employee-centered supervision can be carried to an extreme and that if this were to occur, productivity would almost certainly suffer. As a matter of fact, the Michigan researchers have come to think of employee-centered and production-centered styles of supervision as *not* being at all incompatible. Robert L. Kahn, in reviewing these studies, notes that:[6]

> Most successful supervisors *combine* employee-centered and production-centered orientations, working out their own creative way of synthesizing these two concerns. [By itself, employee-centered supervision may] sometimes generate a superficial popularity among the men, although we predict that in time this would be replaced by feelings of aimlessness and lack of accomplishment.

On the other hand, an unbalanced emphasis on production has been demonstrated to lead to poor morale and low productivity fairly

quickly. Kahn speculates that a foreman who could not give much emphasis to either employees or production would be the most ineffectual of all. In other words employee-centered supervision, however we choose to define it, is effective within a certain range or degree; if it is not tempered or limited to that degree, it can rapidly become a mere caricature of effective supervision. This caricature is precisely how its critics see it and precisely what the production-centered supervisor fears will happen if he experiments with a more personal approach. It seems quite clear, however, that there *is* a middle ground and that some types of supervisors are better able than others to operate in that middle ground.

There has been some speculation, in fact, that the differences between the supervisors who can and can't operate on this basis are too fundamental and deep-rooted to be altered by training. If true, this would drastically change the aspect of human relations from a problem in *training,* as it is currently conceived, to a problem in the *selection* of supervisors. Thus G. B. Shaw may not have been entirely satirical when he said, "Power does not corrupt men. Fools, however, if they get into a position of power, corrupt power."

Meantime a growing body of evidence is being uncovered which indicates that employee-centered supervision does not lead to the best results under all circumstances. We now have reason to believe that production-centered methods can yield short-run productivity records that are at least as good as those produced by employee-centered methods. This equivalence may very well have something to do with the extent to which jobs compel workers to rely on each other, with the consistency of the supervisor's behavior, and even with the personalities of the workers themselves.

In one study[7] the Michigan research group selected four approximately "matched" clerical divisions of a large corporation, all of which were doing the same general type of work. Two of these divisions were placed under a tightly controlled, production-centered regimen, while the other two were placed under a more democratic system in which the workers actually participated in much of their own supervision.

In the production-centered groups decisions were for the most part made at or near the top of the division. Managers surveyed objective statistics of the operation and decreed what must be done with little or no regard to how the individual workers might feel. First-line

supervisors enforced these decisions and ran a well-scrutinized, tautly disciplined shop. The managers were given the goal of increasing productivity over the course of a year, and they attempted to do this in a classical, impersonal way by cutting the size of the working force and by pushing hard for maximum efficiency from the remainder.

In the two employee-centered groups a deliberate attempt was made to move decisions as far down toward the people they would affect as possible. Supervisors received some training in the art of giving their people a say in how their own work would be done. The emphasis was on providing the individual worker with evidence that he was respected, considered responsible, and even indispensable in his own small way to the team to which he belonged.

This study differed from the others in that instead of making essentially clinical observations of supervisors whose groups' performance had been measured and found to differ, it started with groups whose records were nearly identical and imposed different supervisory styles on them. From the standpoint of enabling the researchers to make logical inferences, this approach is considerably more elegant than the clinical method. It runs a much smaller risk that some hidden or unknown factors will produce results which will then be erroneously ascribed to the variable in which the researchers are interested—in this case, supervisory style. This study ought to have been the clincher that demonstrated the superiority of employee-centered supervision beyond all reasonable doubts.

What actually happened was that after a year the production-centered groups had achieved about a 25 per cent increase in productivity, while the corresponding increase in the employee-centered groups was about 20 per cent. Although the difference is not great enough to indicate that production-centered methods of supervision are actually superior, it leaves little doubt that under certain conditions a hardhearted approach is at least as effective as the more sophisticated and democratic methods of supervision.

The Michigan investigators concede this point, at least insofar as short-range effects on productivity are concerned. But they also note that there were other differences between the groups and that in time these would very likely have put the employee-centered group well out in front. By administering attitude scales to all groups before and after the study, it was found that the production-centered groups' loyalty, interest, and involvement in their work had decreased, while in the employee-centered groups there was actually an increase in

the workers' feeling that it was their personal responsibility to get the work done. When the supervisor was away, the employee-centered groups were likely to keep on working, but the production-centered groups were likely to stop. The employee-centered groups began to admire or at least to tolerate the high-producing "rate busters" among them, so there was very little tendency to try to restrict output artificially. In the production-centered groups the classical suspicion of the high producer was evident along with pressures to bring him into line.

Productivity records notwithstanding, therefore, the Michigan team held that the employee-centered groups had come out of the experiment in a healthier condition, better equipped for long-term maintenance of their productivity gains, than had the production-centered groups. In fact, it seemed fairly evident that the gains of the production-centered groups had been attained at the expense of their ability to maintain increased productivity. So in a sense production-centered supervision had sown the seeds of its own destruction.

Of course, the Michigan team has yet to prove its point rigorously. It is at least conceivable that under certain conditions a production-centered group may be able to maintain a high rate of productivity indefinitely. Even if this were true, however, management would be living in the shadow of a serious and wholly unnecessary risk. With the morale and cooperation of its workforce so vulnerable at so many points, the company would have to be phenomenally lucky to avoid strikes, restriction of output, waste, high turnover, or other serious interferences with productivity.

Other studies have indicated that production-centered supervision may, under certain conditions, have more than just a short-term advantage. Victor H. Vroom and Floyd C. Mann[8] studied this problem in a large trucking company. They found one operation (package handling) in which the men worked primarily in small, closely knit groups. The nature of their work required considerable teamwork and more or less constant contacts between the men and their supervisors. The package handlers showed the by now familiar preference for equalitarian, employee-centered supervisors.

However, the results were quite different in another group, which consisted of the truck drivers and their dispatchers. These men, of course, spent the bulk of their working hours alone or at least out of direct contact with each other. Getting their jobs done was a highly individual matter, and they scarcely depended on each other at all,

except in requiring accurate information from the dispatchers. They favored authoritarian supervision.

Now, it may be that truck drivers and package handlers are by nature two very different breeds of men. But it seemed to Vroom and Mann that the nature of the jobs imposed certain constraints on the attitudes of the men, so that the preferred style of supervision was a more or less direct outgrowth of interdependence, or the lack of it, on the job. They speculate, for example, that in necessarily closely knit groups the main danger to morale (and productivity) is the possibility of dissension. Therefore, a democratic supervisor who can support the workers' egos and keep tempers well below the boiling point would be more likely than any other to keep such a group on an even keel. On the other hand, where work is more of an individual matter the essential ingredient is not harmony but confidence that one knows what is really expected of him. Under such conditions an authoritarian supervisor with a firm, no-nonsense attitude may be more likely than a democratic one to make expectations clear and thereby to avoid both confusion and recriminations.

This theory of Vroom and Mann's may help to explain why people vary so much in their reactions to employee-centered supervision. It may very well be that in certain jobs workers who have their egos supported without getting clear-cut instructions are not likely to be productive *or* happy. Far from refuting the central ideas of human relations theory, however, this possibility serves to underscore the postulate that most people have a natural sense of responsibility toward their work and that apathy, obstructiveness, and carelessness result from conditions which make it difficult for them to discharge that responsibility.

Vroom has also uncovered evidence that the effects of supervision may depend to a considerable extent on the personality of the individual worker.[9] His basic premise is that if a man has strong qualities of independence and is not particularly awed by people who hold positions of authority, he prefers to have a say in decisions affecting his work. In fact, such a man will be more productive under a participative system than if he were simply told what to do. On the other hand, Vroom doubted that this would be true of men who are more comfortable in carrying out the orders of a leader than in deciding for themselves what must be done.

To check his theories Vroom made a careful analysis of some 108 supervisory personnel at large installations of the United Parcel

Service. Using psychological tests to divide these men into groups which fit one personality pattern or another, Vroom found that the first part of his theory was indeed true: The "independent" supervisors were happier, and were also more productive, when they were allowed to participate in decisions affecting their jobs. However, no such pattern emerged from the "dependent" supervisors. Having an opportunity to contribute to the management of their own jobs left them cold. They could take it or leave it. None of them showed any particular *dislike* for operating under a democratic style of leadership. But in contrast to the enthusiasm of the independent group, they were simply indifferent. The effect of democratic leadership on their productivity ratings was also nil.

Thus it seems that not just the role that a job requires one to play in an organization but also the personality of the man who plays it helps to determine how receptive he will be to various styles of supervision. Place a group with strong independence drives under a supervisor who needs to keep his men under his thumb, and the result is very likely to be trouble. Similarly, if you take docile men who are accustomed to obedience and respect for their supervisors and place them under a supervisor who tries to make them manage their own work, they are likely to wonder uneasily whether he really knows what he's doing.

Vroom makes an important criticism of all those studies which allegedly "prove" that democratic, employee-centered styles of leadership are *the* answer to all problems of morale and productivity. What these studies reveal is simply the average effects of participation on a large group. Overall improvements in productivity will be largely due to the favorable response of a *part* of the group—not necessarily a large part, either. Theoretically, it is possible that some groups may be so dependent that they would react negatively to participation, which would actually reduce their overall level of productivity.

Some indirect support for this idea comes from a study the General Electric Company conducted at one of its turbine and generator plants.[10] At this plant *consistency* in the foreman's style of leadership seemed to carry more weight than the style itself. This finding is particularly important because of the likelihood that wholesale "human relations training" for supervisors is not remaking them all in an employee-centered mold but is rather causing them to vacillate between the new techniques they have been taught and older methods which have the force of habit behind them.

In this study some 90 foremen were analyzed to determine their supervisory style (which was rated as "democratic," "authoritarian," or "mixed"). Then a tabulation was made of the ways in which more than 300 of their men reacted to these various styles. Most of the men, as might be expected, preferred democratic supervision. Surprisingly, however, those workers who preferred to be handled in an authoritarian manner had *higher* morale than any of the others.

The GE researchers speculated that in the typically high-pressure setting of this plant, where the traditional emphasis was on production rather than on employees, it was probably more realistic for a worker to expect authoritarian treatment than to hope for a more permissive supervisor. The worker who preferred the blunt tactics of an authoritarian supervisor was less likely to be disappointed than the one who longed to be treated as an equal. The demand for employee-centered supervision is probably much greater than the supply, a bit of reality with which the worker must sooner or later come to terms. This is not to say that democratic methods wouldn't have worked better at this particular plant with the majority of workers who preferred them. It was simply a case of the minority who preferred a strong leader being likelier to get what they wanted.

The lowest morale in the plant was found among those men whose foremen were rated *between* the democratic and authoritarian extremes. The GE research team felt that these foremen may have varied inconsistently in their tactics, permissive at one moment and hardfisted the next, in a way that left their men frustrated and unable to anticipate how they would be treated. The naturally autocratic supervisor who is exposed to human relations training may behave in exactly such a manner, sometimes experimenting with his newly learned tactics and sometimes reverting to his old self—a pattern which will probably make him even harder to work for than he was before being "enlightened."

Clearly, then, there is no supervisory panacea which can bring out the best in all workers under all conditions. Supervisory style has to be tailored to fit both the work being done and the workers doing it. In fact, it is not at all unlikely that further research will identify still more factors that have to be taken into account. The more complex the equation becomes, the greater are the demands made on the individual supervisor's ability to diagnose his situation and play his role accordingly. It is patently absurd to expect indoctrination or training to enable anyone to be equally adroit at supervising all

kinds of groups. The complexities of morale and leadership require that different types of individuals be selected and trained for different types of leadership assignments.

The foremost interpreter of the Michigan studies is Rensis Likert, a psychologist who heads the Institute for Social Research. Like Mayo, he probes and questions a traditional "theory" about supervision which management has more or less taken for granted but which research has exposed as not merely wrong but downright inefficient as well.

Since businesses in the past have been notoriously unintrospective, any statement of what they have been assuming about people runs the risk of becoming a straw man for the modern theorist to set up and then demolish. Likert seems to recognize this danger and is much more circumspect than Mayo in attributing "assumptions" to management. He does not accuse management of having assumed that employees were a motley rabble; on the contrary, Likert's criticism of management is that it has been entirely too logical, too preoccupied with tangible results, and too aloof from personalities.

Likert's ideas on how management ought to deal with people have been evolving into what he calls a "modified theory" of organization and management.[11, 12] Its title is well chosen, because what Likert proposes is not a radical change of attitudes but a reinterpretation of some orthodox ideas on how businesses should be run. In essence he is saying that in thinking about assets and liabilities, profits and losses, management simply hasn't gone far enough. It hasn't recognized that employees are, or can be, assets who deserve as much concern and planning as material assets and that damage to the morale or motivation of its human assets must be counted as a loss—and a serious one.

Likert is, of course, aware of those ubiquitous paragraphs in annual reports in which management gives reassuring emphasis to the importance of sound employee relations. He does not disparage the intentions that cause such paragraphs to be written. But he is openly skeptical that such lofty goals will actually be reached while management adheres to its traditional tactics for keeping employees happy. Management has, in Likert's view, been trying to *buy* cooperation and serenity with various and sundry wage, benefit, and incentive packages, and this simply misses the heart of the problem. Motivation that makes for continued high productivity is usually

a response to a particular kind of leadership—interested, supportive, non-intrusive—and not a response to money. Therefore, a company's investment in its employees is not adequately protected if they are all well paid and well insured but poorly led. Over the long haul, efficiency is incompatible with the kind of leadership that is devoted primarily to getting things done.

This is, of course, the paradox that the Michigan group has encountered so often in its work: that a seemingly objective, reasonable approach to supervision would create an "unreasonable" resistance to itself which would, in time, negate its effectiveness. It is very much like trying to push a flat-sided barge through the water broad side: The harder you push, the harder the water fights back. Yet the irony of it all is that those supervisors who were pushing hardest and making the least headway were carrying out management's basic wishes more directly than were any of the other supervisors. Sustained high productivity eluded the man who was preoccupied with it and fell lightly into the lap of the man who was chiefly concerned with creating an atmosphere. It was almost as though the most sophisticated way to serve management was to ignore it and serve the employees instead.

At the root of this paradox is a simple idea (so simple as to seem almost self-evident) which actually has some rather revolutionary implications. This is that the responsibility for production is inherently the province of workers, not supervisors. The proper function of supervisors is to provide the information, materials, and organization that the workers need to do their jobs and otherwise to stay out of their way. This implies, of course, that most employees can function in self-disciplining groups which require little or no pressure to assure that they will spend their time productively. Therein lies the revolutionary aspect of this notion, for it flies in the face of decades of managerial traditions. In his modified theory Likert is saying in effect that a group which is properly led will generate enough satisfaction for its members, in pride and a sense of accomplishment, to offset whatever tendencies to restrict production there may be.

He is also saying that when a supervisor inserts himself too boldly into the day-to-day problems of production, as management policy often requires him to do, this "usurpation" will dispel whatever latent power the group may have had to motivate its members to work productively. The various failings and immaturities of the

workers will then be unchecked, except by the vigilance of the supervisor. Before long the supervisor will be the only one who retains any motivation to produce, since he will be the only one to derive much personal satisfaction from it. For the others, production will cease to be a personal achievement which assures them of their own power and significance in the system; instead it will be the price they have to pay to protect themselves from the humiliations which the supervisor might otherwise inflict on them.

The key to a productivity-motivated workforce, then, is a supervisory style which enhances the workers' proprietorship of their jobs. Management has too often approached the problem negatively, by depriving workers of control in order to forestall stoppages and goldbricking. Likert pleads for a positive approach, for delegating this control in order to make the satisfactions of self-discipline possible. Note, also, that the emphasis is on proprietorship of jobs, not companies. The scope of control that must be delegated to achieve this self-motivating condition is much narrower than many executives seem to have in mind when they speak of defending "management's right to manage." It is not the broad powers of decision making and goal setting that are at stake at all; rather it is the jurisdiction over that fragment of the total enterprise that is under the workers' noses daily.

But what would become of that long-sought goal of scientific management—an orderly and predictable flow of events—if each work group became an independent little island unto itself? How could management plan, control, or anticipate when the ultimate execution of its plans depended on the whimsy of its hired hands? Likert's reply is that management is not really controlling events with its authoritarian structure anyway; that greater productivity than we currently experience could usually be expected—although perhaps not very precisely predicted—under a less rigid system; and that the whole concept of "control" is a spurious one which is incompatible with management's real objectives.

The real business of management is to assure the profitable use of its assets; therefore, productivity is the goal, and control is merely one of several possible means to achieve it. But the effect of control concepts is too often an inhibition, rather than a stimulation, of productivity. The way to achieve the greatest profit is to remove the artificial impediments to productivity rather than to impose a regulatory system, no matter how tidy.

Since the root of productivity is the motivation of the individual worker, Likert sets out to design an organization in which the individual can enjoy a sense of importance and influence. A worker who does, indeed, count for something in his company, who is consulted rather than directed on matters falling within his own bailiwick, is likely to become "ego involved" in his work. A consistent record of excellence would then become a matter of personal pride rather than a meaningless exertion for somebody else's gain. The key to linking the individual's most potent aspirations to the goals of his company is his membership in a group which participates in its own management—a group in which the role of the supervisor is changed from that of an enforcer or overseer to that of an expediter, an information giver, and above all an ego supporter.

Participation is another one of those complex concepts that has sparked a human relations fad and thereby suffered a severe dilution of meaning. There must, of course, be some procedure or set of practices through which participation is implemented as a managerial routine; but by stressing the motions to be gone through and ignoring the spirit that must accompany them the faddists have managed to convert participation into a fairly impotent ritual. Essentially, participation is a matter of regularly receiving the information one needs to make effective decisions about one's work and of having those decisions accepted by management because of its respect for the experience on which they are based. But the key word here is "respect." Participation, to be an effective tool for mobilizing the productive potentialities of workers, must be based on the supervisor's realization of his own inability to do his job properly without the voluntary aid of his people and on his willingness to surrender enough of his power to them to make that aid attractive.

Likert realizes that it would not be easy to revamp an organization which has traditionally reserved as much power as possible for management's own use. But the goal is certainly worth working toward, since the benefits of harnessing the latent motivations of the individual worker are almost incalculable. But not participation nor employee-centered supervision nor any other form of enlightened leadership is likely, in itself, to stimulate all kinds of workers under all kinds of circumstances. What the Michigan group can point to is not a panacea but a badly neglected area of management practice where improvements can and should be made.

Chapter 3

The Pittsburgh Studies

ONE OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED STUDIES THAT HAS YET been carried out in the field of work motivation was conducted by Frederick Herzberg and his colleagues at the Psychological Service of Pittsburgh.[18] It was based on careful interviews with some 200 engineers and accountants who worked for eleven different firms in the Pittsburgh area. These men were asked to recall specific incidents in their recent experience which made them feel either particularly good or particularly bad about their jobs. They were also asked to indicate what effects these incidents had on their attitudes and on their performance and whether these effects were of short or long duration. While these interviews were conducted with the consent of management, they were completely confidential, and every participant had a guarantee of anonymity.

The Pittsburgh research team recognized from the first that the design of their study imposed certain restrictions on the conclusions they would be able to draw from their data. First, engineers and accountants as a group are considerably more educated and less dependent on their relations with a particular employer than are skilled and semi-skilled workers (of whom most of the previously cited studies were made). It seems fairly likely that professional workers might respond to forces which would be of less immediate importance to the clerical or blue-collar worker and that the converse might also be true. However, the motivation of professional and technical workers is well worth studying in its own right because of the growing importance of these groups in the national economy. Further, they may give some clues to what kind of motives we can expect to appear among other workers as we move toward a more technologically based economy and a more professionalized labor force.

Second, any study which is based on volunteered recollections is inherently limited by the frankness, as well as by the self-understanding, of the participants. The former can be controlled to a certain extent

by skilled interviewing technique, but there is no way to control the latter. The most likely effect of these drawbacks, however, is to limit the amount and depth of the data rather than to distort the meaning of the participants' stories. Therefore, the Pittsburgh group felt that the study was worth executing in spite of its unavoidable defects. The decision was amply justified by the importance of what was found.

When these men felt good about their jobs, it was usually because something had happened which showed that they were doing their work particularly well or that they were becoming more expert in their professions. Good feelings were, in other words, keyed to the specific tasks that the men performed, rather than to background factors such as money, security, or working conditions. On the other hand, when they felt bad it was usually because some disturbance in these background factors had caused them to believe that they were being treated unfairly.

This led the Pittsburgh group to draw a distinction between what they called *motivators* and what they called *hygienic factors*. A motivator is an influence that usually has an uplifting effect on attitudes or performance. Hygienic factors produce no improvements but rather serve to *prevent losses* of morale or efficiency. Hygienic factors are prerequisites for effective motivation but are powerless to motivate by themselves: They can only build a floor under morale. This floor will forestall any really serious dissatisfaction or drop in productivity and make it possible for motivators to operate. But the important point about hygienic factors is that they do nothing to elevate the individual's desire to do his job well.

It was clear that with this group of engineers and accountants the real motivators were opportunities to become more expert and to handle more demanding assignments. Pay, job security, and working conditions were hygienic factors: When they were inadequate, they had a significant negative effect on the men's attitudes, but they had no important positive effect when they were properly administered. It made little sense, therefore, to think of motivation for these men solely in terms of paying them well and providing fringe benefits and an attractive place to work. These things wouldn't really motivate them at all. On the other hand, to have deprived them of these things would have caused their motivation to deteriorate very rapidly!

The same principle seemed to apply to so-called good supervisory

practices, such as treating people as individuals and dealing with them fairly, and to communication programs designed to keep the men informed of management's goals and policies. These did not make the men feel particularly positive about their work, nor did they make the men want to work any harder. But when supervision was tactless or communication was poor, the men were very likely to become discouraged and to put just enough effort into their work to get by.

In effect, the Pittsburgh group found that both the traditional bread-and-butter motivators and the more sophisticated "human relations" motivators *didn't* motivate. With this group, at least, these factors had become the minimum tolerable conditions for a job. To lift them above a humdrum, satisfied-but-unexcited level of motivation required something else: the freedom to exercise initiative and ingenuity, to experiment, and to handle the problems of their jobs in their own way. Control of their own work, rather than the tangible rewards of work, was the motivator.

Obviously, motivators cannot operate in the absence of hygiene, and hygiene has a very tepid and unremarkable effect in the absence of motivators. Both are indispensable if productivity is to be maintained at a high level and if work itself is to become a source of satisfaction rather than an unavoidable drudge. By making this relationship clear, the Pittsburgh group managed to put the many factors in motivation into a balanced and realistic perspective which did not emphasize any one of them at the expense of any other. This was quite a feat.

Most of the incidents which caused good feelings that lasted only a short while stemmed from recognition by others for good work. Pats on the back produced a brief glow of satisfaction which was soon extinguished. With this group, at least, the oft-prescribed nostrum of praise had only a temporary effect; to use it more effectively would require repetition which could easily be overdone. The more lasting good feelings were due to such things as being assigned to stimulating work, having considerable responsibility, and being advanced to positions of greater importance. The key to sustained motivation seemed to lie in assignments which pushed the men to the limits of their capabilities and which matched growth in abilities with newer and more serious challenges.

Good supervisory practices had an essentially hygienic effect: They kept the men from feeling neglected and reassured them that their

supervisors were decent fellows who had their interests at heart. According to the Pittsburgh group, this type of hygiene cannot be dispensed with in any work group. However, it is probably more important at rank-and-file levels, where the work itself is often standardized and repetitive, than at professional levels where motivators have a chance to operate more freely. The production worker, who often spends his days carrying out routines that were devised by somebody else, does not have much of an opportunity to experience personal growth on the job. Hygiene is therefore all-important to him, and he may be very sensitive to its absence—as would be the case if his foreman were disinterested or unfair. But the professional worker is luckier: "A man who finds his job challenging, exciting, and satisfying will perhaps tolerate a difficult supervisor."[14]

The engineers and accountants surveyed by the Pittsburgh group reported that their attitudes had a definite effect on their productivity but that the difference was qualitative rather than something that could be measured in terms of sheer output. When they felt positive about their jobs, they put more care, imagination, and craftsmanship into their work; when they felt negative, they were not necessarily careless, but neither did they worry about fine details. In a word, favorable attitudes brought out their creativity and desire for excellence while unfavorable attitudes dissipated their incentive to do more than comply with minimal requirements.

The important point is that professional workers—and probably most non-professionals as well—have their own ways of "restricting output, and these ways do not necessarily show up in production statistics or in the measurements of industrial engineers. It is not quantity itself that suffers so much as ingenuity and care. In effect, when these men felt bad about their jobs, their companies were likely to enjoy little more of their talents and potentialities than was routinely expected; only when they had positive attitudes were their companies likely to benefit from their capacity to rise above the commonplace in the execution of their work. The difference for the individual was one of personal growth or uninspired conformity; translated into its effects on his company, the difference was one of economic growth or stagnation.

Out of all these data the Pittsburgh group developed a theory of work motivation which has important implications for our increasingly technological (and therefore professionalized) economy. It is

also a critique of much of the previous work, both scientific and otherwise, that has been done in the field. They begin by noting the great diversity of "needs" that have been ascribed to workers by various studies and experts over the years. This has led many managers to throw up their hands and conclude that most employees don't really know what they want and that even if they did, their needs would be insatiable. Therefore, in order to make personnel administration a more rational process, they have undertaken to *tell* the employee what he should want. This is one of the effects, if not the conscious purpose, of many company "communication programs" which spread information about fringe benefits, company leadership, and the merits of the free enterprise system. In effect, the Pittsburgh group points out, these campaigns attempt to create satisfaction by showing employees how their needs are being taken care of; in a way they are tacit admissions of the failure of many paternalistic programs to make their own impact on the attitudes of employees toward their jobs. Communicating, in the modern marketing sense of the word, becomes imperative when benefits are taken for granted—as they so often are after having been awarded indiscriminately for many years.

In contrast to those who attempt to impose an order of their own on the supposedly chaotic needs of employees, other managers have recognized that the satisfaction of a given need will actually tend to make some previously quiescent need more acute. According to this school of thought, there is a natural tendency to lose interest in needs which are well taken care of, even if those needs were once highly aroused. Instead a new preoccupation develops, usually with the next most potent of the many needs that are unsatisfied at any given time.

There is, in other words, a sort of pyramid or hierarchy into which needs arrange themselves in the order of their importance, and those needs which are at or near the pinnacle will be the focus of the person's attention and effort until they are somehow satisfied. Then, as long as these needs are adequately cared for, they will cease to be particularly important in motivating the individual. Something new will be on his mind. Of course, the earlier needs can come back with a rush if the arrangements that were made for gratifying them are ever seriously curtailed.

The most powerful motivators, of course, are the elementary biological needs which must be provided for if life itself is to continue: food, drink, shelter, and the like. In primitive economies, and in

those many parts of the world where life goes on barely above the subsistence level, these needs are the principal preoccupations of nearly everyone. When starvation is no longer an ever-present danger and there is a reasonable assurance of having a shirt on one's back and a roof over one's head, there is a tendency to become more concerned with *preserving* this good fortune than with enjoying the good things one has to enjoy. In other words, the individual is not worried about where his next meal is coming from, but he is quite worried about establishing his right to the property or job that makes the meal possible. He becomes security-conscious. At a more advanced level, when he is safely entrenched in his security arrangements, he may begin to hunger for some luxuries, later for some status, and still later for achievement for its own sake. At every step the need which had previously stirred him most of all simply ceases to have much significance, because a new need has risen to take its place.

It follows from this that one can never really buy contentment and tranquility for people by granting them the things they want. Contentment simply isn't for sale—it can't be, because it is not a natural condition for people to be in. Temporarily, perhaps, they may luxuriate in a hard-won privilege or possession, but soon another bug will have bitten them, and they are striving just as hard as ever. Many people, it is true, will settle for little enough and go through life without coveting anything they do not have. But from a longer perspective, this contentment is also temporary: Sooner or later a generation will come along which rejects the passivity and resignation of its fathers and demands more of everything for itself. Demands, needs, and strivings never dry up because the human being is built to want; his perpetual discontent is what enables him to survive and to flourish.

Or so runs the theory. As far as industry is concerned, this theory means that dissatisfaction is here to stay. It cannot be bought off, but neither can it be ignored. Today's motivator will become tomorrow's hygiene. Instead of lamenting the failure of one benefit program after another to pacify the worker, the manager had best reconcile himself to dealing with perpetual discontent. What is more important, he had better hope that it *will* be perpetual, because it is precisely this quirk of always wanting something else badly enough to work for it that makes possible the diligence, ingenuity, and perfectionism on which all industrial progress is built.

The benefit that brings no contentment but simply releases an-

other need to stir up new discontent is the price of progress. It represents, not money down the drain, but money invested to keep the motivational pot aboiling without either exploding into open conflict or cooling into frustration and despair. It should be the business of management, according to this theory, not to try to sell employees on the beauty of benefits they already take for granted but to anticipate where their needs will next become strongest and to plan an active program for harnessing the motives that those needs will ignite.

Now, the Pittsburgh group plainly saw the futility of trying to tell people, however subtly, about what should be motivating them, especially when the emphasis was on needs that had long since lost the power to get them very excited. It made much more sense to find out what the real motivators were by examining the workers themselves instead of reviewing past history and deciding what the motivators ought to be. The group emphasized what was going on in the employee's mind in the present rather than what went on in the manager's mind in the past.

After taking their long, hard look at what seemed to be the real needs of the professional employee, the Pittsburgh group found that a lot of paradoxes suddenly made sense if two classes of needs were recognized. The first (hygiene) was an essential base for the second and required fair treatment in such background factors as salary, supervision, and working conditions. If these were out of kilter, they would constitute a severe insult to the individual's sense of worthiness; he would either become embittered and antagonistic to management or be humbled beyond the point of caring about doing work he could be proud of. On the other hand, if these background factors were in satisfactory balance, the individual would not necessarily respond with any spurts of enthusiasm. He might just as easily lapse into a comfortable and uninspired rut. He could rise above such a mundane level only when the second set of needs (motivators) was satisfied; that is, when he derived a sense of personal growth from his occupation. Such a feeling would exist when his work was not merely interesting but challenging, not merely prestigeful but significant, not merely fun but adventuresome.

This personal growth—attaining an ever-increasing mastery over one's environment—is potentially the most powerful motivator of all, because unlike other motives it can never really be satiated. If work cannot become a source of such growth, then perhaps the best we can hope for in motivating workers will be a sort of complacent

boredom in which energy and enthusiasm are just as scarce as complaints. Bursts of drive will be short-lived because the motivating source will soon grow old and lose its potency. Management will eventually despair of lifting the employee's aspirations and settle for a sort of dismal cease-fire—if one can be had at all. Linking the job to personal growth would seem to be the most hopeful way out of the age-old dilemma posed by "motivators" that sputter and die out after an initial glow but which cannot be safely withdrawn even though they are costly to maintain.

Yet there are obvious limits to how far industry can go in making jobs a vehicle for self-growth. For one thing, people differ markedly in the extent to which they *can* grow or would be willing to respond to such an opportunity even if they could. For another, growth flourishes best where there is a great deal of freedom to experiment, to set one's own pace, even to select the specific jobs one will work on. Granting such freedom indiscriminately would be an invitation to chaos. Attempts to change an organization so as to take advantage of such growth processes would require a discriminating eye and a delicate touch. In effect, there must be centralized control of how, when, and to whom management controls are decentralized.

There *is* a middle ground. Carefully selected people can be profitably permitted to decide for themselves how to reach the broad goals that are set for them by higher management. The Pittsburgh group makes its plea for a limited and realistic type of "participation," a system in which those who can make the best use of freedom in their work are given as much of it as the company can reasonably allow. Such people are particularly common among today's new "elite" groups, the professional and technical specialists. For many of them, motivation only begins with the traditional rewards of employment; it reaches its full flower in the removal of restrictions, regulations, and controls.

Chapter 4

Further Harvard Studies

BECAUSE THE HIGHLY EDUCATED PROFESSIONAL HAS AN UNprecedented amount of bargaining power in today's economy, we may wonder whether his motivation does not represent a special case: a sort of luxury that could scarcely be indulged in by workers whose skills are less in demand. Perhaps, as this bargaining power increases and gives the individual a greater sense of independence, the informal group loses its importance for him, while for someone who lacks this bargaining power the group may be an indispensable source of security. For the professional, the informal group is clearly no lifeline and can be dispensed with if he wishes; growth and independence may transcend his need to belong. Does it follow that for the man on the production line whose fortunes are tied to those of his group the desire for personal growth is insignificant?

A recent analysis of factory workers indicates that while they often have desires for self-development and growth, these desires are much more likely to be frustrated for such workers than for professionals. Partly as a consequence of this frustration, attitudes of futility and disinterest appear which effectively prevent both self-development and efficient job performance. The study, conducted by Abraham Zaleznik and his co-workers at the Harvard Business School,[15] took the hardest look yet at the cement that holds the informal group together and at the mechanism through which the group exerts its influence on productivity.

In this study the research team was not simply collecting observations in hopes that they would fall into some reasonable pattern (which was characteristic of some of the pioneering studies). Enough insights had been accumulated over the years to permit the statement of formal hypotheses which could be subjected to actual tests. As a matter of fact, before the men ever set foot in the plant where this study took place, they had developed no less than thirty-one separate hypotheses about the workers' productivity and about their relationships with each other. By making these predictions beforehand the

team was, in essence, sticking its collective neck out for the sake of determining whether its theorizing was realistic.

The study took place over an extended period in one department of a manufacturing company. Highly trained observers went into the department and gradually won the confidence of the workers. As time went on they made detailed observations of how the workers got along with each other, noting which ones belonged to the more or less dominant informal group and which ones were on the outside looking in as far as membership in this "shop society" was concerned. These observations were then correlated with the productivity of the various individuals.

Most of the men in the department turned out work at essentially the same low rate. This was true of the "regulars" who made up the main informal group and also of many non-regulars who did not belong. Some, but not all, of the non-regulars produced at very high rates. On the surface the department would seem to show the classical pattern of an informal group operating to restrict output among all but a few "rate busters" who were somehow immune to the group's influence.

But the explanation could not be quite so pat. Why didn't *all* the non-regulars produce at a high, or low, rate—why the difference? More important, what motivated the few who were producing at a high rate? Were they the ones whom management had successfully "reached" with its incentive and communication programs?

The deeper the Harvard group pushed its analysis, the less likely it seemed that management's efforts to affect the workers' attitudes were having any lasting effects. As a matter of fact, the data indicated that management was relatively impotent to motivate any of the men, whether regulars or non-regulars, high producers or low producers. The most powerful motivators for all of these men were being distributed by the workers themselves.

Membership in the "regular" group was evidently prized far more than any reward management could offer, with the possible exception of employment itself. In a sense, therefore, management was playing a futile and self-deluding game whenever it sought to stimulate production or to get the men to sympathize with its own point of view. Here was a paradox: Acceptance by the group was the key motivator, even for those who didn't belong. Management was seemingly oblivious to the fact that its efforts to reach the men were taking place in a sort of vacuum.

To add to the paradox, the group was basically stagnant and un-

healthy, and membership cost the men dearly in terms of personal frustrations. The price of membership was conformity to the group's standards, which called for sociability and unity within the group, a sullen indifference to management, and a bemused contempt for the non-member. Any effort to distinguish oneself, to accomplish something out of the ordinary, or to attract attention was regarded as treason to the group because it could undermine its solidarity. In a very real sense, then, the worker who became a regular was abandoning his chances for growth and for a measure of pride, along with a good deal of his individuality.

The Harvard researchers classified the regular group as "frozen" because it so thoroughly stifled individual growth and kept its members indefinitely at the same low common denominator of maturity. Frozen groups are clearly sick groups, destructive to members and management alike; yet they are by no means uncommon. It is doubtful if many industrial organizations of any size are free of them. They are the rocks on which many incentive, communication, and human relations programs have been broken. The frozen group, despite its inner sickness and basically negative purpose, is the hard core of management's motivational problem.

Although they are seemingly self-defeating, there is an underlying logic to frozen groups. They protect the member from being isolated from his fellow workers. Fear of isolation was so powerful a force in the workers studied that it overrode all the other motives they may have had, including even the desire for self-development that had loomed so large among the professional workers of the Pittsburgh study. For many individuals, it is true, the sacrifice of self-development wasn't very hard to make since they had very little inclination along those lines anyway. For them, gravitating into a frozen group was a natural and easy thing to do.

But for others the choice between trying to make something of themselves and avoiding isolation was a bitter one. Nor was it a real choice, since the odds against achieving anything significant as a production worker seemed so remote, and the prospect of being shunned if they attempted it seemed so certain and so forbidding. These men, who presumably had the potential to rise above a mundane level of achievement, were forced instead to accept an unsatisfactory solution simply because it was the lesser of two evils. In the face of an indifferent environment the only safety seemed to lie in banding together with other workers in an association which at least

protected its own interests, if nothing else. So these men became "regulars," but they also became apathetic, embittered, and antagonistic to management. Thus the men who presumably could have been most responsive to management's encouragement actually became the most alienated from it.

Either through the gravitation of the less ambitious or through the Hobson's choice faced by the more ambitious, the regular group acquired enough members to set the prevailing tone in the shop. Those who did not belong could not be indifferent to it; either they wanted very much to get "in" and sought to mimic the ways of the regulars in order to gain acceptance, or they became bitter at their exclusion and sought to revenge themselves by—of all things—a high rate of productivity.

Ironically, the rate busters in the shop were not responding to the efforts of management to raise the level of output. They were simply trying to avenge themselves against another group of workers who had frustrated them. Revenge consisted in showing them up, outproducing them, flouting their values. But the important point is that management was very nearly an irrelevant factor in creating this situation. Once again it was the informal group of workers that played the really influential role, extorting a low rate of output from most workers and provoking others into a high rate.

Whether a man was included in the group or was left out depended on a variety of factors. If he happened to have a lot in common with the others in the group—about the same educational level, for example, a similar ethnic background, and above all a set of values that could easily merge with the group's—it was fairly likely that he would become a regular. On the other hand, if his background was different in some important respect, or if he had some personal quirk which made him too distinct as an individual to be readily homogenized into the group, he would probably remain outside. In that case he might try to get in by courting favor with the regulars, which would almost certainly mean avoiding a conspicuous production record, or he might take a sour-grapes attitude, convince himself that the group wasn't really worth belonging to anyway, and devote himself to making the regulars look inferior by outproducing them.

The group served many functions. For some it provided a sense of belonging and an escape from anonymity. For those who lacked a sense of purpose it provided a ready-made way of life. Most of all it provided a way of defining one's status: The regular "knew" that he

ranked with the other regulars, above the non-regulars, and below the foremen. He did not have to suffer the anxiety of having his importance undefined, of never knowing for sure whether he counted for anything, or if so for how much.

Now, this kind of anxiety may seem very esoteric indeed, especially to anyone who is accustomed to having plenty of indications of just where he stands in the eyes of others. The Harvard group found that most of these production workers hadn't been that fortunate. They had been brought up on the fringes of a sheltered and ordered society which seemed to have no room for them. The worker's world was not a particularly hospitable place. It had its closed circles of privilege and a vast limbo surrounding them, populated with people like himself whose chances of amounting to something or leaving any kind of mark on the world seemed very dim indeed. He found himself, in other words, in an environment that seemingly couldn't care less whether he lived or died.

Not many men are able to fight very long against odds like that. Most of these men had long since acquired the attitude that there was no point in fighting at all, that the only wise course was to forget about trying to "be somebody" and merely to live for the moment. Let those who have privileges worry about responsibility; trust only the man who is as lost and as defeated as you are; shun the man who hasn't given up the struggle, for the fool will only make life harder for the rest of us. So runs the basic attitude.

In this manner men who found that life was full of futility became committed to a pattern of apathy. A shred of self-respect is preserved by denying that the individual really counts for anything or that achievement is anything more than an illusion. Therefore, they are not "really" sacrificing anything, and they are not so ignoble after all. They may or may not believe this in their heart of hearts, but it is important that they act as if it were true. So they associate with others who prefer to believe it and ignore or disbelieve attempts to refute it. And thus the informal group takes shape and tends to become frozen. It is the haven of the dispossessed, of men whose minds are insulated against management, who neither trust management nor share its values.

Does the worker's environment *really* loom as cold and barren as all that? He lives on the same planet and in the same times as everyone else; yet to some others life is always brimming with possibilities and opportunities. If workers have this defeatist attitude, may it not

be simply a rationalization for inherent laziness or inability? Sometimes it is. But living on the same planet or even working in the same factory does not mean sharing an environment. The environment that counts is not physical but psychological: the environment of possibilities and opportunities, of outlets for the individual's drives. Here, even in a democratic and well-intentioned society, the worker may get short-changed. He can look forward to repetitive work, to knowing little if anything about the meaning of his work, to the competition of the educated for positions that call for using one's head in addition to just using one's hands. His opportunities consist in being paid for doing as he is told and for not rocking the boat.

As far as growth and qualification for more demanding jobs are concerned, many workers are facing admittedly long odds. The system simply doesn't work that way: They are expected not to grow but to remain constant, year in and year out. Management's plans for them are based on the assumption that they won't be a great deal more competent or responsible when they retire than when they are hired.

For the Harvard team this assumption was the nub of the whole issue. Once it is made, the frozen group becomes inevitable, and so do all of the problems that these groups create. If workers neither want nor need opportunities to grow, then it makes sense to break their jobs into simple repetitive units, to wheedle effort out of them with piece rates or to browbeat it out of them with demanding supervision, and to leave them completely out of the decision-making processes that affect their jobs. The assumption closes doors. It confirms the pessimism that was bred into the worker by elders who had even less chance than he to control the things they did to earn a living. If he has any spark of ambition left in him when he is hired, this assumption will smother it.

By now managers have been preached to so much about "giving the individual a chance to grow" that they must be rather tired of hearing it. What's more, the Harvard group—for one—is tired of preaching. Yet it seems that the idea hasn't really penetrated and that what management conceives as sound human relations is often a far cry from what experts such as these would prescribe. It is not so much a matter of mechanical approaches to human relations; these still abound, but the individual often remains stymied even where management is too sophisticated to try to deal with him through gimmicks.

Part of the problem—possibly even the heart of it—is that managers also have motives and that these affect their operations as much as the workers' motives affect theirs. One of the key distinctions between a manager's job and other jobs is that the manager has *power*—he can make decisions, select goals and the means to attain them, and change things. Power may have attracted him to management in the first place; or having arrived there, he may have found it a particularly rewarding aspect of his job. He may, in fact, become so infatuated with power that he forgets there are still things he cannot bend to his will and, particularly where other people are concerned, he cannot cause things to happen simply by decreeing that they shall.

Management is not, in other words, simply a process of making the right decision and seeing to it that the decision sticks. When the decision affects other people, it may not be right—and it may not stick very well, either—if they did not contribute to it. Their contribution need only consist in a feeling that management understands them and is trying to be helpful. If that feeling is absent—worse still, if management *thinks* it understands its men but doesn't—the decision is likely to have no real effect or even a negative one.

Understanding men means much more than knowing their names and birthdays. It means knowing their aspirations and their frustrations. It means sharing with them some of the power over their working lives that managers habitually exercise. It means identifying those individuals who could profit from a less rule-bound way of working and giving it to them. The frozen group will cease to limit the productivity of its members only when it becomes unnecessary, because the environment has opened up with possibilities and opportunities.

Chapter 5

The Impact of Money: William F. Whyte

IN THE MINDS OF MANY MANAGERS, MOTIVATION IS STILL SYNonymous with money. Dollars are the standard prescription for stimulating production, quieting discontent, and cementing bonds of loyalty. It almost seems to violate common sense to suggest that the prescription is really a sort of home remedy and that it isn't nearly as potent as we have commonly assumed it to be.

Yet that is not a bad summation of the facts that emerge from an extensive series of studies of incentive pay schemes.[16] Under the direction of William F. Whyte of Cornell University, social scientists have donned overalls and spent months as production workers, with (so to speak) one eye on the drill press and the other on their fellow workers. Their first-hand accounts of what actually happens when incentives are introduced form the basis for the most comprehensive analysis yet of how the dollar affects the workers' attitudes.

There is no doubt that money has an important effect on the thinking and behavior of production workers; but this effect is neither as simple nor as strong as management has often assumed. As a matter of fact, monetary incentives become quickly entangled with a lot of other motives that have little or nothing to do with money, so that the ultimate effect of money itself is no easier to identify than is an egg in an omelette. Money is only one of many considerations that a worker has on his mind, and because of this he cannot think of it purely in terms of economic advantage or disadvantage. He is not simply an economic man but a social–economic man—in fact, he could probably be hyphenated still further to indicate how complex he really is. All of which means that common sense is not necessarily a reliable guide for anticipating how people in a factory will react to the chance to make more money.

By now it will come as no surprise that one of the key "other"

considerations for the production worker is his group. He is not likely to be much of an individualist, nor is he apt to be interested in accumulating a great deal of tangible wealth. If he were of an entrepreneurial turn of mind, he would probably have found a way out of the group—into management, union leadership, or a business of his own—or failing that, he would probably have been pressured by the group into accepting its values and abandoning his own. Either way the group will tend to become characterized by a common concern for security, for buttressing the *status quo,* and for keeping the individual in line.

This attitude is so antithetical to the spirit of running risks in hopes of profit that many executives find it hard to believe that it really exists. It seems irrational and self-defeating. Very often this has given rise to the notion that the workers are merely misled or that they don't know their own minds and that a good dose of money (in the form of incentive payments) is all that is needed to straighten them out. Myths die hard. It is quite clear that money's reputation as the ultimate motivator is going to be a long time a-dying. The evidence against it is already strong, but it will probably have to become stronger and be preached, sold, and debated for years before the myth finally gives way.

One reason why the money myth has proved to be so hardy is the fact that it is partly true. Many people *are* motivated primarily by the desire to make money, which for them takes precedence over all other considerations, including such niceties as the opinions of one's peers. Such people are not at all uncommon among entrepreneurs and many types of salesmen, for example. What's more, the tradition in which the entrepreneur operates—the periodicals he reads, the opinions he respects, the counsels he listens to—has always given a central place to the virtues of acquisitiveness. It is not at all surprising that the people who decide how other people shall be rewarded feel that money is the most important motivator of all.

Nor are they alone. In every occupational group there are persons whose response to a financial incentive is direct, positive, and predictable. The proportion of such people varies from group to group. While attempts to measure it are very difficult, it is clear that among production workers the proportion of primarily money-motivated persons is quite low. Using the ratio of high-producing "rate busters" to low-producing "restricters" as an index, Whyte estimates that perhaps 10 per cent of U.S. production workers will ignore group pres-

sures and produce as much as they can in response to an incentive payment system. In other words, the motivational system that is most widely applied in industry actually produces its desired effect about 10 per cent of the time, and in the remaining 90 per cent it is likely to produce no effect at all or even to lead to resistance. For production workers, at any rate, the incentive payment system as it is usually administered would seem to be a remarkably inefficient technique.

Whether a worker does or does not respond to an incentive plan would seem to depend less on the plan itself than on his own background. Whyte cites some data, admittedly tentative, which indicate that the rate buster and the restricter are basically different types of people. In the plants where this relationship was studied, the rate buster was likely to have come from a home environment where economic individualism was highly prized (such as a farm family or a lower-middle-class urban family). The restricter was more likely to have been raised in an urban working-class home where the proletarian tradition was the dominant note. The rate buster, shunned by the others in the plant but not really caring, tends to be a lone wolf outside the plant also. He is not a joiner and has a narrow circle of friends. The restricter belongs not only to the "shop society" but also to other groups, both formal and informal, outside the plant.

The rate buster may have a strong drive to rise above his origins and establish himself as a propertied, independent person who is beholden to no one. The restricter is content with his status in life, is more interested in being liked than in breaking his dependence on others, and in fact may find that dependence rather comforting. The rate buster saves or invests his money and is unlikely to have outside interests—not costly ones, at any rate. The restricter is more likely to be a spender and to have hobbies that cost money without bringing an economic return.

It would seem, then, that an individual's reaction to an incentive system reflects his basic outlook on life, which in turn is the product of influences which had their impact long before he walked in the factory door and encountered the incentive system. Therefore, the effectiveness of an incentive plan is limited as much by the type of people it is intended for as by the dollars-and-cents aspects of the plan itself. Ironically, the type of person who seems most responsive to such a plan probably seeks employment in non-production jobs whenever he can; those who remain in production jobs evidently are not numerous enough to have much effect on production figures.

When productivity increases do in fact occur after an incentive system is introduced, it does not necessarily mean that money has made the difference. The blue-collared sociologists who studied the impact of these systems on individual workers reported at least three other influences, any or all of which could have had as much of an incentive effect as money. First of all, having a quota to aim for makes one's productivity into a sort of a game: The number of units produced is very much like a "score," and one can win or lose in very much the same manner as winning or losing at poker, bowling, or billiards. Pitting oneself against a standard is, in other words, a fairly universal form of fun, provided, of course, that the standard is neither so easy as to be attainable by everyone nor so hard as to be almost impossible for anyone to attain. Listening to workers brag informally to each other of their production records, and especially of their success in "beating the system," Whyte's observers were struck with the game-like quality of their comments and the absence of an emphasis on money.

Second, meeting the quota was an effective way of escaping from the unwelcome attentions of the supervisor. It got the foreman off the workers' backs. Life in the plant was more pleasant if one of its major nuisances could be avoided. For men who expected to spend most of their working lives in the shop, making their jobs as comfortable as possible was every bit as important as making a short-term financial gain. However, when making the quota is seen as the price of being left alone by the foreman, it may also become a ceiling on productivity. The workers will probably not want to pay more than the "going rate" to be relieved of the bothersome supervisor, especially if relief is a stronger goal than money. To Whyte's observers, this often seemed to be the case. As a matter of fact, many workers seemed to take a special delight in conspicuously flouting some minor rule right under the foreman's nose, provided they were making their quotas. In these cases production at quota level was in effect a sort of immunity from petty discipline.

Lastly, producing at a regular and fairly brisk pace actually seems to be less fatiguing than erratic or slow production. Once a worker hits a steady working rhythm, it is usually easier to maintain it than to switch into different rhythms or to allow his attention to be diverted at odd intervals to matters that are not related to his job. At the end of the day, a worker who has been producing at a steady pace is likely to feel fresher than one who has been producing erratically or "goofing off."

Boredom can be more tiring than exertion, and exertion is less tiring when it is rhythmic. Experienced workers come to recognize these facts intuitively, even if they cannot put them into words. Again, men who expect to spend most of their working lives in production work will put more value on being able to go home without undue weariness than they will on short-term financial gains. But since the man who turns out work at a steady rate is quite likely to make his quota consistently, it may appear that he is responding to the incentive system. Since quotas are usually set, knowingly or otherwise, well within the limits of what most workers could attain, the bonus payments will often be going to people who would have produced no less if there were no bonus at all.

These observations certainly do not mean that monetary incentives are ineffective or that they have no impact beyond a small group of people who happen to be susceptible to them. They do show, however, that the impact of money is very complex and easy to misunderstand and that in all probability a good deal of the money that is now being poured into incentive payment plans for production workers is spent inefficiently or even unnecessarily.

The complexity is due to the fact that while the worker *is* interested in advancing his own financial advantage, he has many other interests which prevent him from making a direct, "automatic" response to the incentive system. He also values the opinions of his fellow workers, his comfort on the job, and his long-range job security. Because he does not strive to maximize a purely financial advantage, the worker has often been described as illogical or at least non-economic. Yet Whyte's analysis shows not only that the worker's reaction to incentives is logical but that he actually has a more sophisticated concept of "advantage" than does the industrial engineer. The worker's time perspective is longer than the incentive planners believe it is: He thinks ahead to the effects of increasing his production and wonders about speedups, work shortages, and tensions with supervisors and friends. He wonders whether once he steps up his work pace it will be possible to slow it down again without incurring some kind of penalty.

The important point to be grasped here is that the worker thinks he is selling a great deal more than management thinks it is buying. The worker is selling his future, the remainder of his career, and he thinks in terms of keeping that future as safe, tolerable, and profitable as possible—in about that order. He therefore tries to avoid changing his own behavior in a way that sets precedents which could

undermine his long-term interests. On the other hand, management introduces an incentive system to buy some particular units of production at some particular point in time. The difficulty arises from the fact that workers simply do not sell their labor without reference to the future or to non-financial consequences. Here, in a nutshell, is why incentive payment plans for production workers have had such a lackluster record of success.

But when these plans have had disappointing results, it has usually been assumed that it was because of loopholes in the system rather than because of any fundamental defect in the plan itself. The way to make an incentive plan work, it has been felt, is to clamp down on evasions: tighten procedures, make new measurements, pronounce new rules. When results have continued to fall short of expectations, as they often have, still more controls are prescribed.

What ensues is not a positive motivational force for production but a battle of wits between two groups of people that are equally determined not to be outsmarted by the other. Somehow the workers always seem to be able to find ingenious ways of evading or even sabotaging the plan. Sometimes, in fact, these evasions take place with the tacit connivance of the foremen, who are no fonder of the restrictive controls on them than the workers are of theirs. Before long, each side is so challenged by the other that both their egos become involved, and the original purpose of the organization is lost sight of. It would almost seem, at times, that management is determined to assert its control over the workers for control's own sake and that the fact that this will not actually help production is overlooked. "The world of industry," notes Whyte, "is full of executives who will sacrifice almost anything in order to maintain their 'power' to give orders that will not be effectively carried out." The point that must be grasped is that incentive payment plans do *not* give the executive very much control of the worker's motivation and that attempts to *compel* the worker to respond to a basically ineffectual system are absurd. Neither the carrot of money nor the club of management controls is subtle enough to have a lasting motivational effect—about the only reaction they can be relied upon to produce invariably is resistance.

Whyte is much too sensible to propose any "solutions" or even to suggest that we may someday know enough completely to preclude problems of this kind. However, he does feel that the type of program proposed by the late Joseph Scanlon of the Massachusetts Institute

of Technology offers much promise and points in the general direction that we probably ought to follow. Scanlon's ideas have attracted a great deal of attention and have been implemented in a number of industrial plants. Somewhat uniquely among widely used motivational systems, this one has the blessings of many social scientists.

Although the "Scanlon Plan" is often referred to as if it had been written down somewhere in a single definitive statement, it has never been stated as a pat formula that could be applied anywhere. The whole intent of the plan is to develop a realistic way of merging what the workers consider to be their interests with what management considers to be its interests. The precise way in which this is attempted will vary considerably from plant to plant, depending on local conditions, but it will usually include two basic methods. First, rewards for increases in productivity are distributed to entire groups of workers rather than to individuals. Second, the workers participate with management in devising methods to raise production rates or quality standards.

The Scanlon Plan—we shall call it that even though it is more of a philosophy than a plan—is not just another profit-sharing program nor just another employee suggestion program. Since rewards for suggestions are distributed, rather than given to a single individual, they provide a means whereby the worker can gain without seeming to do so at the expense of his fellow workers. He thereby avoids the risk of ostracism, which so often inhibits men from advancing ideas for production improvements. Under the Scanlon Plan the worker who makes a successful suggestion is in fact a benefactor of everyone else in his group and is therefore likely to be held in high esteem by all of them. Further, a distributed reward recognizes that an idea is not the exclusive creation of one man and that even if it were its implementation requires the cooperation of many others.

As a matter of fact, the plan encourages joint efforts to increase productivity by bringing workers into the heart of the production-planning process. Worker groups elect committeemen who transmit their ideas to a central planning body, made up of management and worker (and sometimes union) representatives. When an idea is accepted, the group from which it originated benefits according to some agreed-upon formula. In effect, then, the worker is given a genuine chance to shape his own job. This is a far cry from interminably following routines that were worked out by somebody else.

But the actual mechanics of the plan are unimportant. What counts

most of all is the transformation of attitudes on the part of *both* management and worker groups. By sharing in the processes and rewards of management, at least insofar as it relates to ways of doing the workers' job, a mutual respect and understanding can be generated. The traditional "necessity" of controlling the workers on the one hand, and evading the controls on the other, can fall of its own weight. In other words, Scanlon systems try to create an atmosphere in which managers and workers have an opportunity to lose their illusions about each other.

If this happens—and there is nothing to guarantee that it will—productivity will tend to rise, conflicts will tend to diminish, and management will actually have much more control over the productive process than it had before. The workers will not exert themselves particularly, but neither will they loaf, gossip, or hold back work. The result is an even flow of work which is considerably more efficient than a typically erratic flow made up of conspicuous exertions and inconspicuous ease. Ingenuity will be applied to methods of raising productivity rather than to methods of foiling the foreman. There are no miraculous transformations, and many of the old suspicions and fears undoubtedly remain, but they cannot help but be muted by slowly changing perceptions of what the other side is really like. Ironically, management may attain better control of productivity by surrendering some of its control to the people engaged in production.

Whyte has no illusions that the Scanlon Plan can be introduced everywhere with equal success. Experience with the plan has not been remarkable: It works better under some circumstances than others, and there are many practical difficulties that counter its effectiveness. Like any remedy that tries to strike at the roots of a long-standing problem, the Scanlon Plan is most effective where the conflicts are not too severe and where both groups are predisposed toward some kind of realignment of their ideas. It works best, in other words, where both sides recognize that something is wrong and that both are probably contributing to what is wrong. That is an uncommon degree of insight in today's industrial world; consequently our progress toward more rational ways of motivating people to be more productive is likely to be slow and arduous.

Whyte states the matter bluntly:

> Success of an activity such as is involved in the Scanlon Plan requires a veritable revolution in management's conception of its functions.

> . . . The management preoccupied with protecting its prerogatives had best not consider the Scanlon Plan at all.

Nor is there much point in simply giving lip service to the concepts underlying the plan and seeking one or more gimmicks with which to create the illusion of participation:

> It is fashionable for management people to say that participation on the part of workers is important. But often they give themselves away by saying that the worker "must be made to feel that he is participating." This synthetic sense of participation they seek to provide by distributing financial statements to workers and in other ways telling them how the business is getting along. But real participation involves changes in the behavior and activity of people. It involves getting workers to initiate changes in the behavior of management people. If management is unwilling to make any significant changes, then it is futile to start on such a program.

Thus Whyte, who began by looking at monetary incentives and found that they could not be considered apart from all of the worker's other needs, finds at the close of his analysis that *power* is perhaps the most important—and misused—motivational tool of all. The power to regulate one's working methods, to set one's goals and standards, and even to have a role in determining one's rewards: This more than money would seem to be the key to sustained productivity increases.

Chapter 6

The Impact of the Organization: Chris Argyris

MANY THREADS OF EVIDENCE ARE NOW CONVERGING. THE RE-strictions imposed on individuals by industrial organizations for the sake of order and efficiency seem to create resistances which eventually hamstring the organization. Since big companies have a way of getting bigger and small companies are continually graduating into the big-company class, it is obvious that the tussle between individuals and organizations is going to have increasingly serious consequences. As more people are drawn into the conflict, more sophisticated control measures are pitted against a shrewder and more intractable workforce.

Thus work itself becomes, for most people, an ever less satisfying way to spend their time. As leisure time becomes available they pour enormous reserves of energy and interest into it, enough to make leisure itself the basis of giant new industries. But while people turn away from work as a source of personal satisfaction, management is also turning away from people as a source of productive effort: Witness the rapid spread of automation. One would almost have to conclude that under the conditions prevailing in many large organizations, a lot of people are neither happy nor economically secure.

If this condition spreads far enough, we may be faced with the paradox of a bountiful economy supporting an unhappy society. Men would have to work to be able to afford the fruits of production, but they would find little motivation in the work itself to be more productive. Thus a growing number of workers may become "motivationally marginal." If this group should become sizable, industry would face the dilemma of whether to go on employing them largely to maintain their purchasing power or to displace them and endure both heavier tax burdens and a less responsive market. Such a situation would be inherently unstable and would probably lead to some

kind of collapse, followed by controls which might or might not be effective.

Whether this gloomy future is actually in the cards would seem to depend on whether this basic assumption is correct: that organizations by their very nature must grind the individual down to manageable, and therefore spiritless, proportions. One social scientist who has had the courage to look this possibility squarely in the face is Chris Argyris of Yale University. He does not emerge from his analysis in a particularly optimistic frame of mind, but neither is he altogether pessimistic. The organization, he finds, by its very nature is going to do some damage to the individual, but the damage isn't *necessarily* fatal or uncontrollable. The main danger at the moment is that too few managers recognize the social effects of their policies or the directions that these effects are tending to follow.

At present, Argyris finds an all too frequent tendency for organizational policies to collide head-on with the natural growth processes in the individual. Since this collision is a very one-sided affair, the result is wholesale frustration. Most organizations, especially at the lower levels, are geared for men who make a very childlike adjustment to life: They leave very little leeway for choosing, for using discretion, or for adapting rules to fit circumstances. Most employees are expected just to do as they are told and leave the thinking to the foreman, whose capacity for doing so is a perennially moot point among the people he supervises. In any case millions of grown men are required to spend forty hours a week suppressing their brainpower in order to maintain a system that is not nearly as efficient as it looks. That is a lot of man-hours. It leads to a lot of problems, too.

Are industrial organizations really geared to accommodate the immature worker? Do they really frustrate and discourage the mature person? If the charge is true, it would appear that industry is inadvertently slipping a noose around its own neck, because it is precisely to the well-developed worker that management must look for the creativity and sophistication on which economic growth is based. Yet Argyris is convinced that the charge is true and backs it up with a detailed analysis which draws heavily on what psychologists have learned about the normal process of growing up. The nub of his theory is that industrial organizations, as they have been traditionally run, are just about 180 degrees out of phase with the normal needs of a mature adult at a number of key points.[17,18]

Argyris's point of departure is the individual himself, who usually

arrives at the employment office physically mature but whose *emotional* maturity—that is, his realism, self-control, and independence—can vary all the way from being highly developed to downright childish. Pinning down the features that distinguish the mature adult from the childish one, Argyris notes seven changes that normally occur as an individual grows up.

First, he moves from a state of passivity as a child to one of increased activity as an adult. The child characteristically is in the hands of his environment; his life is a series of events which happen *to* him without his having chosen them. A mature adult, on the other hand, has learned how to control his environment to some extent and knows how to make some events turn out to his liking.

Second, he gradually outgrows his total dependence on others and develops a capacity to shift for himself. This process occurs unevenly, making some people very independent indeed and leaving others still nestled quite close to protective people or institutions. Still, Argyris considers it to be one hallmark of a fully matured adult, and most psychologists would agree with him. He is aware, of course, that some dependencies are healthy: After all, none of us is truly self-sufficient in this world. But to acknowledge this does not mean that we must cringe before the opinions of others or sit by helplessly while unsatisfactory events take their course.

Third, the child has a very limited repertoire of ways of behaving, but as he grows older he becomes much more versatile and can respond to a given situation in a wide variety of ways. The adult is both less predictable and more adaptable than the child. Not only is he able to handle a given task in many ways, but also he is very likely to become bored if he doesn't.

Fourth, a child does not maintain a given interest for very long and can hardly be said to pursue his interests deeply or deliberately. As he grows older, however, he begins to single out certain subjects to which he devotes more attention than to others. Gradually he acquires a fairly well-defined set of interests, some of which can absorb him for hours on end and offer him a great deal of satisfaction. The change, in other words, is from a rather shallow interest by the child in what he is doing to a capacity in the adult to find endless challenges in what he is doing, provided, of course, that it is interesting to him in the first place.

Fifth, the child's time perspective is very short. For him, life is a series of fleeting instants which may or may not seem interconnected.

The past is quickly forgotten, and the future hardly exists at all as far as he is concerned; he is almost exclusively concerned with the present. As he matures, however, he becomes aware of both past and future, and as an adult he often ignores the present for the sake of either or both. His behavior is influenced by the things he remembers, even by things he has never experienced but has read or been told about. Similarly, he is very much concerned with what may or may not happen in the future and tries to influence future events so that they turn out to his liking.

Sixth, the individual normally develops from being everybody else's subordinate, as a child, to being an equal or even a superior of others as an adult. A mature person can function either as a superior or as a subordinate, as the occasion requires; but he does not think of himself as being *inherently* cut out to be a follower. While he makes allowances for differences in training and experience, he probably considers himself to be at least as capable as the next man of exercising judgment and making decisions. He is not servile and does not "know his place" in the caste sense of the term.

Seventh, while the child does not have a habitual set of attitudes about himself and indeed does not have much of a "self" to have attitudes about, the adult thinks about himself a good deal and usually has some fairly definite ideas about the kind of person he is. He has an ego and may go to some lengths to protect it. As a matter of fact, he becomes quite miffed when he senses that he is being treated as an automaton rather than as an individual with needs and ideas of his own. His ego may make him rather inconvenient to manage, since it demands individual attention and care; yet this is a healthy demand without which the individual cannot flourish. In some people the demand for attention can be snuffed out by prolonged neglect, but when this happens, a great deal dies with it: The desire to improve, excel, and create disappears too. The adult ego with its persistent concern about itself may be an obstacle to mechanistic management, but it is also the indispensable basis for productivity gains.

If the person who presents himself at the employment office has progressed fairly well along these seven major lines of maturation, he probably has a great deal to offer a company. Yet he would be inconvenient to manage and in some cases might not even be hired for precisely that reason. If he were hired, he might find himself working in an organization whose traditions allowed him very little room for being himself, which more or less compelled him to conduct himself

in a manner which he had outgrown years before. He would find out soon enough that in most companies he was expected to be passive, dependent, subordinate, submissive, shallow, and insensitive—that his role was to do as he was told, repeat routines interminably, and leave the thinking to somebody else.

Just how badly this situation would affect a given individual depends on how mature he is and on how restrictive his job is. To put the question into perspective, it is worth noting that very mature adults—mature in the specific senses we have been describing—are not very common. It is probably fair to say that a great many grown men in this world are pretty passive and dependent, that they have already matured about as much as they are going to, and that the typical restrictions of organizational life will cause them little if any hardship. For a sizable group of working people—possibly a majority of them, for that matter—a regimented, restricting, and repetitious way of life is made to order. Yet there are others, whose significance far exceeds their numbers. Their fate in a typical organization is usually either a slow grinding down into bitterness or a limited blossoming of abilities which occurs in spite of the system rather than because of it.

The natural outlet for such people would seem to be in managerial, professional, or specialized technical jobs that offer them scope and freedom in which to exercise their talents. Yet many of them don't get into such positions, because of educational limitations, bias, or just plain lack of opportunity. (For that matter, many a mature person doesn't *want* to be a manager or a professional. He therefore will be particularly frustrated in a typical organization because the work he likes best is the most regimented and oversupervised.) Further, managerial jobs are by no means free of restrictions, especially at the level of the first-line supervisor and at the middle-management and staff levels. In many companies the professional is effectively boxed in by reporting systems which minimize or even nullify his effect on the traditional organization. It would seem, then, that organizations have acquired a remarkably effective way of insulating themselves against the kind of people who could make them more viable by inducing them to change.

Argyris finds three main mechanisms through which the organization frustrates the mature employee and encourages the immature one to stay that way. These are the formal organization structure, directive leadership, and managerial controls such as budgets, incentive systems, and time and motion studies.

Organization structure typically concentrates power in a relatively few hands and leaves the man near the lower end of the chain of command pretty much at the whim of his superiors or of the system itself. Yet Argyris does not argue that the structure should be changed simply because it has undesirable effects on people. Rather, he is convinced that concentrated power is unhealthy for the organization itself since it leads to apathy and inflexibility. Delegation and decentralization simply don't go far enough when they stop short of giving the individual worker the authority and incentive to manage his responsibilities as well as he can. Some centralization is obviously necessary to avoid chaos, but the typical organization errs so far on the side of caution that stagnation is a much more present danger.

Delegated authority has a way of coming home to roost. According to Argyris, the first-line supervisor is likely to realize that the best way to get out production is to stay in the background, leave his men pretty much alone, and see to it that they are well taken care of. But if he attempts to operate in this way, management is likely to feel that he is too lax and will put pressures on him which he is supposed to transmit to his men. Caught in the middle, the foreman becomes passive toward management as well as toward the men, and management then moves into the vacuum by going directly to the shop floor, inspecting, and checking. This undercuts the foreman, who pulls still further out of the picture, and "delegation" of authority deteriorates into more of a formality than anything else.

By "directive leadership" Argyris refers to the traditional style of supervision in which the superior makes nearly all of whatever decisions the work requires and his subordinates simply carry out those decisions. The system has the virtue of keeping a given operation going under a single plan and avoids the delays and confusion that might occur if authority were divided. Under a system of directive leadership, however, any decision-making ability on the part of subordinates is not only unnecessary but downright undesirable. At the very least, a subordinate with a mind of his own will question his supervisor's judgment; at worst he may openly suggest better ways of doing things and thereby undermine his supervisor's prestige.

As a leadership system, directive methods are perhaps well adapted for managing groups that lack the experience or ability to make their own decisions. Unfortunately, such a style is usually adopted because of the supervisor's needs and without much consideration of whether the employees need it or not. Whatever capacities they may have for doing their own thinking are pretty much ignored. According to

Argyris, a great deal of potential initiative and creativity is simply allowed to wither on the vine, gradually growing flabby and impotent, because directive leadership gives it no real chance to grow. In effect, men are taught to trust their supervisor's judgment rather than their own.

Not everyone reacts to directive leadership in the same way, but as Argyris charts the various ways in which people can adjust to it there does not seem to be much room for escape. The controlling style of supervision is a sort of giant trap as far as motivation is concerned. Some men will fight it for a while, only to find themselves considered troublemakers and malcontents; others submit to it without much of a struggle and become apathetic toward their work. Some become cynics and shrug off the system as the *sine qua non* for their wages. A few manage to get promoted, which gets them out from under a particular supervisor but not necessarily away from directive leadership itself.

Managerial controls consist of various restrictions on local initiative which require (or at least seem to require) that certain decisions be made regardless of whether they seem appropriate to the man on the scene. Some examples are budgets, manpower restrictions, and standard operating procedures. It may be argued that these ought never to compel a particular decision but are simply guides designed to promote consistency and prevent excesses. Argyris would probably dismiss such an argument, however: No matter how controls are intended to function, they operate in fact as inhibitors which make the manager very leery of deviating from what the "book" spells out. After all, his own performance is likely to be measured by how closely he has adhered to the letter of the controls, and if he tries to interpret their spirit, he runs the risk that his supervisors' interpretation will not agree with his. Managerial controls therefore prevent a lot more than just excesses; they can put a damper on ingenuity and even on common-sense adjustments to reality. They can also undermine the stature of the local manager in the employee's eyes, since it will often be painfully apparent that the real authority lies elsewhere.

These three mechanisms—organization structure, directive leadership, and management controls—are part of the bone and sinew of most modern management. Yet their effect is too often to require people who differ widely in their needs and aspirations to behave in the same way. Behavior in a modern industrial system is often dic-

tated by one's position on the totem pole rather than by what one is capable of doing, or even by what one ought to do in the interests of the organization. But this uniformity does not represent efficiency at all to Argyris; he sees in it instead a colossal waste of time, talent, and the money that pays for both. The hidden costs of imposed uniformity are tremendous: absenteeism, turnover, apathy, goldbricking and rate-setting all impose heavy penalties of their own on profits. In planning for organizational efficiency management seems to have been inadvertently making the fundamental building block of any organization—the individual—about as inefficient as possible.

Yet are not controls and a well-defined organization structure necessary if a company is to survive and prosper? Therefore, are not the frustrations of which Argyris speaks an inevitable part of the price we must pay for living in a technologically advanced society? If so, is it not more realistic to try to distract the worker from his frustrations by encouraging recreational and other non-job interests than to lament his unavoidably tough luck at work? Argyris undertook his inquiry with an unsentimental attitude toward these questions, and as his research progressed his ideas have been evolving from pessimism to a carefully hedged optimism. To be more precise, he has been largely concerned with describing the present problem and tracing its roots; only recently has he begun to explore ways of coping with it.

Convinced that the concentration of decision-making power in a few hands is detrimental to the health (that is, the mental or emotional health) of most of the individuals in an industrial organization, Argyris has recently been addressing himself to the question of whether such a system has an effect on the health of the organization itself.[19] This, of course, raises the question of whether "organizational health" can be defined at all and, if so, whether it has any relation to individual "mental health," especially when psychologists are still struggling to find a definition of the latter on which they can all agree.

Argyris believes he may have found the answer, or at least a way to take some tentative steps toward an answer. To begin with, he takes the position that a "healthy" organization is one which is able to achieve its own basic purposes, which consist, in general, in defining its goals and the obstacles that have to be overcome to get there and then planning and executing an optimum strategy for reaching those goals. In other words, a healthy organization is realistic about both itself and its situation, flexible, and able to summon its best

resources to meet whatever challenges it may encounter. This definition of a healthy organization is strikingly similar to some definitions of mentally healthy individuals that have been advanced of late by various psychologists. Basically, they say, a mentally healthy person is someone who has no illusions about himself and who does not permit fear, prejudice, or force of habit to distort his picture of the world he lives in; who selects goals for himself that are both desirable and possible, though not necessarily easy, to attain; and who can vary his tactics for achieving those goals as the occasion requires without necessarily changing them.

Therefore, what is best for an individual is also best for an organization, and vice versa. However, far too many current definitions —both tacit and explicit—of what is best for an organization are shortsighted and obsolete. Organizations have to do a great deal more than just make profits, expand markets, and grow in size and importance. *They must also survive.* History teaches us that institutions which have outgrown their usefulness do not survive for very long. The truly abiding institutions that still exist among us—our religions, our family organization, and our cultural heritage—have survived either because they satisfy some fundamental human need or because they have successfully adapted themselves to changing times, or both.

Now, the Industrial Revolution itself is only a few hundred years old, the modern corporation is only a few dozen years old, and many of them are younger than that. There is no historical evidence, in other words, to indicate that today's industrial organizations are going to be permanent fixtures or indeed anything more than a passing phase. Whether they survive in the long run will probably depend less on the international struggle with another (Communist) form of industrial organization than on how well they can adapt themselves to meet the needs of the people who own, manage, buy from, sell to, or work for them—especially the latter.

For that matter, the survival of Communist industrial organizations will probably depend, in the long run, on whether they can pass exactly the same test: satisfying the needs of the people who participate in them. As the Soviet economy grows, and particularly as an educated managerial "class" grows in numbers and importance, the purely material motives of the Soviet citizen will gradually be satisfied. In all probability this will lead (if it hasn't already) to the emergence of needs for self-expression and greater personal freedom simi-

lar to those that emerged in American workers when their material needs began to be met. Whether the Soviet mechanism can adapt to the changing needs of its people or will frustrate them by persisting in pre-industrialized tactics remains to be seen. In any case, while the lessons of history ought to be as apparent to the Soviets as to us, we at least have the advantage of not being saddled with a dogma that persists in interpreting the present in terms of century-old economics.

Or do we? The dogmas may be different, but does not our uncritical acceptance of concentrated authority, directive leadership, and management controls constitute the very sort of blinder that could gradually make *our* industrial organizations obsolete as far as our people are concerned? Ought not a beginning be made to bring these organizations more closely into line with the needs of the people in them? Argyris foresees the necessity for doing this and has even sketched out a rough plan of action.

First, he notes that no single system of distributing power within an organization is best adapted to *all* of the various situations in which the organization is likely to find itself. For example, the management strategy that is best calculated to result in high productivity and friendly worker/management relations is very different from one which is geared to cut costs and boost profit.[20]

The ideal organization, therefore, is not only one which is flexible enough to shift power downward or upward, as the occasion requires, but one in which the entire organization assesses its problems and selects the power distribution that seems most appropriate to the times. Argyris is proposing, in other words, to serve both the needs of the organization (by versatility in operating styles) and the needs of the individual (by giving him a voice in selecting whichever style is to be used). The role of the manager himself could vary all the way from that of a traditional autocrat to that of an agent or "senator" of the workers themselves, depending on how tightly or loosely the organization was being run.

These are radical proposals. There is not likely to be any great rush to test them. They are less important as a prescription, perhaps, than as a prediction of the directions in which industry may find itself evolving in response to the pressures it is generating within itself. Argyris proposes a program of phasing gradually from the existing system of management into the more flexible and participative form. The program he has in mind would admittedly demand a great deal of maturity on the part of everyone concerned, and one won-

ders whether organizational maturity can ever really precede individual maturity. On the other hand, the vicious circle of organizational controls encouraging individual dependency, which in turn necessitates more controls, must be broken somewhere. Argyris has been astute enough to present a diagnosis, and now he has been bold enough to propose a solution. This puts us in his debt whether his solution works or not.

Chapter 7

The Impact of Management Philosophy: Douglas McGregor

IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY APPARENT THAT MANY MANAgerial actions which are not intended to affect motivation at all but rather to simplify management or to improve controls have a definite motivational impact, and it is usually a negative impact at that. Similarly, many time-honored policies which are deliberately intended to make workers want to do what management wants them to do are likely to do nothing of the kind. In effect, a good deal of modern management practice actually has a *demotivating* effect in the sense of causing employees to behave in ways that thwart the organization.

The picture is not all black by any means. A good deal of orthodox management procedure has a positive impact on the individual's desire to handle his job properly. Sound salary and benefit programs, sensitive and appropriate supervisory methods, two-way communication systems, and procedures for recognition and promotion are all examples of traditional ways of motivating employees which can be quite effective. But as the Pittsburgh and Harvard researchers have shown, these traditional motivators are necessary but not sufficient in themselves to produce positive motivation. They remove irritants, make jobs tolerable, and provide an occasional temporary glow; or to put it another way they protect the individual from the dangers of demoralization. But they are not ordinarily able to spark the kind of all-out concentrated effort of which most people are capable. Traditional motivators, when properly used, make employees placid but not fully productive, compliant but not creative.

The pity of it is that this tepid state of affairs is often aimed for quite deliberately and accepted gratefully when it is achieved. It seems to be part of the unwritten folklore of many organizations that a pacified workforce is the ultimate goal to be sought as far as motivation is concerned; even that it is an optimum basis for man-

aging a business. It is almost as if the whole purpose of motivation was to prevent subordinates from obstructing the intentions of their superiors.

When management aims merely to minimize the employee's ability to interfere with its aims, either through old-fashioned pressure tactics or by means of the more sophisticated gambit of keeping him contented, it is in effect acknowledging him as a sort of necessary evil whose potential contribution to the organization is at best rather small. The underlying assumption would seem to be that the organization can accomplish things only because management guides and energizes it, and that employees serve merely as instruments for handling details and dirty work. Such a management would seem to regard its function in the organization as being very much like that of a master puppeteer.

Now, this line of reasoning may sound like setting up a straw man (or a straw management, in this case) in order to knock it down. No experienced manager would make such egocentric assumptions about his own role and importance; besides, the successful manager is guided by results and hard facts and cannot afford to luxuriate in assumptions of any kind. A manager must, after all, be a doer rather than a theorist. If you must pin a philosophical label on him at all, then he is certainly an empiricist and a pragmatist—he is guided by experience rather than by preconceptions, and it is enough for him to know that a method "works" without necessarily needing to know why it works. Does it make any sense, therefore, to deduce so-called "assumptions" from a manager's style of operation or to concoct a "theory" that he is supposedly guided by?

It makes a great deal of sense for two reasons: Managers are seldom quite so objective as they are presumed to be, and managerial assumptions can often be shown to have a definite role in the fate of an enterprise. A management "philosophy" in the sense we are using here is not a carefully reasoned set of propositions, nor is it a high-sounding credo. It is rather all those ideas taken for granted, all those unquestioned attitudes and guesses which form the normal operating background for a given organization.

That some philosophies are more realistic than others—in fact, that management philosophies have a pronounced effect on employee motivation at all levels—is a point of view being ably championed by Douglas McGregor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.[21] Because his theories integrate many of the previously de-

scribed ideas into a coherent system, in addition to being both provocative and significant in their own right, they are a fitting culmination to our review of what is currently known about the motivating environment.

In the folklore of management one of the most respected and least supportable ideas is that managers can effectively *control* the behavior of their subordinates; that is, that other people's behavior can be engineered by the application of certain tactics. A good manager should therefore be able to construct situations to which people will react in ways that suit his purposes. This is the manipulative or puppeteering approach to management; and as McGregor points out, it is derived from some very erroneous ideas about what makes people behave as they do. People are motivated by needs of their own to a much greater extent than they are motivated by the pressures that management can bring to bear. Therefore, the manager is in a position very much like navigating a small boat amidst powerful currents: The trick is to adapt himself to those currents rather than to buck them.

McGregor is convinced that a lot of management policies are bucking against human nature. The countless instances of well-thought-out policies which don't work out in practice because people don't understand them or don't implement them properly are cases in point. But all too often management puts the blame on its people for their failure to implement policies which may very well have put them at cross purposes with management. This simply sets up a useless cycle of pressure and resistance. The real fault lies with unexamined assumptions that are implicit in the policies. Simply because a policy may be objectively fair or logical is no guarantee that other people will see it the same way.

The mistake, then, is assuming that management's values and logic are shared by the people who implement policies. They very often aren't. The values and logic of management constitute a sort of unwritten (often unconscious) theory about the nature of the human animal and the strategies that are required to manage it. McGregor argues that these "theories," regardless of whether they are spelled out in so many words, have a profound effect on the relationships that management has with employees and even on the future of management itself.

There is a traditional theory of what workers are like and what

organizations must do to manage them, a rather uncomplimentary but allegedly hardheaded theory that Mayo and many others have described. McGregor refers to it simply as "Theory *X*," partly to avoid begging the question of whether it is a good or a bad theory (remember the "rabble hypothesis"?) and partly so that he can contrast it with another theory which he calls "Theory *Y*." We shall use his terminology in presenting his ideas, but let it be understood that Theory *X* is essentially what we have been referring to as a puppeteering or authoritarian point of view, while Theory *Y* recognizes the interdependence of managers and employees and generally reflects the current scientific understanding of what people at work are really like.

There are three cornerstones of Theory *X*: One is that most people just don't like to work, the second is that some kind of club has to be held over their heads to make sure that they do work, and the third is that the ordinary mortal would rather be told what to do than have to think for himself. The world, in other words, is supposed to be full of peons, and managing them is largely a matter of vigilance, catering to their security needs with various fringe benefits, and keeping the implied threat of unemployment handy in case it is needed. McGregor stresses that this set of assumptions, obsolete as it is, continues to have a very broad influence in American industry. Much of the literature on principles of organization, with its emphasis on centralized authority and controls, seems to take these assumptions for granted. More importantly, so do many experienced managers.

There are, of course, plenty of goldbricks, production restricters, and frozen groups around. The adherent of Theory *X* need only point to them to get some fairly dramatic support for his ideas. Yet most research indicates that these groups exist *as a consequence* of management based on Theory *X* rather than because the theory's estimate of the average human is correct. It is the old chicken-and-egg problem; but regardless of which came first, it is quite clear which will have to go first if the situation is to be improved. McGregor states:[22]

> In its *basic* conceptions of managing human resources . . . management appears to have concluded that the average human being is permanently arrested in his development in early adolescence. Theory *X* is built on the least common human denominator: the factory "hand" of the past.

But there has already been a breakthrough, although it is not yet widely regarded as such. A lot of money has been spent in studying the motivation of the technical research worker, partly because many companies are heavily dependent on what he produces and partly because management, in its first large-scale contacts with this hitherto "academic" type, was inclined to regard him as a creature from another planet. It is now well understood that the best way to manage technical and scientific people is to give them plenty of freedom and plenty of control over their own activities, that the typical petty restrictions of business life grate on their nerves, and that they are responsible enough not to abuse being exempt from those restrictions. Management has, in other words, conceded that Theory *X* doesn't apply to at least one kind of worker.

But scientific and technical employees are still regarded as being basically different from all the other people in an organization. Books are being written about them which stress their uniqueness, special media are published to "communicate" with them, and they are generally regarded as a race of precious eccentrics. That the difference between these employees and most others could be one of degree rather than of kind, indeed that the "difference" is largely a reflection of the fact that we understand them a lot better than we do the others in an organization, is not widely recognized. Granted that a scientist is usually much brighter than the average employee, nevertheless the full capabilities of this average man can probably never be utilized while Theory *X* holds sway.

The answer is not to swing to the other extreme. Simply to leave everyone to his own devices does not necessarily boost morale, and even if it did, high morale does not necessarily mean greater productivity. But the manager who is looking for reasonable improvements rather than miraculous transformations would be well advised to look at what McGregor calls Theory *Y*. Although it is hardly revolutionary, it does provide a broader and more realistic basis for management than the antiquated assumptions of Theory *X*.

Theory *Y* holds, first of all, that people do not like or dislike work inherently but rather develop an attitude toward it based on their experiences with it. Second, while authoritarian methods can get things done, they are not the only method for doing so; there is nothing inevitable about them, and their undesirable side-effects do not have to be tolerated. Third, people select goals for themselves if they see the possibility of some kind of reward, be it material or purely

psychic, and once they have selected a goal they will pursue it at least as vigorously as they would if their superiors were trying to pressure them into doing the same thing. Fourth, under the right circumstances people do not shun responsibility but seek it.

Actually, this is probably an understatement of the facts. But it shows management's quandary in a new light. Theory *Y* is basically saying that Theory *X* is unnecessary, that we can get along at least as well without it as we do with it, and probably a lot better. It is a plea for flexibility, but since management has historically hewed fairly close to a single philosophy, a change to flexibility inevitably requires a lot of stress on non-traditional ways of doing things. The baby is not necessarily to be thrown out with the bath water, however. For Theory *Y* aims at a true integration of the individual's goals with those of the organization rather than at the subjugation of one by the other.

According to McGregor, the essential "contract" between an employer and an employee in the traditional organization is an acceptance of external control in exchange for money and other rewards. Since this arrangement goes against the grain of many individuals, it sets the stage for conflicts and wastes the potentialities of both the individual and the organization. The controls are presumably necessary to keep people in line and to prevent chaotic inefficiency, but McGregor asserts that this presumption is just plain wrong and that when people are positively motivated, they can actually be a lot more cooperative and efficient *without* controls than they ever could be with them.

Not only is the worker capable of keeping himself in line without having a foreman peering over his shoulder, but he can even produce more because he won't have to drain off so much energy and ingenuity in finding ways to thwart the foreman. The individual's own internal discipline costs less and accomplishes much more than the imposed discipline of the organization. But whether this internal discipline comes into play at all depends entirely on whether the individual sees enough advantage in it to want to use it. McGregor is saying, then, that most adults are quite grown up and will behave like that on the job if they are given a chance to and if they can see some positive reasons for doing so.

What is being preached here is not really an unregulated workforce but a *self-regulating* one; not anarchy but voluntary cooperation based on self-interest. If you grant the premise that most people

can do a better job without external discipline than they can with it, the sermon makes sense; if you don't accept the premise, then the sermon may seem nonsensical.

Just how is the great transformation to be brought about; how are the organization's goals to be integrated with the individual's? Can you integrate the incompatible? McGregor would not suggest that you can, but his basic point is that the needs of individuals and companies are *not* incompatible at all, notwithstanding tradition, "common sense," "the facts of life," and all the other aliases behind which Theory *X* habitually masquerades.

"Theory *Y* is an invitation to innovation." There is not a great deal of precedent for implementing it. First of all, it is necessary to recognize what it is not: It is not an invitation to disorder, neither is it softness or abdication of management's responsibility. Theory *Y* does not deny the need for authority but recognizes it as merely one of several methods of managerial control, one that is appropriate some of the time but not all of the time. It may be called for when the external pressures on management are urgent or when the worker is not likely to exert the necessary self-discipline. On the other hand, the theory holds that authority is an inappropriate management tool when employees feel committed to attaining the organization's objectives

To achieve such a commitment it might be supposed that an employee would have to be given "a piece of the business." Actually, if the experience of partnerships or of employee stock purchase plans is any guide, sharing of ownership is no guarantee of cooperation. When the possibility of financial gain is coupled with the possibility of personal growth, however, a powerful motivating potential is set up. The real task of management under Theory *Y* is to make the job the principal stage on which the enlargment of competence, self control, and a sense of accomplishment can occur

If you pay a man for broadening his horizons and strengthening his mastery of his world, he is likely to identify his goals with yours, not because you have bribed him but because what you have really done is to tailor a part of your business to suit him. You are allowing your organization to be propelled by his motivation rather than using your organization to suppress that motivation.

But who is in command of such an organization? Can the competitive world of work ever become such a utopia anyway? McGregor

would hold that management would actually be in more effective command of the enterprise (in the sense of being likelier to make more profit) under this system than under an exclusively authoritarian method. The organizational ship responds better to a light hand on the wheel than to a tight grip. As for utopia, the effect of Theory *Y* would hardly be that, since there would still be plenty of restrictions. But these would be largely self-imposed, in the interests of keeping one's freedom of action as broad as possible by not intruding onto other people's and thereby inviting retribution. A free system would work out its own natural balance of options and restrictions, and these balances would probably be a lot more flexible and realistic than the kinds that are imposed by authoritarian management.

There is no royal road to the self-propelled, self-disciplining organization that McGregor describes. The evolution, if there is to be any, must begin at the top in the nature of the relationship between top executives and their immediate lieutenants. This ought to become one of joint target setting, advice and assistance by the superior (with the subordinate actually making all his own decisions) and joint reviews of results. Instead of keeping the subordinate under pressure by holding the threat of removal over his head—a form of pressure which is inevitably passed all the way down the line, creating conflicts and resistances wherever it goes—he is "controlled" by allowing him to have a real sense of proprietorship over the area for which he is responsible. This same type of positive faith in the subordinate would then be gradually transferred downward to all levels of the organization. The superior becomes a consultant and advocate rather than an overseer. The organization becomes devoted to expediting its business rather than to power struggles.

Organization charts would take on a new significance. Instead of defining pecking orders and lines of battle, they would become a loose set of guidelines within which the individual has plenty of leeway for defining his own job. We often hear protestations that this is what the organization chart is intended to be anyway, and that when practice falls short of the goal, it is only because of individual weaknesses. McGregor would reply that it is not human weaknesses but false and defensive relationships between people that rigidify the lines on the chart.

Under Theory *Y* the manager conceives of his job as helping each of his subordinates to achieve their mutual goals in the subordinate's own way. The manager neither decrees what the goals shall be nor

prescribes the methods to be used for reaching them. Since the ultimate responsibility rests on his shoulders, he does have a veto, but he will exercise it only in case of dire necessity. He takes a front seat in management with regard to his own superiors and a back seat with regard to his subordinates.

To manage in this fashion requires a great deal of faith: in the abilities and integrity of the people who report to one, in their capacity for growth, and in their willingness to assume responsibility. The manager must assume that his subordinates are capable—at least potentially—of running his department without him. The assumption may seem unduly flattering to most working people and rather unappreciative of the uniqueness of the manager. Yet it fits the facts of research a lot more closely than the horse-and-buggy cynicism which still pervades so much of the folklore of management.

More is required than just faith. A certain amount of private heroism is called for, too: the kind no one else is likely to appreciate because he won't even know it's there. The manager must learn the delicate art of not frightening other people with his authority, not inhibiting them with his self-assurance, and not compelling agreement with his enthusiasm. He has to make people feel free to develop their own solutions, which frequently won't be the same as his. Creating this freedom demands restraint. In effect, the manager has to learn to hold a tight rein on the very qualities that helped to propel him into management. He must learn to use his own personality as an instrument for developing other people's personalities.

Many executives are incredulous—even angered—when they are told that they don't really "sell" their ideas to their subordinates at all but in fact compel agreement by unconsciously playing on their fears. Sometimes the play isn't unconscious at all but a deliberate bit of machiavellianism on the part of someone who frankly subscribes to Theory *X*. More often the executive rejects the accusation because it implies that he believes in Theory *X* and he thinks he doesn't.

Yet it is very often true that an executive—even a very able, honorable one—will effectively prevent his lieutenants from using their own ideas. He does this unconsciously, with the best of intentions. His actual impact on others, regardless of what he intends, is to make administrators of them rather than managers, agents rather than officers. This happens because the executive, being human, probably has a very limited understanding of the way in which he affects other people's feelings and because his role makes him a natural target for

all of the suspicions and fears that his subordinates may have developed in their associations with previous superiors.

This is where heroism comes in: To effectively implement Theory *Y* the manager must learn what impression he actually makes on others, why he affects them in this way, and what some of his own motives are for dealing with them as he does. Before he can deal sensitively with others, he must become a lot more sensitive to himself. He must grow personally to a considerably greater stature, in terms of self-awareness and self-acceptance, than most people ever have to. Unless he does this he will constitute a bottleneck in the whole process of releasing suppressed motivation that Theory *Y* prescribes. People will not see any advantage in self-direction if they expect their boss to reassert his control of them at any moment.

This kind of personal growth is not easy to attain. Some very mature managers—mature in attitudes, not just in years—have attained it. They are usually notable for running a complex and successful operation with an extraordinarily light touch. As a device for progressing toward this level of maturity, McGregor favors the type of "training group" sessions developed by the National Training Laboratory at Bethel, Maine. Basically, this is a series of group meetings under the guidance of a psychologist in which the participants let down their hair and bring their attitudes toward each other out into the open. The effectiveness of the method is controversial, but in any case it is not likely to accomplish much unless the participant genuinely wants to learn something about himself and to increase his effectiveness as a leader.

However it is attained, this kind of ability to convey an attitude of helpfulness rather than dominance, guidance rather than control, can become infectious. It can filter downward, gradually dismantling some of the "fences" that people erect to defend their egos from each other. Slowly the potentialities which Theory *X* denies and Theory *Y* affirms will begin to assert themselves. This, at least, is McGregor's faith. A great many of today's most serious students of motivation in industry agree with him.

Chapter 8

Implications

THE INDIVIDUAL WHO GOES TO WORK TODAY FINDS HIMSELF in an environment that consists primarily of other people: his fellow workers, whose acceptance he is likely to crave; his immediate supervisor, who may watch him closely or trust him to get things done on his own; the salary administrator, who may think of him as an independent "economic man" or as a more complex creature with social as well as financial needs; an organization structure that is most often designed to concentrate power in the fewest possible hands; and lastly top management, which may unknowingly be guided by some preconceived notions about what he is like and what he wants. He also encounters his job itself, which may be stultifying or stimulating. This whole complex and many other factors impinge on him at every moment, shaping his attitudes and the habits which may carry him through his entire career.

He is not altogether a victim of this environment. But the major finding of those who have been studying the motivating environment is that it too often does dominate him by blocking his own inclinations and driving him, in despair or bitterness, into a stubborn, foot-dragging negativism. Management's great task, if it is to stop the trend toward the dehumanization of work and tap man's creative potential more fully, is to fashion this environment into a stimulus, not a suppressor. Doing this will require a lot of sober soul searching on management's part, since it has obviously created a good deal of the predicament for itself, albeit inadvertently.

As a first step in that direction, it would be well to recognize that the existing ways of organizing work were not inevitable: They evolved as they did because of choices made on the basis of what seemed to be sufficient evidence that they were right. Had today's evidence been available fifty years ago, we might very well be living in a considerably more prolific and satisfying economy already. There is nothing in the free enterprise system or in the nature of man that

requires work to be frustrating or to bring out the worst instead of the best in a man. It has become that way because no one examined the human consequences of organizations as they began to burgeon, because it seemed "self-evident" that people would accept a highly controlled environment since it was so logical, and because no one really thought that human consequences would be particularly important anyway. There was perhaps very little reason for management to assume otherwise.

There is nothing inevitable about the nature of tomorrow's industrial world, either. It is a matter of choice. We are designing it today, whether we realize it or not, in every decision made or not made and in every precedent set, broken, or followed. We have always fashioned our tomorrows out of todays: Yesterday's precedent becomes tomorrow's tradition. The basis for informed decisions about industry's tomorrow is greater now than it ever has been before, which gives us good reason to be hopeful about the future.

Management has always responded to evidence that it is not organized properly for people. Perhaps the response has been slow, reluctant, or even grudging at times, but the important point is that it has been forthcoming. Management has attempted, in an earnest if not always effective way, to adapt itself to the findings that pour forth from human relations researchers. But now it is possible to go further and say that the personal relationship between a manager and his men, while vitally important in its own right, is not the only source of difficulty. Even in the unlikely event that every supervisor could acquire a sincere and understanding attitude toward each of his men, boredom and inefficiency would remain. Work must be more than congenial—it must be absorbing, fascinating, challenging. Even if we answer the criticisms of Mayo and Likert, Herzberg's and Argyris's remain. The frontiers of human productivity already lie beyond decent supervisory relationships.

This is why the more recent research on motivating environments has focused on the organization itself, on the distribution of power. The burden of evidence is that too many decisions are made for people by their superiors. It follows that a greater dispersion of decision-making power would lead not to chaos but rather to greatly enhanced productivity, though no doubt at the expense of some confusion. The loss of tidy control might make some administrators feel less secure, but it would also liberate enormous untapped reserves of energy and creativity.

In sum, the most recent research indicates that we are overmanag-

ing our enterprises to the point where initiative and ingenuity are too often driven to seek outlets outside work. A fortunate few in engineering and research have already convinced management that they pull hardest in response to a light rein, but the majority of employed people at all levels continue to have little leeway for exercising their own judgment at work.

The tightly controlled organization is obsolete. In a generation or two it may well be more of a curiosity than a commonplace. Management will move toward greater flexibility and individual responsibility because these are more efficient principles of organization than the traditional chain of command. The death knell of the tightly controlled organization is already being sounded by decentralization, delegation, and management development. Where management by prescribed, enforced methods remains, it will be in those few circumstances where they are appropriate to the company's employees or to its market.

Not even the coming of modern data-processing systems, with all their revolutionary implications for management, is likely to halt this trend. It has sometimes been assumed that as many normal decision-making functions are automated, middle management will in effect be displaced by machines. Power would then be concentrated in fewer hands than ever, and these would presumably be able to manipulate huge organizations with as much finesse (or more) than far smaller organizations can be managed with today. Theoretically, hardly anyone in this automated organization would retain much control over his environment, and even the few people who did have control would be compelled to exercise it in an extremely loose, distant way.

Management can be automated, but human nature cannot. People have never rearranged their motives to make themselves more convenient to administer, and there is no evidence that they are about to become any more obliging. In the end it has always been the system which has had to accommodate itself to people, and not vice versa. Therefore, while data-processing systems have the potential for centralizing industrial organizations more than they ever have been, it is quite unlikely that they actually will. J. F. Burlingame has put his finger on the main reason why this is so:[23]

> With a rapidly increasing percentage of our population acquiring advanced educations, it is difficult to believe that members of this group who go into business will be satisfied with spending their daily

> working hours . . . in pursuits devoid of intellectual satisfaction. It is more likely that they will attempt to curtail the freedom of businessmen or any other group that tries to force such a condition on them.

Nor is it plausible to circumvent Burlingame's argument by assuming that business and industrial organizations will lose their dependence on educated men. Systems, after all, are designed and installed by men; they can be updated, improved, and corrected only by men; and the better systems that will antiquate the ones we have today will also be designed by men. To cut off the flow of inquisitive, creative talent into an organization is simply to invite a more expensive form of obsolescence than we have ever experienced before. In brief, organizations cannot survive without talent, and talent will not tolerate a system which prevents it from exercising itself. Inevitably, then, data-processing systems will be used to make decentralization more feasible and efficient rather than to revert to greater centralized control.

The basic flaw in the centralized method of organization—the flaw that will probably lead to its undoing—has been succinctly described by Raymond A. Bauer of the Harvard Business School:[24]

> Until recently, organization theory was virtually dominated by . . . the chain of command. . . . People were treated as chessmen to be moved about. It was recognized that people were in fact not so passive, but every effort was bent to extend controls so as to keep them as closely in line as possible. . . . It is now a commonplace comment on such an organizational model that its only salvation is that nobody ever succeeded in putting it into effect. . . .
>
> There was a notion of *the* best way to do a job, and *the* best type of person for the job . . . [but] it has been found a number of times that if a person doing a highly routine job is permitted to do it in a variety of ways at his own pleasure, his productivity may be greater than if he is forced to do it in the single "best" way—as figured out by the time and motion man.

The flaw in centralized organizations, in other words, rests in this paradox: Most people are never so inefficient as when they are organized into coherent, economical systems for controlling their work. But while there is a considerable amount of truth in this generalization, we cannot push it too far. When urgent outside pressures demand a coordinated response, where the nature of the work requires

unequivocal information about what kind of behavior is expected, or where the workers themselves are dependent and disinclined to show initiative (and perhaps under many other conditions as well), the pattern of close direction will undoubtedly remain. But the point is that this pattern, which is well suited to a limited number of conditions, has become traditional in nearly all the conditions under which people work. Consequently it will inevitably undergo a considerable net shrinkage in the coming years. By enlisting the active participation of people down the line, rather than organizing them into passive compliance, tomorrow's organization will grow more flexible, viable, and productive.

There are some who view such an organization as a sort of sugar-coated Orwellian nightmare, as a subtler-than-ever means of manipulating people so they become automatons without even knowing it. But their criticism makes little sense unless you assume (as the Marxists do) that the interests of management and working people are inherently in conflict and that therefore any worker who is contented must be deluded. There is nothing in modern research that supports such an assumption. Bauer disposes of it rather neatly:

> You would like to set up [an organization] so that people would be most likely to do what you want them to do because they want to do it. Other writers have envisaged a system of this sort as the ultimate in control. . . . I would only say that an organization which has been set up to maximize the satisfactions of the people who are supposedly being controlled leaves me confused as to the meaning of control.

Plainly, management must be willing to examine itself and, where necessary, to experiment with new methods of organization. But that is not all. Management must also acquire a better understanding of the individual worker: what motivates him, how he got that way, and why he behaves as he does. For every individual arrives at work with a set of motives that predates his contacts with the motivating environment. In Part II we shall turn to an examination of what is currently known about the motivated individual.

Part II

The Motivated Individual

Introduction to Part II

ONE CAN HARDLY SPEAK OF THE MOTIVATING ENVIRONMENT without making some assumptions about the people who work in that environment and bring their own private motives into it. The environment doesn't do all the motivating; as a matter of fact, it may be more accurate to say that it only bends the directions that the individual tends to follow naturally. A strongly motivated person may not be deflected from his goal by the environment to any great extent. On the other hand, someone whose goals are poorly defined may be so molded by his environment that he becomes a mere passive creature of it.

More commonly, however, people find that their jobs offer relatively little opportunity for satisfying their deeper needs, and so they turn to hobbies or other non-job pursuits as channels for their enthusiasm and their best efforts. Physicians and vocational counselors have for years given tacit recognition to the traditional bleakness of the job environment. They frequently advise frustrated people to find some *outside* avenues for their pent-up ambitions and skills. The pity of it is that an unrewarding job environment is pretty much taken for granted, especially for the middle-aged, the non-college-trained, and the production worker in general.

Until recently, there has not been a great deal of scientific attention to the question of precisely what kinds of ambitions and drives are becoming pent up in industry. The focus has been on management and its role as a barrier to the individual rather than on the individual and his own drives. The men who have been most critical of the way in which management constructs the job environment have freely accused it of making various kinds of assumptions about the worker: usually, that people are inherently lazy and indifferent to their work rather than made that way by being overmanaged, or that they are basically economic men who will react to the prospects of profit and loss precisely as a corporation would.

On the other hand, the critics have made assumptions of their own. Mayo, for example, assumed that men had a natural tendency to form allegiances with each other and to cluster together in mutually protective groups. Likert assumes that workers feel a sense of responsibility for their work and are therefore frustrated when they cannot share in the authority that controls it. Herzberg assumes that the need to master one's vocational role takes precedence over other needs, at least for people whose elementary needs are already well taken care of.

There is no need to confine this list of assumptions to those that the experts make. Most people have their own pet theories about what makes other people tick. There is a growing number of people, for example, who entertain uneasy thoughts about what all this human relating may do to the moral fiber of our workers. They detect something faintly un-American about it, something that might cause self-reliance and initiative to wither away. Presumably, the underlying assumptions here are that self-reliance develops solely as a response to an indifferent world and that it becomes stunted when the world is too hospitable. This is something like saying that the fittest cannot survive when the not-so-fit can.

Much of this kind of criticism misses the main point by arguing against a form of welfare paternalism that no reputable social scientist is seriously preaching. Indeed, the decline of self-reliance is precisely what men like Argyris and McGregor are alarmed about and trying to reverse. Yet beyond this misunderstanding there are deeper questions that remain to be answered: such as whether today's managerial practices actually encourage self-reliance or smother it and, indeed, whether management actually has much of an effect on the individual's motivation at all.

If these questions had simple answers, there would be much less disagreement about them than there is. It is easy enough to build an attractive argument for either side, but there are likely to be some embarrassing facts which just won't fit neatly with the rest. As long as we are content with assumptions about people and do not insist that they be made to stand up under tests of logic or experience, it is apparent that one assumption is going to be about as good as any other. One of the more hopeful signs for an improved understanding of work motivation is that this casual, pseudo-common-sense attitude toward assumptions is beginning to disappear.

In the past several years psychologists have made some important

advances in understanding human motivation. While these do not yet fit into a neat theoretical package—there are, in fact, some lamentable gaps in what they cover—they do point toward a new and apparently useful concept of motivation. Support for these ideas in the form of hard evidence is patchy but growing. Nevertheless, it is already clear that they can do a more convincing job of explaining the available facts than the traditional or "common sense" ideas can do. More importantly, research that was generated by these new concepts has brought to light some intriguing facts which the older ideas could not have anticipated. This is, in other words, a fairly exciting time to be studying work motivation, because we seem to be heading toward important breakthroughs in understanding in the next decade.

Except for a brief review of the classical motivation theories of Freud and Adler, this section will deal exclusively with works that are quite recent. This is because the classical theories do not have nearly as much relevance to industry as do the current ones. The new concepts, although not yet well known, have important implications for industry and deserve the attention of a managerial audience. Therefore, we shall review current ideas about the competence motive, the affiliation motive, and the achievement motive, as well as biographical research on how these and other motives develop. The motives for prestige and security will also be analyzed, after which we shall be ready to explore that most widely heralded and least understood motivator of all, money.

It will be apparent that many of these newer motivation theories are consistent with some, but by no means all, of the ideas about the motivating environment that were presented in Part I. This, of course, is part of the reason for their importance. The fact that what we know about job environments is beginning to fit together, however incompletely, with what we are learning about the individual could very well be the prelude to far-reaching improvements in understanding and managing human resources. Following this review of current research and theorizing about the individual, we shall try to fit it together with what we have learned about the environment and see whether anything new or useful to management can emerge from what the social scientists are doing.

Chapter 9

The Classical Theories

SIGMUND FREUD'S NAME IS A HOUSEHOLD WORD. MOST PEOPLE are aware that he had a great deal to do with making psychiatry what it is today, that he thought he could make sense out of other people's dreams, and that his theories allegedly found sex at the root of everything (they didn't). He will probably be praised by some and damned by others for a long time to come. It is impossible for a serious writer on motivation to be indifferent to Freud: His impact on psychology has, for better or worse, been enormous. From the standpoint of the sheer weight of his influence, no other psychologist even approaches him.*

Freud was an exploratory genius. He broke a path that is still being followed into what was then new, unknown, and even unsuspected territory. Some of the theoretical "maps" he drew of those previously uncharted areas of the mind have turned out to be amazingly accurate, while some have errors in detail, and others have not been particularly helpful. His importance lies not in whether all of his ideas can hold water but in his illumination of so much that had been inexplicable about the mind. If Freud had been right in every detail of his theories, he would have been more than just a genius: He would have been a miracle.

It was Freud who first called attention to the importance of *unconscious motivation*. Of all his ideas, this was undoubtedly the most important and also the hardest for laymen to understand. But he simply meant that people are not normally aware of everything that they want, that they will often have tastes, biases, or attitudes which strongly influence their behavior but for which they cannot really

* Freud, as a physician who treated mentally ill people, was a *psychiatrist,* and since he invented the analytic method, he was also the world's first *psychoanalyst.* But since we are concerned here with his theoretical efforts as a student of human motivation, he may be properly labeled a psychologist. I think he would have preferred this designation.—S.W.G.

account. Freud's investigations convinced him that the motivations of most people were rather like an iceberg: Only a small proportion of them showed above the surface in a form the individual could recognize and be aware of, while the greater part were hidden and blocked off from consciousness by powerful forces.

These forces were not altogether bad, since they made an orderly flow of thoughts possible and prevented distraction by irrelevant or disturbing notions. On the other hand, if too many of a person's needs and impulses were kept out of consciousness, tensions could accumulate which might lead to neurosis or mental disease. In most people, however, a certain degree of unawareness or non-recognition of motives is normal and even necessary. It is because of this normal degree of unconsciousness that most people are better able to observe the operation of Freudian mechanisms in others than in themselves.

Freud stressed the importance of the child's early experiences in building what would later become his adult personality. Any person, at any point in time, is the product of all of the events and encounters he has been through in the past. Since the child is relatively plastic (psychologically speaking) to begin with but gradually develops a consistent style of thinking and behaving, Freud reasoned that the earliest experiences would have the greatest effect on the directions that the child would ultimately follow. As a matter of fact, he concluded that by the age of five most of the broad outlines of the future personality were pretty well drawn and that the things which happened afterwards might change the details of the developing person but would not alter him fundamentally.

However, Freud also pointed out that the individual was not a mere victim of his early environment and that he was not necessarily doomed at age five to leading a particular kind of life. The child's traffic with the environment was not a one-way street, with the child being randomly pushed this way and pulled that way. Instead he was born with at least the rudiments of individuality in the form of instincts, which are inborn inclinations or predispositions to behave in certain ways. While all children had the same instincts, they did differ in degree; so one child might react quite vigorously while another behaved rather lethargically in the same situation. These instincts largely had to do with the preservation of life—through feeding, for example. But, as the child grew older and his learned patterns of behavior became available to replace the instincts, they tended to persist for reasons that had little to do with survival. Be-

cause his instincts worked so well in getting him what he wanted (and also because, unknown to him, a number of adults had been scurrying busily about at his beck and call), the young child might reach the understandable conclusion that the world was put here for his convenience. He then had to *unlearn* the notion that he controlled his environment and everyone in it, which is a long and difficult process. If it is completed successfully, the child may be said to be civilized. Not everyone is.

At any rate, the young child's instincts and his environment are in constant contact, gradually producing that pattern of experiences and reactions which emerges as a more or less stable personality pattern. Psychologists are still wrestling with the problem of just how much of the adult personality is determined by instincts and how much is conditioned by experience (the "nature–nurture" controversy). The generally accepted view is that while the instincts and other innate characteristics set certain broad limits on what the child can and cannot become (especially with regard to intelligence), the specific paths that the child follows within those limits are strongly influenced by the early environment. This leaves a great deal of room for experience to play its part. As Mark Twain showed satirically in *Pudd'nhead Wilson,* different environments can lead to enormous differences in personality.

As the child grows older and the circle of his understanding widens, the adults in his world become less tolerant of his demands on them and begin to make some demands of their own. Thus the child is expected to be weaned, to be housebroken, to dress, undress, and feed himself. With each new demand he is placed in the position of having to surrender something he dearly loves in order to preserve something he loves even more: the affection and protection of his parents. Eventually he grows up—but not always. Sometimes he never quite gets over a particular hurdle on the way to maturity, either because he held back extra stubbornly or because his parents were not cheering him onward with quite enough interest. These uncompleted steps in the growing-up process linger as little flaws in the child's character right into adulthood. They can be seen in the guises of petulance, self-indulgence, irresponsibility, and other forms of childlike refusal to face reality.

Freud was primarily concerned with tracing the development of neuroses and mental diseases. (In an extremely simplified form the "incomplete growing-up" theory sketched above is a summary of his

psychiatric findings.) He was also concerned, but necessarily to a lesser extent, with how the normal personality develops and especially with how some children can resist unhealthy influences in their early environments and go on to become mature, emotionally stable adults.

Normally, the child does not find it too difficult to cease demanding that the environment cater to his whims and to start accepting some responsibility for himself. At every step he is confronted with a carrot and a stick: the carrot being the approval and applause of his parents if he succeeds in doing what they want, and the stick being various forms of punishment if he doesn't, including what Freud considered the worst punishment of all, rejection. In this way the inevitable is made desirable, and the child learns to *want* to grow up. As a matter of fact, he sometimes learns this so quickly that his parents hardly have time to adjust to it.

The course of growing up is greatly expedited by a process that Freud called "identification," in which the child tries to model himself after the parent of the same sex. Thus a young boy will tend to pick up his father's attitudes and mannerisms and some of his habits. To the extent that the father encourages this formation of a chip off the old block—which he can do through attention, interest, and approval—the process is reinforced and occurs more quickly. On the other hand, indifference or apathy by the father will slow the process. This identification, which occurs to some extent in nearly all children beginning at about age two, provides the child with a positive incentive for growing up. It also helps to set a fundamental framework for what will later become his adult attitudes toward those aspects of life that are characteristically male concerns, including attitudes toward careers, jobs, and employers.

However, no one is a mere carbon copy of his father, and the child's character is not built by a process of simple imitation. It is much more complex than that. As the child gets older, he is exposed to many other models besides his father, and some of these may contribute something to the growing personality. Others in the family (women as well as men), neighbors, friends, teachers, screen stars, and sports heroes all can provide examples which the child may incorporate into his own growing repertoire of attitudes and mannerisms.

There are times when the models that are available to a child are for some reason unsatisfactory to him, so that instead of imitating

them he actually bends over backward to become as *different* from them as he possibly can. Freud called this a "reaction-formation"; that is, the character that forms is a reaction to, rather than an absorption of, the character of the model. When a boy develops a reaction-formation to his father's personality, it is usually because one or more of these three influences were operating: (*a*) The father fell short of some general cultural standard of how a man ought to conduct himself; (*b*) the father was ridiculed, or at any rate held in obviously low esteem, by other significant adults (especially the mother); (*c*) the father rejected the child, took no interest in him, or even ridiculed the child's attempts to acquire some independence.

As we shall see later, reaction-formations to the father's personality are not at all uncommon among today's crop of male adults in the United States. Further, these reactions seem to play an extremely important role in the development of significant job motives—remote though they may seem from the office and factory.

Alfred Adler, a one-time collaborator of Freud's who later broke with him to establish his own school of thought, has also had an important influence on our understanding of work motivation.[25] Adler is not as well known as Freud, even among professionals; in fact, many of his ideas have become accepted today without having his name attached to them. Unlike Freud, who stressed the pleasure-seeking and life-sustaining motives, Adler placed a great deal of emphasis on the power motive. By "power" he meant the ability to require others to behave in ways that suited one's purposes. An infant actually has a great deal of power over others. As any parent can testify, a baby can cause a considerable commotion among all the adults within earshot with the merest yelp.

According to Adler, this ability to manipulate other people is inherently pleasurable. Not only does the child have a hard time unlearning it, but he may also spend a good deal of his adult life trying to recapture that blissful condition of having other people do as he wills. However, Adler did not consider the child to be merely a miniature dictator. He recognized, first of all, that power was not sought for its own sake so much as it was a refuge from the utter helplessness of childhood. Adults are the child's lifeline, and it is a life-and-death matter to the child that the adults in his world be reliable; therefore, the power motive acquires an urgency which it never quite loses even though it eventually becomes unnecessary. It is especially strong in an older child or in an adult who feels handi-

capped in some way in his ability to win the respect and attention of others. Such people may go to considerable lengths to command attention, thereby overcoming whatever real or imagined weakness it was that had disturbed them in the first place. In describing this process, Adler introduced two well-known terms to psychology: *inferiority complex* (underlying fears of inadequacy or handicap which need not necessarily have a basis in fact) and *compensation* (the tendency to exert extreme efforts to achieve the goals which the "inferiority" would ordinarily deny).

Second, Adler recognized that power was not the only way to solve the problem of helplessness. In time the growing child realizes that cooperativeness wins a more permanent assurance of safety for him than power ever could, and at considerably less cost in terms of watchfulness and fear of retaliation. If the child's development proceeds normally and does not encounter too much tension, the power motive gradually transforms itself into a desire to perfect his relationships with others—that is, to make these relationships more confident, open, and helpful. Thus the mature adult would be able to move among others freely, without fear or suspicion. On the other hand, if the process were stunted somewhere along the line, perhaps by too many disappointing contacts with untrustworthy adults, the power motive would not only persist but would actually become stronger. The adult who had grown up in this way would be on guard, rarely willing to reveal very much of his plans or feelings and continually on the lookout for an advantage that would secure his position in what seemed a treacherous world.

Adler, like Freud, held that the basic life style of an individual was determined quite early by the quality of the child's experiences with the adults in his little world. By age five or thereabouts the child would either have developed a flexible confidence in others, a guarded determination not to be hurt by them, or, as is more likely, some kind of in-between variation including both trust and power strivings to some degree.

Both Freud and Adler were primarily concerned with understanding psychological disorders in order to treat them more effectively. Therefore, their ideas dwell more on the making of a neurosis than on how people get to be normal. Only recently have modern psychologists begun to extend the thinking of these great classical theorists to the understanding of normal psychological development and, more specifically, to the adjustment of the adult to his career.

Chapter 10

The Competence Motive: Robert W. White

A GREAT MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED AND TREATED psychologically since Freud and Adler did their pioneering work in the early part of the century. Out of this vast body of observation and experience have come a number of modifications of the original theories. While the main outlines of the classical theories have stood the test of time fairly well—which is, of course, a tribute to the genius of Freud and Adler—modern psychologists have found it necessary to extend or reinterpret certain aspects of these theories in order to make them fit the facts more closely.

A recent reinterpretation of this type which has considerable significance for our understanding of work motivation has been advanced by Robert W. White of Harvard University.[26] White notes that the original Freudian theory, for all its complexity, is still a little too simple to account for all the facets of human behavior. Specifically, the individual is more than just a vehicle for a set of instincts; he is also an active observer and shaper of his environment. For White, one of the mainsprings of human motivation is an interest in getting to know what the world is like and in learning to get what one wants from it. Whereas Freud stressed the life-preserving and comfort-seeking instincts and Adler, going a step further, stressed the drive for power over others, White notes that people also want to understand and manipulate their physical environment (and, later on, their social environment too). In the broadest sense, they like to be able to make things happen—to create events rather than merely to await them passively.

White calls this desire for mastery "the competence motive." It can be seen even in very young infants, he believes, in the form of random fingering of objects, poking around, and feeling whatever is in reach. Later on it takes the form of exploring, tinkering, taking

things apart, putting them together, and the like. As a result of years of learning his way around his own small world, learning what its possibilities are and how to exploit them, the young boy develops a certain assurance that he can handle himself equally well in the larger world he will enter as an adult. Whether his sense of competence is strong or weak depends on the balance of successes and failures the boy has experienced in his pint-sized forays into the world around him. If successes have predominated, he will probably come to regard life as a fairly promising venture where a little common sense and persistence can take him a long way. On the other hand, if the failures have outweighed the successes, the boy may regard life as a hazardous game at best, one in which running risks is likely to lead to nothing but another fiasco, so that it makes more sense simply to wait for circumstances to come along and have their will with him than to try to influence them.

Because the individual can hardly avoid some kind of transactions with his environment every day, the ledger of successes and failures is altered constantly. Consequently, one's fate is never entirely sealed. There is always the possibility that a particularly fortunate set of experiences will come along to bolster a timid ego, or contrariwise an unfortunate set may knock the props out from under an overly confident one. While the emerging personality may be pretty well jelled in a number of important respects by age five, this is not true of the sense of competence: It can get off to a bad start and still develop strongly as the result of later successes.

But there is, alas, a limit to this. After a time the sense of competence is also likely to reach a sort of plateau from which it may vary somewhat but not (ordinarily) a great deal. This is because after a while the sense of competence begins to affect the likelihood of a given experience's turning into a success or a failure. The more venturesome spirits will be out trying to win things or change things, and by brushing aside obstacles and persisting toward their goals they tip the scales of chance in their favor. Meeker individuals will venture less and therefore gain less and will perhaps shrink a little too readily from obstacles. Thus the sense of competence gradually becomes a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy: The individual seldom achieves more than he expects because he does not try to achieve more than he thinks he can.

Whereas the Freudians feel that the crucially determining years are from birth to five or so, White considers the years from about

six to nine to be especially important in the development of the competence motive. These are the awkward in-between years when the child is no longer entirely under the family wing but by no means altogether out from under it. He is developing his contacts with other boys outside the family—contacts which in a few more years will blossom into a far more congenial and attractive society for the boy than his family. Out of the pre-teen pal and club relationships comes the full-blown microcosm of adolescence, with its own codes of conduct and its raucous, sometimes rebellious, experimentation with being grown-up. The seeds of this independence are just beginning to sprout in the six-to-nine period, which is why it is so important as far as competence is concerned. This is where a shy child can be brought out of his shell by contacts with people who, being his own age, had nothing to do with his retiring into a shell in the first place. It is where the spoiled, willful, or self-important child can get his much-needed comeuppance at the hands of his contemporaries. It is where the adventurous child can try his wings for the first time outside the protecting sphere of his family. It is, in a word, the first significant test to which the emerging sense of competence is put.

Although the results of the test do not conclusively determine just how strong a sense of competence the boy will have thereafter, they have a lot to do with it. The pattern set in these years will repeat itself later because of the competence–behavior cycle which soon starts to operate. The seemingly radical changes in outlook that sometimes occur in the twenties or even later may be more apparent than real: Somewhere along the line the beginnings of a sense of competence—of a constructive attitude toward opportunities—have probably been tucked away. At the right moment and in the right atmosphere, this latent optimism about oneself can burst forth.

In adults the competence motive is very likely to express itself as a desire for job mastery and professional growth. It may therefore have a great deal to do with Herzberg's finding that the most lasting satisfactions of accountants and engineers are derived from solving difficult technical problems. The need for a suitable outlet for this motive, in a civilized society that has had most of the elemental challenges engineered out of it, may even underlie the growing tendency for people to identify themselves with their professions rather than with a particular employer or the region or group in which they were born and raised.

The job can be one of the few remaining arenas in which a man can match his skills against the environment in a contest that is neither absurdly easy nor prohibitively difficult. Where such a contest is possible, the competence motive may be exercised and considerable rewards may be enjoyed. But, where it is impossible, as in most routinized or oversupervised jobs, a strong competence motive leads only to frustration, while a weak one merely encourages resignation and dependency.

Further, the sense of competence probably plays a key role in affecting job success, especially in those jobs where initiative or innovation is essential. A man who trusts his own ability to influence his environment will actually try to influence it more often and more boldly than someone who is inclined to let the environment influence him. Can it be, then, that the games and horseplay of seven- and eight-year-olds have something to do with events in the executive suite thirty years later? White's theory suggests that they may, and in a later section we shall review some of the evidence which indicates that this may be the case.

Chapter 11

The Affiliation Motive: Stanley Schachter

PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE BEEN ATTACKING THE PROBLEM OF HUman motivation from more than one angle. In addition to studying the ways in which assurance and daring evolve out of a basic sense of competence, they have turned their attention to the question of what makes some people such strikingly social creatures and why others seem to be able to spend most of their time quite happily by themselves. That most people like to be in other people's company is obvious enough, but it also seems to be true that this liking is stronger in some than in others and stronger under certain kinds of circumstances.

A promising beginning toward understanding this urge to be sociable has been made by Stanley Schachter of the University of Minnesota.[27] Schachter has pursued the affiliation motive further toward its origins than anyone else; yet it is clear that he has made only a beginning. In many ways his research raises more questions than it answers. Even so seemingly commonplace a trait as wanting to be with someone else turns out, on analysis, to be quite complex. It is a good illustration of why the layman sometimes thinks that the psychologist is belaboring the obvious; yet when we examine Schachter's work closely, it is clear that what he has analyzed is neither obvious nor simple. In fact, the analysis of affiliation demonstrates how the "obvious" can be rather amazing when you dig beneath its surface—which is, of course, the secret behind most of the fun in psychological research.

The importance of affiliative needs is clear: Mayo certainly stressed them enough in condemning the impersonal factory system, and the growth of labor unions demonstrates what pronounced consequences a tendency to band together can have. Yet the existence of an affiliation motive has been more or less taken for granted, so that when

Schachter first began to direct serious scientific attention to it, he could find little in the way of previous research or even theorizing to guide him. It was generally assumed that affiliation could be either a means to an end or an end in itself. That is, people might seek the company of others in order to gain some kind of impersonal reward which the others meted out, such as money, favors, or protection. Or they might socialize simply because they enjoyed it. It was with this latter kind of affiliation that Schachter concerned himself: the desire to be with other people regardless of whether anything but company was apparently gained thereby.

Some previous research had touched on the question in a way. Psychologists had found that when something happens which contradicts a strongly held belief, the "believers" will tend to seek each other out with great urgency. They then go through an excited process of comparing notes, speculating about the event, and seeking explanations. Eventually some sort of consensus emerges from all this discussion, and most of the people will quickly associate themselves with it. Whether the new ideas fit the facts any better than the old ones did, or indeed whether they are very different from the old ones at all, does not seem to matter particularly. What *does* seem to matter is that one's beliefs are squared with everyone else's. There seems, in other words, to be a great deal of relief when one's thinking is shared by many others, almost as if this agreement confirmed the "rightness" and therefore the safety of one's own ideas.

It is easy to scoff at such a need to find something new to conform to when the old conformity is shattered. True, the pattern is easiest to observe among fanatic groups holding extreme ideas that are susceptible to sudden disproof, such as millennial cults which watch their carefully calculated "doomsday" come and go without incident. But the pattern of confusion-to-congregating-to-consensus is by no means confined to fringe groups, as anyone who has witnessed a break in prices on the stock market can testify. It is a fairly common reaction to a loss of certainty.

For Schachter, the most important element in the pattern was the reassuring effect of sharing an opinion. Apparently this kind of sharing provided a feeling that the world was understood and that therefore life was not really so dangerous after all. Evidently something more than just company was being provided by this particular form of affiliation. Socializing, in this instance, served to make life *seem* a little more manageable, a little less inexplicable, even though

the shared ideas themselves might be utterly without foundation. (This probably helps to explain the unpopularity of most new ideas: They suddenly make the world seem unfamiliar!) If the pattern is not particularly rational, that does not make it any less human.

So one motive for affiliation can be the opportunity to have one's beliefs confirmed. But Schachter found himself wondering whether the discomfort of uncertainty was the only form of discomfort that would lead to affiliation or whether it was just a special case of a broader class of anxieties that would make people want to get together. To answer the question he devised an ingenious, though somewhat diabolical, series of experiments. The subjects in these experiments were those unsung heroes (heroines in this case) of most psychological research: the college sophomores who, in return for volunteering to be subjects for an experiment, are excused from a lab report.

Schachter's technique was to produce a mild state of fright by implying that his subjects would have to endure a certain amount of pain during the experiment. They endured nothing of the kind, of course; Schachter was deliberately trying to create a rather upset frame of mind. Once he had gotten his subjects sufficiently perturbed, Schachter told them that they would have to wait for further developments and gave them an opportunity to do so either alone or together. Most of them chose togetherness, despite the fact that they were strangers. At this point Schachter confessed his trick, apologized, and explained the experiment to his much-relieved subjects. He had proved his point: Misery definitely does love company.

In similar experiments he demonstrated a number of other important points. First, when people are upset, they do not seek out just any company indiscriminately; they prefer people who are in a similar predicament. In other words, misery loves miserable company better than contented company. Further, this tendency for unhappy people to congregate together occurs even when they cannot communicate with each other, so the "idea comparing" form of mutual reassurance cannot operate. Merely being in the presence of others seems to reduce unhappiness, especially when the others are unhappy too.

In the light of Schachter's experiments some of Mayo's early theorizing starts to make more sense. An individual with an advanced case of anomie is likely to be very unhappy indeed. If being together with others in a similar fix helped to make the burden

more tolerable, he would naturally seek them out, and if he were somehow prevented from associating with them, he would miss them. Schachter gives no support to Mayo's idea that affiliations are natural and necessary to all men. Rather, the urge to affiliate would seem, in this case at least, to be a reaction to the boredom and ineffectuality of factory life. The informal group is apparently an antidote—and only a partial one at that—for the collapse of an ego that has become an unimportant, almost incidental, speck in its environment.

The informal work group is a way of adapting to a humiliating lack of competence in the face of a mechanized organization. The group provides some degree of reassurance: Everyone else is equally "beaten" by the system; therefore, it is less of a reflection on each individual to be beaten. Viewed in this light, the informal work group is not necessarily due to "natural" gregariousness; it may also be a defensive reaction and a symptom of deep distress.

This is not to say, of course, that workers may not form groups on the basis of genuine friendship and other positive attractions. But the casual, work-restricting group whose ties go no deeper than assignment to the same department needs a firmer cement to keep it together. This can evidently be provided by the anesthetic effect of being able to mingle with others who share the same burden of defeat.

Then, too, the existence of "loners" and "rate busters" disproves the idea that there is some universal need for affiliation as an end in itself. Apparently the rate buster feels competent enough to beat the system, or at least to use it, rather than be beaten by it. He therefore has no need of the group, although he may gravitate toward it if he loses his confidence. The "regulars" need the group because it provides them with a fictitious sense of significance that cannot be derived from their jobs. The "frozen" groups of Zaleznik have been so irretrievably crushed by the indifference of the factory system that banding together becomes essential to the preservation of the members' egos.

Affiliation, then, can be a simple expression of good fellowship or the symptom of a drastic loss of self-respect. (It can also be many other things: a voluntary stratagem for increasing the likelihood of obtaining certain advantages, for example.) Schachter himself points out that his work is incomplete in the sense of not having weighed the effects of other motives, such as sheer joy, curiosity, or dominance,

on affiliation. We cannot say that seeking to be in other people's company is the result of unhappiness or uncertainty and nothing else. But affiliation *can* result from such things, and at least in one form it is apparently an attempt to recoup some of the security that is lost when the individual is clearly no match for his environment.

Schachter has therefore thrown some light on what kinds of circumstances are likely to induce people to cluster together into groups. Going beyond circumstances, he has also considered the question of why some people are more prone to affiliate than others. If you will recall W. F. Whyte's work, the rate busters who remained aloof from the work-restricting factory group tended to be different personality types from the regulars. They were rather flinty, independent people who were generally impervious to the opinions of others. Schachter, on the other hand, found that the affiliative desire was much stronger among the somewhat tense people who are sensitive to every shift in the social winds than among the more carefree who simply take life as it comes. This is not entirely consistent with Whyte's finding. The rate busters were hardly carefree or casual; on the contrary, they were a rather serious lot. Further, the regulars were not necessarily tense; if anything, they were entirely too relaxed.

However, the disagreement here is probably more apparent than real. Whyte observed his workers *after* their affiliative habits had been formed; indeed, they were often hardened into fixed patterns. Schachter studied his students both before and after he tried to induce affiliation by creating anxiety. Whyte's regulars had enjoyed the comforts of belonging to a group for months or years—long enough, at any rate, to calm whatever insecurities had driven them into the group. Basically they were no longer trying to accomplish anything as individuals; rather, they were trying to control their environment in a way which guaranteed that their security would not be disturbed. Their calmness was therefore the result of affiliation and not the cause of it. Presumably any threat to the reliability of their safety precautions—the existence of too many rate busters could constitute such a threat—would produce considerable uneasiness and a sense of foreboding. As a matter of fact, this is exactly what seems to happen when such a group faces the threat of displacement by automation.

The most likely explanation of the non-affiliating tendency is that at least two types of people are predisposed to show it. (As we shall

see presently, it is quite common for people with widely differing motives to behave in almost identical ways, although of course the behavior itself serves different purposes. This is why it is so often misleading to try to deduce a person's motivation from simply observing the way he acts.) In any case it seems likely that some people refrain from joining informal work groups because they are suspicious or contemptuous of them, and others because they are secure enough to get along without them. In all probability the cheerful non-joiners in Schachter's experiments were in a "take it or leave it" position with regard to the opportunity of becoming part of a group. Sustained pressure of a more realistic sort might have brought many of them into a more affiliative frame of mind. The temporary stresses of a psychological experiment are not, after all, in the same class as the day-in, day-out pressures of factory life.

What emerges from Schachter's work is a somewhat clearer understanding of why men sometimes form groups which have the effect of lowering productivity. The group itself is defensive in nature. It is a means of creating an artificial, miniature world in which the things that are lacking in the real workaday world—pride, importance, security—are reproduced on a smaller scale. The impulse to create such a group is touched off by the sense of impotence one feels when he becomes dependent on a system that is by no means dependent on him. It is, in other words, the *lack of control over one's working environment* which drives so many working people into informal work-restricting groups. This lack of control is engineered into the system by excessively simplifying and rationalizing the flow of work and is compounded by excessive supervision and control and by lack of effective communication between managers and the people they manage.

Some people are more susceptible to being drawn into this pattern than others. The difference is at least in part a matter of personality, or more specifically of the individual's ability to tolerate insecurity. It seems quite clear that many of today's working people are not capable of enduring the degree of lack of control of their own work that is built into their job environments without falling back on the informal group for support and for emotional relief. Work restriction then follows, not from perversity or inherent opposition to management, but as a means of preserving the group. To become a rate buster would be to weaken the group by reducing management's dependence on it; to weaken the group would be to

jeopardize what little dignity and security its members have. Such groups are not inherently anti-management or anti-productivity; indeed, they can be uncommonly productive when their inner dynamics are properly understood and utilized, as was amply demonstrated by Mayo in the aircraft factory study and by the Michigan group in their Prudential study and elsewhere.

Work restriction is therefore a side effect, and by no means a necessary one, of informal work groups. These groups, in turn, are also side effects—again, not inevitable ones—of a system of organizing work which minimizes the degree to which the individual can control his own activity. We are dealing not with unalterable human cussedness but rather with a removable obstacle of our own creation. Removing it will not be easy, and it would be neither wise nor possible to remove it altogether. Still, work restriction is an unnecessary burden on everyone, including the restricters themselves. It can and should be relieved.

Chapter 12

The Achievement Motive: David C. McClelland

WE HAPPEN TO KNOW A GREAT DEAL MORE ABOUT ONE PARticular kind of motivation than we do about any other. Fortunately for students of industrial motivation, this motive—achievement—has a more significant influence on the success or failure of industrial enterprises than any other motive we now know about. By far the greatest volume of research, and probably the most sophisticated kinds of research, has been devoted to it. Yet, oddly enough, research on the achievement motive was not begun because of its economic importance but rather as a wholly unintentional by-product of some tinkering with a new psychological test.

It happened this way. Back in the 1930's Henry A. Murray of the Harvard Psychological Clinic introduced a new testing procedure which was destined to become second only to the famous Rorschach inkblots in its popularity among psychologists. Murray called it the "Thematic Apperception Test" (or TAT, as it is familiarly known today).[28] Like Rorschach's test, TAT consists of a series of printed plates designed to stimulate the imagination. But instead of ambiguous inkblots, Murray's test consisted of pictures of actual people, some in photographs and others in drawings. These pictures were deliberately made blurry and indistinct, so that the person looking at them was free to interpret them in almost any way.

Murray found that when someone was asked to make up stories based on the ideas that the TAT pictures brought to his mind, these stories could be analyzed to reveal the inner dynamics of the storyteller's personality. Because the pictures are so indefinite, the connotations that the individual places upon them are largely "projections" of the personal thoughts and feelings that normally play upon his ideas. These influences weave their way into the story in ways that the skilled psychologist can unravel. Small wonder that this

subtle, sensitive test has become one of the clinical psychologist's favorite tools for analyzing an individual's motives.

Shortly after World War II a group of psychologists led by David C. McClelland of Harvard University began to experiment with TAT to see if it was sensitive enough to detect changes in motivation that were caused by simple attempts to sway the individual's attitudes. In order to simplify their task, McClelland's group decided to select one particular motive for intensive analysis: one to which the test was fairly responsive and which seemed fairly easy to arouse in their college student subjects. The achievement motive happened to fill the bill perfectly, and so it came under scrutiny primarily because of its convenience! From this unlikely beginning have come some of our most penetrating insights into personal and even national economic success. For it was not long before the economic implications of the achievement motive were recognized, so that it became the subject of intensive investigations in its own right.[29, 30, 31]

Because the achievement motive was first detected in the products of imagination rather than in action, it was originally defined in terms of the stories in which it was discovered. In general a TAT story was rated as revealing the presence of the achievement motive if the main character was striving to achieve a certain standard of excellence: that is, if he had committed himself emotionally to the accomplishment of a task which he considered both worthwhile and difficult.

If a motive displayed itself only in fantasy and never affected the actual behavior of the individual, it would be little more than a laboratory curiosity. But McClelland's group quickly discovered that the achievement motive played a very vigorous role indeed in the real lives of the people who were influenced by it. In effect, they found that people whose thoughts turned to achievement themes when they were asked to compose a story were very likely to *do* something about it in their everyday behavior. The TAT story is not a mere romantic escape for daydreamers; on the contrary, it would seem that when doers daydream, they daydream about doing and that their inner drive for accomplishing something tangible can be portrayed quite reliably through fantasy.

Enough research has been done on the achievement motive to enable us to list quite a few characteristics that seem to be related to it. Before listing them it would be well to point out that when two things occur together, one is not necessarily the *cause* of the

other. The achievement motive doesn't produce a preference for moderate risks, concrete feedback, or any of the other traits we shall discuss. Rather, they all seem to be part and parcel of a whole package of consequences that arise from certain conditions in childhood—conditions that we shall describe after the achievement "package" itself has been reviewed. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that when we speak of the achievement motive or achievement needs, we are really using a sort of psychologist's shorthand to denote a way of life, or a basic attitude toward life, and not an elementary psychological particle comparable to an atom or a molecule.

Just about everyone has an achievement motive to some extent, but some people are consistently more oriented toward achievement than others. Perhaps the most important aspect of a really strong achievement motive is that it makes its possessor very susceptible to appeals that he try harder. Again, most people will put more effort into their work if they are challenged to do better or if some valid reason for exertion is pointed out to them; but the achievement-motivated person is likely to outstrip all others in his zeal to improve his performance when he is challenged to do so. He tries harder and demands more of himself, especially when the chips are down. Consequently he accomplishes more. We find, for example, that college students who have a strong achievement drive will usually get better grades than equally bright students with weaker needs for achievement. Executives "on their way up" in their companies are usually driven by stronger achievement needs than those who do not rise so quickly. The stronger the achievement drive, the greater the probability that the individual will demand more of himself.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the achievement motive is that it seems to make accomplishment an end in itself. If anything, it is the person who has little achievement motivation who expects a tangible reward for greater effort. While the achievement-motivated person does not spurn tangible rewards and even has a rather unexpected use for them, they are not really essential to him, either. He takes a special joy in winning, in competing successfully with a difficult standard; this means more to him than money or a public pat on the back. He is not an altruist: He simply finds enough delight in doing difficult things that he does not need to be bribed to do them.

He does like to make money, yet when he has money, he does not spend it ostentatiously, and neither does he hoard it. Money seems

to be significant to him primarily as a measurement, as a way of gauging his progress and of comparing his achievements with other people's, rather than as a status symbol or as a source of economic security. Given a choice between a lucrative but easy course of action and a challenging one that merely brings a modest financial reward, he is, other things being equal, quite likely to choose the latter. He is obviously not an economic man in the classical sense, yet it is precisely his penchant for tackling the difficult that has opened up whole new areas for economic activity over the course of history. For the fact of the matter is that this not-necessarily-economic man has all the earmarks of the classical entrepreneur except the one that all entrepreneurs in good standing were always "supposed" to have: the profit motive. McClelland makes a strong case for concluding that the profit motive—at least insofar as it acts as an incentive for the highly achievement-oriented individual—ought to be reinterpreted: The lure of profit is that of an objective measure of success in accomplishing a difficult task and not one of making the most money for the least risk and effort. The latter course, which is by far the more economical of the two, would more likely appeal to the person whose drive for achievement was rather low. Thus a delicious bit of irony emerges from McClelland's research: The classical motive of the merchant class turns out, on examination, to appeal primarily to the least enterprising people among them. While it would stretch the truth outrageously to claim that the most venturesome managers have been motivated solely by the desire for sheer accomplishment, it would not be far from the truth to say that *accomplishment accompanied by profit* is a far stronger incentive to them than a safe or easy profit by itself.

Going one step further, McClelland has put his theory to the test by measuring levels of achievement among executives in several countries. The results indicate that the higher the level of achievement motivation, the more likely is the executive to rise to positions of greater power and responsibility. The really intriguing part of this finding is that it seems to hold true regardless of how "developed" or "underdeveloped" a country may be, and even regardless of whether the country has a free or a Communist economy. In a motivational sense, at least, successful executives seem to be brothers under the skin throughout the world, and it is apparently their achievement motivation that enables them to be successful in any kind of economy.

A closer look at the achievement-motivated person reveals why running an enterprise ought to be a particularly attractive career for him and why he is uncommonly well equipped to be a successful entrepreneur. The most important way in which the achievement motive is related to managerial success is the individual's attitude toward risks. Most people have a natural preference for a particular degree of risk: Some incline toward the wild speculative gamble, while others prefer a conservative approach that minimizes their exposure to losses. But people with a high degree of achievement drive fall almost uniformly in the middle; they like to incur a moderate degree of risk which is big enough to offer some excitement and the hope of a worthwhile gain but not so big that their own efforts would have less of an influence on the outcome than sheer luck.

The extremes of risk taking are usually favored by persons whose achievement drives are rather weak. Some of them choose the big risk, apparently because the outcome is so far beyond their power to influence that there is no reason to feel any sense of personal responsibility for what happens. They can chalk their losses up to hard luck and credit their gains to their shrewdness. Others may habitually choose tiny risks where the gains are small but secure, perhaps because their exposure to blame for things that go wrong is very small indeed. It would seem, in other words, that one's attitude toward risks depends in large measure on whether he is willing to assume some degree of accountability for the results of the project he undertakes.

An achievement-oriented person prefers a moderate degree of risk precisely because his efforts, skills, and determination stand a reasonable chance of influencing the outcome. Therefore, the achievement —if there is to be one—will be personal and not just a lucky break or a foregone conclusion. For this reason the achievement-motivated person usually prefers to seek the prudent risk: the opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile in a field where successes come hard but are not unobtainable. This is, of course, precisely the sort of aggressive realism that marks the successful entrepreneur.

Once he embarks on a project, the man with a strong achievement drive likes to know how well he is doing. For this reason he prefers activities whose feedback is prompt, precise, and unmistakable. For example, boys who have a high degree of achievement motivation often become interested in carpentry or mechanical hobbies, both

of which provide immediate and concrete evidence of how well their work is progressing; they can see the table taking shape, and the repaired alarm clock either works well or it doesn't. Adults with achievement drives may be more inclined to enter careers with built-in feedback mechanisms, such as sales or management. But whatever career they select, they are not likely to remain in it (not happily, at any rate) if they don't get enough information to know whether their efforts are bringing them closer to a goal. This should chasten the manager who cries out for more talent in the ranks of management trainees, on the one hand, and then treats the periodic appraisal interviews as an avoidable nuisance on the other.

Further, the kind of feedback that is provided makes a difference. People with achievement needs will work harder when they are told precisely what is right and wrong about the way they are working. Merely to be told vaguely that they are doing "all right" or that they are being cooperative, pleasant, or anything else "nice" but irrelevant will not affect their efforts at all. Incidentally, quite the opposite is true of people who have stronger affiliation needs than achievement needs: *They* work harder when they are complimented for their attitude than when they are told about their efficiency.

It would almost seem that if you want to stimulate people to their greatest efficiency, it will help to know beforehand what their basic motives are. Knowing these, you can proceed to provide specific, task-relevant feedback to the achievement-motivated people and social or "attitudinal" feedback to the affiliation-motivated people. Unfortunately, real people do not sort themselves into two neat little groups quite so conveniently as all that; otherwise we might actually be able to write a valid supervisory cookbook! Most people are not predominantly achievement-motivated or affiliation-motivated; indeed, the characteristic pattern produced most often by the American culture is a fairly strong but balanced blending of both.

Achievement motivation has a way of making people more realistic about themselves and about the accomplishments they seek. They are not without their foibles and affectations, but when it comes to undertakings that are close to their hearts, they can become utterly unsentimental. They are well aware that big achievements do not come quickly or easily. Therefore, they will mentally dig in for long, hard campaigns rather than hope for lucky breaks. Even their thinking is far more oriented toward the future, fuller of anticipation and attempts at logical prediction, than that of people without strong

achievement needs. The man with a high degree of achievement drive is not necessarily more gifted in organizational ability than the next man, but his attitudes enable him to make more effective use of his abilities than most other men make of theirs. When he encounters an obstacle, he starts trying to figure a way to get around it instead of allowing his thoughts to dwell on the obstacle itself. He is practical, venturesome, and determined—a formidable combination which can achieve brilliant results with or without organizational brilliance.

Nor is the achievement-motivated person likely to let his personal likes and dislikes stand in the way of his reaching a goal. If his work requires assistants, he would much rather select men who are proved experts, even though they may be complete strangers or distasteful in some ways, than work with his close friends. This is of course diametrically opposed to the way the man with a strong affiliation motive would be expected to react. Achievement-oriented people take a strictly business attitude toward whatever their business happens to be. They not only wouldn't let friendships stand in the way of accomplishments, but they probably wouldn't allow the two to come together in the first place. They are not necessarily ruthless or dedicated (although they can be both), but they do care more about overcoming obstacles than about whether other people consider them likable. Except in the superficial sense of dress, speech, and mannerisms, they certainly aren't conformists. The passable job and the respectably average performance aren't good enough if the task has any importance to them at all.

McClelland's group has discovered an interesting relationship between optimism and achievement motivation. We have already noted how the achievement-oriented person gauges his chances of success in a cool, detached manner when the odds against him are clearly defined. But what happens when the odds are not clear? If we put a man with strong achievement needs into an entirely novel situation —one in which he has had no experience and so cannot really know how well he can expect to deal with it—he becomes very sanguine indeed. He not only expects to come out of this unprecedented situation very nicely, but he sees no reason why he shouldn't shatter all records in the process. Freed of the ordinary restraints of reality, his "true self" comes forth all too exuberantly! And precisely because he is not deterred by the lack of guidelines, he can blunder forward and make more of whatever opportunities are there than

the more prudent fellow who waits for the circumstances to clarify themselves.

But as the nature of his situation becomes clearer, the achievement-oriented individual begins to calculate his chances very closely. He may even err somewhat on the side of caution if the odds begin to seem too heavily loaded against success. Remember that he is not a romanticist who thinks he can master every challenge that comes along but a realist who happens to be fond of winning. He therefore selects his challenges with an eye to not wasting energy on improbable adventures. He presents the somewhat paradoxical picture of boldness in the face of the unknown and prudence in the face of the familiar. This is why he is better adapted by temperament to exploratory or competitive ventures than to well-established organizations which have matured to the point of smoothly operating traditions. We do not, apparently, encounter achievement-oriented people in regulated or static industries nearly as often as we do in so-called "growth" industries.

Once they have committed themselves emotionally to accomplishing a certain task, achievement-motivated people are likely to become preoccupied with it; at least they find it hard to stop thinking about the task until it has been completed. They cannot forgive themselves very easily for a project that was begun and then dropped. Because unfinished work weighs so heavily on their consciences, it is not likely to remain unfinished any longer than necessary. Perhaps this is another reason for their disinterest in running great risks: The onus of failure would bother them too much, and for too long!

Incidentally, this ability to recall uncompleted work better than tasks that have been finished is a well-known quirk of memory that can be demonstrated in most people, whether or not they happen to be achievement-motivated. But the effect is much more pronounced if they *are* so motivated and if the task in question was one they considered important.

In general, people with a high degree of achievement motivation are more persistent, realistic, and action-minded than people with other kinds of motivational patterns. But this does not necessarily make them more productive; that seems to depend on whether the task requires some degree of personal initiative or inventiveness. If it does, the achievement-motivated person is very likely to leave his competitors far behind. But if it doesn't, he is likely to turn in a very ordinary, uninspired performance. This raises the tantalizing

question of how many potentially high achievers are languishing unnoticed (and unstimulated) in classrooms where the pace is geared to the "average" student or in jobs that are organized so that all of the thinking is done by the supervisor. The question cannot be answered, but it is disturbing nonetheless. There is not much comfort in the thought that a "real" achievement drive will just naturally assert itself no matter how stultifying the environment may be. We cannot afford to rely exclusively on the few heroic characters who manage to rise above their surroundings; we gain nothing by artificially handicapping the remainder.

As we have reviewed the personal characteristics that are usually associated with achievement motivation, it may almost have seemed that we were conjuring up a sort of idealized folk-hero: someone with all the qualities that a red-blooded American boy "should" have. This is no accident. Achievement motivation has played a key role in the American culture ever since Colonial times. After all, what were the Horatio Alger stories about if not a glorification of the achievement drive?

Because the early frontier conditions provided both limitless challenges and limitless opportunities, because the birth of political freedom removed the restrictions that caste and tradition had exercised over the possibilities of achievement, and for many other reasons, life in early America was particularly conducive to the development of strong achievement drives. As they flourished, the values that are associated with the achievement motive—realism, determination, aggressiveness—became highly prized. They were held up to generation after generation of young Americans as the ideals to which they should aspire. This tradition of preaching the glories of achievement has done its job very well: The United States is one of the most achievement-oriented countries in the world today, according to McClelland's surveys. It seems entirely logical that a society that encourages its young people to set their sights high and which makes heroes of its Franklins, Edisons, and Fords would raise whole generations of men who could not rest until they too had accomplished something big. There is a sense in which the achievement motive comes close to expressing the whole genius and splendor of America.

But other countries value the achievement motive too. In fact, we have no grounds for complacency or self-congratulation. We have no monopoly on the ability to stimulate the achievement drive, and we

are not necessarily the nation most prolific of people with strong achievement needs. Our principal adversary of the moment, the Soviet Union, turns out adults in quantity whose achievement drives are quite comparable to those of Americans. Obviously, then, achievement motivation is not the exclusive prerogative of a particular ideology or political system: Its roots go deeper than that. The achievement motive evolves from a complex set of personal and cultural forerunners, some of which have been fairly well defined by research.

To begin with, strong achievement motives are more likely to be found in certain groups or classes of society than in others. People in the so-called "middle class"—the merchants, managers, professionals, and salaried specialists of all kinds—usually have more pronounced drives for achievement than either the "lower" or the "upper" classes. It is hardly surprising that those who work their way into one of the occupations that offer the greatest opportunities for accomplishing something on one's own would be motivated by strong achievement needs. Neither is it surprising that they would indoctrinate their children with achievement values and encourage them to develop the habits and attitudes that facilitate achievement. Therefore, the middle class in effect "recruits" many of the more achievement-oriented members of the working classes into its own ranks and simultaneously stimulates the growth of achievement motivation among its members' children. The achievement motive is one of the main causes of the phenomenal growth of the middle class in the United States and every other industrialized country. (But not the only cause, of course; mass education, technological change, and the absence of a caste system all play important roles.)

It is interesting to note, in passing, that the middle class has grown and prospered despite Marx's dire prediction that it would "inevitably" shrink as more and more small merchants were driven out of business by monopolists. Marx apparently hadn't heard of the achievement motive; and even if he had, it is doubtful that he would have recognized how strongly it would express itself in business. Yet it is precisely because commerce and technology offer such attractive channels for the achievement motive that people have been flocking into the middle classes rather than fleeing from a crumbling, mercenary society as Marx insisted they would.

It is a well-documented fact that middle-class parents impart a different set of values to their children than working-class parents

give to theirs. There are many exceptions in both directions, of course; after all, the movement of ambitious men into careers of greater stature and remuneration is one of the most striking phenomena of American life. But on the whole, most young people do seem to be profoundly influenced by the values of the class in which they were raised. By the time they reach adulthood, these attitudes are likely to be fairly well fixed. It is therefore possible to demonstrate some different reaction patterns in middle-class and working-class groups, even though there will be many individuals in both groups who do not fit the patterns.

One of the most interesting of these reaction patterns concerns material rewards. A researcher in the McClelland group put some high school students from both social classes to work on a project where they were not only told how well they were doing but paid for their efforts as well. Under these conditions the middle-class and lower-class groups performed equally well. After a while, however, the researchers stopped paying the students but continued letting them know how close they were coming to certain standards of productivity. The working-class group lost interest, and their efficiency fell off; but the middle-class group kept right on working at the same pace as before.

In other words, the "profit" motive was operating far more effectively with the children of working-class parents, and the achievement motive was more prevalent in the middle-class group. Of course, it might be argued that the working-class students were "hungrier" and therefore more likely to get somewhere in this world than the more complacent middle-class students. But the weight of evidence indicates that the working-class students were neither hungry (in the achievement drive sense) nor money-motivated; they were simply less achievement-motivated than the middle-class group and therefore less susceptible to appeals to their egos. They were in greater need than the other children for an immediate, tangible reason for exerting themselves.

Before we begin to draw too many sweeping conclusions about classes, let it be noted that the term "middle class" is actually a very loose, poorly defined way of grouping people. In fact, sociologists are often amused by the way nearly everyone in the United States considers himself to be part of the middle class even though objective indicators (such as income, occupation, and residence) would put him clearly in the lower or even the upper class. The important point is

that the middle class covers such a wide scope and so many diverse kinds of people that generalizations about it are really very hard to make. Therefore, all of the preceding observations about the middle class have to be taken with a grain of salt. They are true in a general sense only and cannot be treated as hard and fast rules. To arrive at a clearer understanding of how broad social groups are related to the spread of the achievement motive, we have to analyze the sprawling "middle class" into smaller, more sharply defined components. One way to do this is by classifying middle-class families into "entrepreneurial" and "bureaucratic" groups.[32] In entrepreneurial families the parents are employed in relatively small, venturesome organizations which offer considerable opportunity for advancement but at the hazard of considerable risk taking and competition. By contrast, the parents of bureaucratic families are employed in larger, better-established organizations where one "gets ahead" slowly or by becoming highly specialized, and where at any rate the risks are usually well hedged. Careful studies of both kinds of families have shown that each tends to raise its children in ways that prepare them for the particular kind of economic life that the parents are already leading.

Thus entrepreneurial parents indoctrinate their children with self-control, even self-denial, and with a zeal for actively pursuing a goal once they have decided on it. Above all, they stress independence: The child learns that his fate is going to rest largely in his own hands. He comes to regard the world as a fairly promising place for people who stir themselves to accomplish something. In a word, he is likely to acquire a healthy dose of achievement motivation. On the other hand, bureaucratic families stress patience, conformity, and a willingness to trust the environment rather than attempt to manipulate it. Their children are likely to be more relaxed, less disciplined or dedicated, than those of entrepreneurial families. They come to view the world as a fairly benevolent place where one can get along quite well by simply waiting to see what happens. They become cheerful, easy to get along with, and not overly serious. Their achievement drive is not likely to be very strong.

Thus there is a very broad sense in which a man's social origins can affect the extent to which he acquires an achievement motive—and, for that matter, all other motives as well. The conditions in which particular social groups live make it more likely that they will have certain expectations of their children and will encourage them to

develop certain attitudes. It is these specific expectations and attitudes, rather than "classes" themselves, that play a crucial role in determining whether an individual will grow up with a strong achievement drive.

McClelland and his group have made a close examination of the expectations and attitudes that mold a child's motives and start him toward a career of strong achievement strivings, or weak ones, as the case may be. Their initial studies indicated that the parents of boys who went on to develop a great deal of achievement motivation expected their sons to start behaving in a relatively "grown up" manner fairly early in life. That is, they expected a boy to start showing some independence (making his own choices, doing things without help) and mastery (knowing his way around the neighborhood, doing well in competitive sports) and generally taking care of himself around the house somewhere between ages six and eight. On the other hand, boys with relatively low achievement drives had parents who either expected such independence and mastery at an earlier age—before they were really ready for it—or who did not expect it until much later.

The "too early" expectancy pattern was most often found in the poorer economic groups or in families where the child was evidently considered as something of a burden by his harried parents. This premature pushing rarely encouraged the boy to become self-reliant; instead, it was quite likely to frighten him, to make him feel unwanted at home and incompetent away from home. The result, too often, was a listless, "What's the use?" attitude, with achievement needs pretty well crushed. Sometimes the pattern of thrusting a youngster onto his own resources at a very early age produces a certain wiliness and cunning which equip him very well indeed for survival in a competitive world; but a far more likely result, unfortunately, is a passive, defeated attitude.

The "too late" expectancy pattern, on the other hand, was most often found in wealthier families or in groups which had a tradition of controlling the activities of their children very strictly. These boys, in other words, were either overprotected or overdisciplined, or both. They learned to expect to receive rewards from their parents as a matter of course, or as a mark of appreciation for being good boys, rather than winning them through their own efforts. Therefore, they tried hard to please their parents by staying in line and avoiding the kind of self-assertion that their parents disapproved.

Or they learned that doing what they were told to do kept them out of trouble and that doing what they wanted to do got them into trouble. If this pattern was imposed harshly enough, it could dampen the boy's achievement drive considerably.

This is not to say, however, that achievement-oriented boys were not well disciplined by their parents: They were, but there were important differences in emphasis. There were fewer "Thou shalt nots" imposed on the highly achievement-oriented boys, and these restrictions were enforced earlier than for the boys with weaker achievement needs. Where discipline was specific, rather than a pervasive demand for compliance in all things, and where it was stressed as a form of responsibility for oneself, rather than as submission to someone in authority because he is in authority, the achievement motive blossomed. Where discipline was weak or erratic or where it encompassed too much of the boy's life, achievement strivings were unlikely to appear.

Therefore, the most likely breeding grounds for future entrepreneurs and achievement seekers are homes where children are encouraged to begin taking control of their own lives as they become capable of doing so; where they are not excessively restricted by parental discipline; and where the emphasis is on a desire to prepare the boy for effectiveness and responsibility as an adult rather than on a desire to be rid of him or to make him conform to the parents' values. Take any of these elements out of the equation and you lessen the likelihood of producing adults with strong achievement motives. For at this early stage of life the basic dispositions that the child will follow begin to be set; and as time goes on, these "snowball," acquiring a sort of momentum which makes gross deviations ever less likely to occur. The individual personality gradually grows more consistent and, in at least a gross sense, more predictable. The person becomes, as it were, "more like himself every day."

In order to see the achievement motive in its proper perspective, we must first compare it with the other motives we have already discussed—competence and affiliation—as well as with one we have only alluded to—power. The semantics of motivation are still rather cumbersome, reflecting the incompleteness of our knowledge and the surplus of theories over hard facts. Therefore, sharp distinctions between similar concepts, such as the competence motive of White and the achievement motive of McClelland, are difficult to make. In the case of the achievement motive, enough research has been done to

nail down what we mean with a fair degree of precision. But competence is not yet so easy to pin down; it is probably a broader and more fundamental motive than achievement, but only time and further research will tell whether it is really very different at all. It seems reasonable to suppose, for the time being, that a generalized sense of competence could take a number of specific forms as the child grew older. One of these might be an achievement drive, but it could also develop as a strong sense of social competence or even as a drive for dominance and control over others. Just to make our semantic problem a little tougher, it is already certain that motives are not mutually exclusive: They can and do flourish side by side in the same person, in all sorts of combinations.

As for the achievement and affiliation motives, they are different but by no means antithetical. It would be a mistake, for example, to assume that achievement-motivated people are always more productive than affiliation-motivated people. The distinction depends on the nature of both the work and the feedback. Nevertheless, there is a persistent bit of folklore in management which is well summarized in an aphorism, attributed to Leo Durocher, which has it that "nice guys finish last." If being a nice guy means having strong affiliation needs and enjoying association and familiarity with other people, then we can say with certainty that it hasn't handicapped many a successful man who had strong drives for achievement *and* affiliation.

It must be remembered that experiments which contrast people who are high in one motive and low in the other can be carried out only when there is a very large pool of people available from which to select them. This is precisely because such people are rare types. Most people cannot be classified quite so conveniently into one motivational group or the other. It is much more common (in the United States, at least) for both motives to play an equally important role in the life of the individual. The American culture, after all, has ways of preaching morality and brotherhood to its children at least as vigorously as it preaches achievement.

Apart from differences in the motives themselves, there is a vast and unfortunate difference in the amount of research that has been devoted to them. We know more about how to arouse the affiliation motive, for example, than we do about what kind of life history makes a person susceptible to that kind of spirit in the first place. On the other hand, the origins of the achievement motive and the

various ways of stimulating it are fairly well understood. The intense research effort that the McClelland group has devoted to the achievement motive has been so fruitful that it seems a pity that some other group has not yet made a comparable effort for the affiliation motive. The significance of the achievement motive in industry is obvious, but in its own way the affiliation motive is just as important: Unionization, informal work groups, and possibly even partnerships and mergers are likely cases in point.

The same considerations apply, although with much more emphasis, to the power motive. We know how to identify the power motive in a TAT story, but other than that we know very little about it. There is a considerable body of research about so-called "authoritarian personalities." These are people who are apparently very willing to accept domination by others and even to see it imposed on everyone else. But they do not necessarily want to wield that power themselves, and it is precisely the power wielders that we need to know more about. This is because modern organizations place a great deal of power in certain hands and because lack of power on the part of the other people in an organization seems to be an important deterrent to their productivity. The fact is that we really do not know much more about power strivings today than we did when Adler gave us his clinical insights more than a generation ago.

About all we can say with any certainty about the relation of the achievement motive to the power motive is that sometimes they occur together and sometimes they don't. At any rate, a drive to control other people does not seem to be a prerequisite for achievement, not even the kind of achievement that stems from directing the activities of others.

Despite these gaps, we can now answer the question we posed at the beginning of Part II as to what kinds of ambitions and drives are becoming pent up in industry: It is the achievement motive that suffers most. How much room does a production-centered supervisor leave for a sense of personal responsibility? How much direct feedback do we provide for in mass production? How much personal goal setting, risk taking, and realistic judgment do we allow for in most jobs, even including supervision and middle management? Precious little, much of the time. How often are salaries administered to reflect the passage of time rather than the accomplishment of difficult tasks? Too often. How much more time, effort, and

money do we devote to making employees feel secure than we do to allowing them to feel that they are accomplishing something worthwhile and that they are growing through their work? The unhappy truth is that many modern organizations make very inefficient use of the achievement motive.

The findings of the Michigan group that most work groups produce more efficiently under employee-centered than under production-centered leadership become quite understandable if we simply make this assumption: In most work groups there are enough people with enough latent achievement motivation to account for the difference in supervisory results. The assumption is not very farfetched at all. The "gamelike" quality reported by W. F. Whyte in describing the reactions of factory workers to a production incentive system can be better understood if we grant them their share of achievement motivation too. That is, surpassing a moderately difficult standard is inherently attractive to achievement-oriented people, entirely apart from the size of the remuneration.

The effect of achievement motivation is even more pronounced in a professional group, such as Herzberg's accountants and engineers. The prerequisites for entering such a group are usually stiff enough to attract men who are achievement-oriented (at least to a moderate degree) to begin with. The key motivator which Herzberg reported for these men was a sense of personal progress in their profession. This was probably very similar to the enjoyment of concrete feedback and of competition with a standard of excellence which McClelland cites as the hallmarks of the achievement motive.

So the achievement motive is probably more pervasive, and more important, than we have suspected. We are accustomed to recognizing it only in persons who possess it in heroic quantities and are therefore capable of spectacular, eye-catching feats of achievement. Yet most of the achievement motivation in this world is distributed in unheroic amounts to ordinary people who are not destined to scale any heights or set any records. If they become more productive and find their work more satisfying when they pit themselves against a standard, shouldn't they be given standards to pit themselves against? Might not their work be more efficient and creative if it were organized so they could see the results of what they were doing and make some decisions as to how it should be done? In fact, isn't the achievement motive likely to be one of our greatest untapped resources for productivity? This is why we can say after analyzing

the motivating environment that "work must be more than congenial—it must be absorbing, fascinating, challenging." If it is not, a motivator of potentially enormous consequence may fail to deliver more than a fraction of its benefits.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the achievement motive, or at least the hardest to swallow, is the light it casts on the role of money as a motivator. By now it should be apparent that money plays an extremely complex role in motivation and that like all motivators it is not entirely rational. Later in this book a separate section is devoted to exploring the question of money motivation more fully; suffice it to say for the moment that research on the achievement motive forces us to ask what functions money serves in the emotional life of the individual. We cannot glibly say that someone works for money and let it go at that, because money can mean many things to him beside the numbers that appear on his paycheck or in his bankbook or even on a statement of his net worth. Among other things he may interpret money as a measurement of his progress, or as a symbol of his prestige, or as a bulwark against disaster, or even as an end in itself. Whether its meaning is symbolic or financial or both, money can no longer be regarded as the only reason why people work, or even as the primary reason.

Work, even when it is relatively routinized and menial, can have a subtle attraction of its own. We are accustomed to making jokes about the activity that fills the greatest part of our waking lives; thus, "Work is the curse of the drinking class," or, "Why wasn't I born rich instead of intelligent?" to cite just two illustrative old chestnuts. Yet, as Freud pointed out, humor can serve as a way of voicing feelings we are otherwise ashamed to admit. Is it not possible that some of our joking about work is a way of paying our grudging respects to that which burdens us always, intrigues us occasionally, and in rare moments flatters our egos? If work were really little more than an ugly necessity, and if some kind of leisure were really the instinctual goal of our existence, then why is retirement as difficult an emotional transition as it is for most men? Why do workers whose work weeks are reduced without loss of pay take second jobs? Perhaps it is not work itself but the organization of work that is the "curse" of the working classes (and the drinking classes too?).

Before leaving our discussion of the achievement motive, we should note that it is not necessarily an unmixed blessing. A young

man who is liberally endowed with it is a likely candidate for rapid promotion in many large organizations. His life history is likely to have made him accustomed to winning, giving him a confidence which enables him to surmount obstacles that block lesser men or at least take them longer to get over. Therefore, the achievement-motivated young man is likely to receive the responsibility for supervising other people at an age when his experience is not only briefer than, but also different in kind from, that of the people he is placed over. He is accustomed to viewing his prospects optimistically; indeed, he may consider it a rather unmanly departure from his personal code to think of his future in any other way. But in all probability the people he supervises will have had a less one-sided history: They will be more familiar with what it is like to be discouraged, or defeated, or rejected. They will be more likely to consider impossible that which he considers merely difficult and to consider difficult that which he considers easy.

The achievement-motivated person is not necessarily lacking in compassion, but especially if he is young and has never tasted defeat, he is likely to be lacking in perspective. He may be impatient or critical with subordinates who react with less certainty and optimism than he does. He may not be sufficiently "acquainted with grief" himself to understand how important security is to some people, or why change is sometimes so threatening, or why sustained exertion is often resisted even when the rewards are great. In a word, the achievement-oriented young man may become an insensitive, ineffective supervisor. He may be too prone to appeal to other men's egos with sophomoric pep talks or to charge gallantly forward and assume that his men are following enthusiastically behind him. He may fail to recognize the tensions he creates among others simply by virtue of his own rapid rise or by his taste for committing himself *and* his men to difficult undertakings.

In time he may recognize all of this, with or without the chastening experience of defeat, and learn to leaven his drive for successes with a measure of understanding toward his men. As he matures, he is likely to evaluate his situation more realistically than egoistically and to recognize that success through others is achieved more indirectly than success through one's own efforts. But there is a danger, especially when the young man is being groomed for higher responsibilities and is brought along too quickly, that he may rise beyond the level where these lessons can be best learned before he

has had a chance to learn them. He may thereafter lack both a common touch and a sufficiently fine awareness of what his managers and supervisors are up against with their subordinates. In any event, there is very likely going to be an awkward period early in his managerial career when he discovers that other people are not always as achievement-motivated as he is. Paradoxically, the very qualities that propel him into higher responsibilities may prevent him, for a while at least, from handling those responsibilities well.

Chapter 13

Biographical Studies: The Achievement, Prestige, and Security Motives

ANY NORMAL ADULT IS MOTIVATED BY SEVERAL CONTINUING needs, some of which are consistently more prominent in his makeup than others. This pattern or "hierarchy" of motives tends to be fairly stable. For example, if a given individual is motivated primarily by an achievement drive today, he will probably continue to be chiefly motivated by achievement needs for a long time to come. Further, it can probably be shown that he has previously been motivated in this fashion for a long time, possibly even since childhood.

The same generalization holds true for the other major motives. Most people remain quite consistent in their motivational patterns throughout their lives. The needs that an adult seeks to satisfy in his work have been etched into his personality by his past history and are very likely to remain there regardless of what his future history may be. It is of course true that people will outgrow the particular interests or attitudes that characterized certain phases of their lives, but even this growth tends to follow paths that are roughly predictable. The human twig is bent early, and the tree does not deviate very much from the direction in which it began to grow.

The growing realization that adult motives are to a large degree the product of childhood and adolescence has led to renewed interest in studies that trace the early development of grown men, searching for clues to their adult strengths and weaknesses. In industrial psychology, biographical research was for a time in a mild state of disrepute, largely owing to the spotty success of personal history forms as instruments for personnel selection. More recently, how-

ever, greater sophistication in the use of biographical data has brought a new surge of interest in this area. Thus when Paul Mussen, a University of California psychologist, reviewed research in child psychology up to 1959, he could state that research was now "generally consistent in indicating that the child's familial experiences are the prime determiners of his personality."[33] In 1961 Erwin K. Taylor and Edwin C. Nevis, both practicing industrial psychologists, analyzed the progress that had been made in personnel selection and observed that "the weight of evidence seems to indicate that biographical information items of one kind or another remain one of our best predictors [of job success]."[34] Clearly, the exploration of childhood has become a serious practical concern for psychologists and personnel specialists alike.

We have already touched on some biographical studies: W. F. Whyte's group looked into the backgrounds of rate busters and restricters among production workers, and McClelland's group examined some of the antecedents of the achievement motive. A more detailed biographical study, this time of a group of executives, was made by James C. Abegglen of the University of Chicago.[35] Abegglen persuaded a group of top executives (vice presidents or higher) of major firms in the Chicago area to undergo intensive interviewing and psychological testing for research purposes. Therefore, his study is as interesting for what it indicates about executive motivations as it is for its broader psychological importance.

Abegglen was primarily interested in tracing the roots of what sociologists call "social mobility"; that is, the movement of an individual from the social class into which he was born to another (usually higher) class. He was interested in finding out whether there were any personal characteristics which aided people who had radically improved their social status. This is, of course, exactly the sort of question that armchair philosophers love to answer. Usually they provide moralistic answers which stress that since the socially mobile individual works harder than anyone else, he gets ahead chiefly because he deserves to. However, Abegglen was looking for deeper and more objective answers.

So he arranged to study, in depth, the backgrounds of twenty executives who had been raised in very modest or poor circumstances but had managed, in the course of their careers, to elevate themselves to the topmost rungs of the business ladder. These men were, in other words, examples of social mobility *par excellence:* Very few

people have had overall success stories that could compare with theirs.

Each of these men related as much as he could remember of his early life history to a trained interviewer during the course of a long, confidential discussion. Since this information was "filtered" to an unknowable extent by the individual's ability to recall events that had happened long before, as well as by his willingness to reveal what he could recall, the overall precision of Abegglen's data may be somewhat questionable. He concluded that his subjects were probably being as truthful, but not necessarily as comprehensive, as they could.

Biographical studies portray lives as they are actually lived, penetrating the little niceties and concealments that are adopted, as a matter of etiquette, to make our histories innocuous enough to be talked about in public. Very few lives, if any, are lived without a certain burden of tension or without a few secrets that are best left unspoken. To say this is not to suggest that life is any more sordid than it is but rather to acknowledge what we all know privately but seldom, for the sake of good form, admit publicly: that there are likely to be some rather unpresentable phases in nearly everyone's life. Therefore, if we pursue biographical research very far—and it is obvious that we have to if we are fully to understand motivation—we must be prepared to encounter a good deal of very private pathos and even tragedy. But this is what real lives are like. What is far more important than the dirt under the rug is the fact that unhappy circumstances often make possible careers of great significance and value. Adversity is sometimes an indispensable ingredient in success.

To return to Abegglen, what did he find in the background histories of his socially mobile executives? Fifteen of the twenty reported some form of severe strain in their early relationship with their fathers. Divorce, illness, death, or financial difficulties sometimes were present. Most important, perhaps, these men recalled feeling that their family's economic straits were somehow caused by the father's inadequacies as a protector and provider. In many cases, the parents apparently didn't get along well, with the mothers providing more of an example of strength and steadfastness than the fathers did. In other words, not just the tight economic situation but also the early emotional relationships within the families of these men ran to a type. The sons viewed their fathers with a cer-

tain disappointment or even a certain scorn, while the mothers were seen as stronger than the fathers but rather austere and not particularly "motherly" in the protective sense.

To understand how these conditions affected the budding motivational patterns of these people, it will help to recall Freud's concepts of identification and reaction-formation. The identification that ordinarily takes place between father and son seems to have been blocked. The boys did not admire their fathers and did not wish to emulate them. Thus the fathers served as models chiefly in the negative sense: They exemplified habits and attitudes which the boys wanted *not* to acquire. Apparently, then, a reaction-formation took place with the sons striving to become more effective, more confident, and ultimately more important than their fathers were. The energy that fueled their determined drive for success was, presumably, their refusal to lapse into the kind of weak, defensive role that had marked their fathers' lives. Evidently their mothers provided some of their initial momentum by setting an example of self-reliance and responsibility. This not only gave the sons something more satisfactory to emulate, but, perhaps more importantly, it made their fathers' attitudes less attractive than ever as a model of how a man ought to conduct himself.

However, deliberate competition with the father was rare. The men reported that, in retrospect, they must have felt that something was missing in their relationship with their fathers, something that they would have preferred to be there; yet they did not consciously dwell on this lack at the time but simply made the best of it. This "something" was presumably an effective example of how a man ought to cope with the problems of making a living and raising a family. They had to turn to other sources for examples which they were willing to accept. While there were often other men (teachers, relatives, friends) on whom they could model themselves, they seldom developed a close relationship with any of them.

In fact, this tendency to maintain a certain distance from people —to be civil enough, and friendly enough, but still not too chummy —became a very important part of their developing personalities. Precisely because they had not developed strong attachments, they were not dependent on them; therefore, they learned to keep their own counsel quite comfortably and to move out of old relationships into new ones without feeling any great sense of loss. This made it easy for them to leave behind the friendships of one phase of their

lives, and even the values that had characterized those friendships, and to acclimate themselves to new friends and their values. They were not anchored, emotionally, to any particular way of life, and they did not feel any less comfortable in unfamiliar groups than they did in familiar ones.

They were, in sum, not only driven to progress and improve upon their origins but also were free of strong attachments which would make it difficult for them to give up the ways of life to which they were accustomed. The psychological "passports" for mobility were therefore acquired in childhood through dissatisfaction with the examples that were set for them and through a reluctance to form binding attachments. The dissatisfaction and the reluctance were to remain as more or less central traits throughout their lives. The dissatisfaction prevented them from feeling contented or complacent, so that they continually demanded more of themselves, while the reluctance kept them from becoming so fond of a given status that they would not want to advance still further.

Obviously a great deal more than this goes into the kind of success story that carries a man from humble beginnings to a position of eminence. Ability, determination, and initiative must also be there, along with enough poise to win the confidence of others and enough luck to be noticed. Granting all these, it still seems quite unlikely that this group would have overcome the inertia which makes most men gravitate toward familiar and comfortable status levels if there had not been a certain imbalance in their early lives.

There are two important points to make about reaction-formations. The first is that they are not the only mechanism that leads to success stories. Abegglen was dealing with the most mobile men he could find; most achievement records are not nearly so spectacular and can be produced by different childhood patterns. For that matter, a quarter of the executives in Abegglen's sample did not fit the reaction-formation pattern either; indeed, there are many successful men who have not had to be especially mobile in the first place because they had the good fortune to be born into families that already had reasonably high status.

Second, reaction-formations to unsatisfactory-father images are quite common in today's American scene. Perhaps because of the depression of the 1930's, which caused many men to lose faith in themselves and to become highly security-conscious, or because industrialization itself has made men economically dependent who

might formerly have been self-sufficient, or for whatever reason, enough fathers fell far enough short of their sons' expectations a generation ago to make reaction-formation a common psychological pattern among today's adults. To the extent that this has produced a widespread determination to better oneself and to exploit one's abilities to the fullest, the fathers' weaknesses in one generation have contributed notably to strength in the next generation. This bit of irony recalls McClelland's remark that history is largely a matter of unintended and unforeseen consequences.

In any event, these men acquired a powerful and continuing drive to advance themselves and to cope with the problems of life with a determination to win out over them. They were unhampered by sentimentality toward the familiar, and they were not satisfied with small progress. There is little doubt that they acquired a strong achievement motive, partly because their accomplishments in business made possible their rising social status and partly because they needed to test themselves against challenges. The childhood tensions that brought their basic motives into action were, of course, quickly forgotten. But the habits and attitudes which they generated became self-reinforcing and continued to operate throughout their lives. The traits they acquired years before in boyhood as protests against the deficiencies of their fathers undoubtedly served them well as mature executives. They had always been determined, always set their sights high, and always been incapable of complacency.

Intriguing as Abegglen's findings are, it must be remembered that they were drawn from a small and highly select group. He has demonstrated that an early reaction-formation can lead to a lifelong pattern of achievement striving and upward mobility; but so can other kinds of psychological relationships. Sons who are disappointed in their fathers are not destined to corner the market in successful careers! It is now clear that there are many kinds of more or less consistent biographical patterns and that these can create certain motives that affect the course of careers. An individual's long-term motivational pattern probably has a great deal to do with the kind of education he tries to get and how well he does in it, and it also influences the kind of job he gravitates toward and how well he does in it. Careers are to a large extent a continuation of the individual's early history.

We have already seen how a strong *achievement* motive can originate in a boy's disappointment with the example that his father

set of masculine action and attitudes. Biographical studies conducted by the author indicate that at least one other life history pattern can also produce a strong achievement motive. (There may very well be other equally effective patterns that have not yet been delineated.) This second route to achievement motivation is based not on reaction-formation but, rather, on a positive identification with the father. There is, in other words, a wholesome and desirable set of circumstances that leads to vigorous, effective careers.

The underlying psychology in this pattern is quite straightforward: energetic, confident fathers who meet their environment head-on and who encourage their sons to do likewise. These fathers were not necessarily economic successes, especially if the boyhood of their sons occurred during the depression, but their spirit never faltered. Morally, at least, they were undefeated and proud of it. Some, of course, were prosperous. But the key quality that marked the fathers of these achievement-oriented sons was not their affluence but their confidence in their own ability to affect the course of their lives through action. In a word, they were achievement motivated themselves. Their sons admired them, modeled themselves after them, and acquired as permanent traits in their own characters the same confidence, action-mindedness, and independence that had served their fathers so well.

In fact, the pattern is so simple that good psychologists would be suspicious of it, especially those in clinical practice who often see an altogether different outcome. That is, a conspicuously successful father frequently seems to make it difficult for a son to follow in his footsteps; his accomplishments may seem so towering that his son shrinks from even attempting to match them. This produces a reversal of the dissatisfaction we have previously described. This time it is the father who is dissatisfied with the son, so much so that he may decide at length that something drastic needs to be done to correct his son's slow progress. So he sends him to consult a psychologist. With this kind of input constituting no small part of their practice, it is understandable that psychologists are a little suspicious of successful fathers! But then they seldom get to see the successful sons of any father.

Although it is hard to be sure, the difference between the successful and the unsuccessful sons is apparently due to the amount of interest and affection shown by the father. When he delights in seeing his son attempt to do things on his own, spends enough time with the boy to assure that some of his own philosophy rubs off,

and applauds the boy's achievements, there will probably be an identification, and the old block will, so to speak, have acquired a fine new chip. But if the father is too preoccupied to be bothered with the youngster, or, worse still, if he belittles or mocks him, identification probably will not occur. In fact, such a boy may learn that being a conspicuous failure is about the only sure way of getting his father's attention—and of getting even with him, besides.

Regardless of whether their drive originated in a fortunate or unfortunate father relationship, the life histories of these achievement-motivated boys begin to show a remarkable degree of consistency early in life. (People may behave similarly, and may even have similar motives, yet arrive at these adult patterns from extremely different psychological origins.) At least three characteristics tend to show up in their adolescent years which persist well into their adult lives; sometimes, in fact, they can be traced to preadolescence. These are: a deliberate selection of activities in which distinction can be achieved; a pronounced tendency to make educational or career decisions without seeking advice or other forms of aid; and a dislike of close supervision.

When these achievement-motivated people were young, it was common for them to drop a particular activity (such as a sport or a hobby) in which they were doing well enough but still weren't quite outstanding and shift their energies instead to some new activity in which they could excel. They were quite competitive, and at least while they were still young, they often seemed more intent on outdistancing other boys than on enjoying the particular activity in which they were engaged. This need to be a winner was hardly a "pure" form of the achievement motive, but it did provide concrete feedback and a basis for an early sense of competence. As time went on, the habit of winning became ingrained. This was due as much to the boys' deliberate selection of likely targets and to their determination as it was to their basic ability. In effect, they achieved a considerable economy of effort by channeling their energies into those areas where their best abilities lay rather than dissipating them in activities which were merely interesting. But as time went on they began to *expect* to win, and so competition became less important as an end in itself. The difficulties of the activities they had chosen became more challenging than the competition of their peers. And so what was originally a driving need to do better than others evolved into a need to do the difficult well.

This habit of choosing activities which offered prospects of dis-

tinction was an aspect of a broader trait of making decisions independently. Even as boys, these men had a clear-cut tendency to anticipate forthcoming choice points well in advance, to weigh the various alternatives and decide which course to follow, *without seeking advice from anyone.* Neither did they let themselves be swayed by traditions, by what the rest of their friends were doing, or least of all by sheer circumstance. They had reasons for the directions they chose to follow, and these were *their* reasons, not someone else's. Thus their selection of a college, of a major subject, of a career field, and even of the potential employers to whom they would apply for jobs all were made quite deliberately and well in advance of any necessity for doing so.

They all had a long-range goal and a series of short-range goals via which they intended to get there; they were not content to let fate have its way with them. When their plans were unavoidably interrupted by military service, they usually enlisted rather than waited for the draft. Once again they chose to exercise whatever control they could over their lives instead of letting life control them. This pattern of target setting and of relying exclusively on their own judgment persisted into adulthood. It enabled them to know, quite literally, exactly where they were going.

Their deeply ingrained habit of making major decisions without consulting other people led directly to their attitude toward supervision. Fundamentally, these achievement-oriented men wanted to be told what management expected them to accomplish and then be left alone to do it. They appreciated occasional feedback, and they were not above accepting advice, especially while they were still inexperienced, but watchful or demanding supervision simply rubbed them the wrong way. Since controlling their own activities was so important to them, anyone who interfered with that control was, to say the least, not appreciated. We can well imagine how they would have reacted to a production-oriented supervisor!

The *prestige* motive is very much in evidence nowadays, so much so that it has become fashionable to poke fun at it. We hear a great deal about status seeking, keeping up with the Joneses, and so on. Prestige seeking is by no means a twentieth-century phenomenon. Anthropologists tell us that it apparently existed even in Stone Age societies, and there is no reason to assume that men have ever been entirely willing to let everyone enjoy the same degree of importance or glory.

Like it or not, people have evidently been sorting themselves out into chiefs and Indians, nobles and peasants, executives and hourly workers from time immemorial, and they show no signs of stopping. The classless society has yet to appear, even in Soviet Russia—which reputedly aims to turn itself into one. History gives no sign of any long-range leveling of prestige. The revolutions that began in western Europe in the eighteenth century and are still spreading throughout the world are not due to any desire to rid society of prestige as such but rather are revolts against rigid class lines which prevent men of ambition and ability from acquiring prestige of their own.

But what, precisely, is prestige? Basically, it is a sort of unwritten definition of the kinds of conduct that other people are expected to show in one's presence: what degree of respect or disrespect, formality or informality, reserve or frankness. A man's prestige is, in other words, largely a matter of how he can expect to be treated, and it therefore has a definite effect on how comfortably, conveniently, and efficiently he can expect to get along in life.

Prestige is conferred by society, not elected by the individual to suit his tastes. High prestige is often as much a matter of low-status people wanting to put someone on a pedestal, so they can feel guided and protected, as it is of an individual wanting to enhance his own status by getting onto that pedestal himself. Witness the fuss that elderly patients make over a young doctor or that teenagers make over crooners. Inequality of ability and motives is the basis of prestige, and prestige becomes onerous chiefly when natural inequalities are blocked by caste or prejudice. Ironically, equality of opportunity is the best guarantee that the natural inequality of men will assert itself; therefore, prestige differences are, in a sense, an inevitable consequence of democracy.

Everyone begins life with a certain degree of prestige merely by virtue of his origins. Society at large applies a sort of gross, impersonal, sight-unseen ranking. Many people go through life quite comfortably without any appreciable change in the level of status they started with; others chafe under what they regard as inadequate status. Such an unwillingness to settle for the prestige that one was born into can, under certain conditions, turn into a lifelong pattern of striving to climb to higher social levels. Prestige motivation can be a powerful and continuing force in shaping a man's career, since the kinds of jobs a man holds can be a vehicle *par excellence* for upward mobility.

People seek prestige throughout their lives in countless ways.

some of them subtle and others blatant. Too often, perhaps, they struggle for the mere material trappings of prestige rather than for the kind of personal excellence that commands prestige quietly. But the important point is that regardless of how sophisticated the attempt may be, there is a widespread need to have one's relative importance clarified and to set that importance at a level which the individual feels he deserves. Prestige seeking is really feedback seeking, and the status symbols of which we hear so much are little more than signs which tell people how much deference we expect from them. Precisely because prestige is a form of feedback, it often overlaps with the achievement motive, although the two motives are not identical, and we often see one in the absence of the other.

Prestige consciousness itself is very old; what is new is the fact that so many people suddenly find themselves able to aspire to so much more prestige than their parents ever dreamed possible. The spread of a prosperous, educated middle class has created, for the first time in history, a glut of *nouveaux riches.* In a transitional phase between status levels, awkwardness and ostentation are inevitable; this is why a mobile society is such a choice target for the satirist.

If anything, we are likely to see more prestige motivation, and with it more social climbing, ostentation, and jabbing criticism of all of it in the future. This is because the ultimate source of the spread of this motive lies in a historical process which shows every sign of continuing: the spread of affluence to an ever-widening segment of the American population. The desire for greater importance and esteem arises, not merely from dissatisfaction with the "assigned" status of one's origins, but also from a belief that an improvement is possible. The possibility of upward mobility has increased dramatically as the economy itself passed beyond what Walt W. Rostow calls the "take-off" period and into an era of rapidly accelerating abundance.

According to economist Robert Heilbroner, the thirty-year period following the onset of the Great Depression has brought with it a "wholesale vertical shift of living standards." The percentage of American families whose incomes were below a conservatively estimated subsistence level shrunk from 60 per cent in 1929 to 36 per cent in 1958, and the majority of those remaining below this level were held back by social handicaps (racial prejudice, old age, educational inadequacy) rather than by any inability of the economy

itself to absorb them into its upward course. The power of the economy to elevate living standards, and thereby to elevate status levels along with them, can no longer be doubted; even the dislocations of automation will probably lead to a net shortage of labor in the long run and thus reinforce the general widening of prosperity. The old theory that poverty on a large scale is an inescapable reality of economic life has been punctured by history, and the floodgates of upward social mobility are opening wider. As Heilbroner explains:[36]

> The major part of economic misfortune [in 1929] was rooted in the inadequate *productivity* of the industrial process itself. In 1958 this most obdurate of all barriers had been largely overcome. . . . When the average worker earned $4,324, there was no doubt that the wage structure of capitalism as a whole had severed the connection between poverty and industrial earnings.

Thus the historical course of the American economy greatly enhances the likelihood that prestige motivation will occur more often and that it will help to shape more careers, more consumer tastes, and more corporate images. Further, since prestige is relative rather than absolute, the motive need not be rooted in poverty: It is possible for a young man or woman to become dissatisfied with the assigned status of any social class. Therefore, prestige motivation is unlikely to die out as poverty is eliminated, for it is not poverty itself but the individual's sense of justice—of whether his status is in line with what he deserves—that determines whether he will accept the status he was born to. Prestige motivation seems to begin when a youth realizes that he is living in an incongruous situation which simultaneously stimulates a certain inner pride, on the one hand, and mocks that pride with the realities of his family's status on the other. He lives, in other words, in a taunting environment, and it is up to him either to abandon his pretensions to personal worth or to struggle to make them tenable. Just where the all-important touch of pride comes from in the first place is difficult to say; biographical studies suggest that it is sometimes implanted by a parent who believes in the potentialities of the child and who may hope to share vicariously in his upward climb.

A prestige-motivated person is often a formidable competitor, too fond of his laurels to risk resting on them and too uncertain of his real status to risk taking it for granted. He often finds it hard to feel

entirely at home in a new status level even after he has established himself in it quite securely. The only security for him, at least for a long while, lies in continued climbing. He will therefore tend to be attracted to career fields that offer the potentialities of large incomes, impressive titles, and rapid advancement. In this manner a prestige drive may supply the thrust that leads to a conspicuous vocational success, both for individuals and for their companies.

Since prestige motivation is often confused with snobbery, it would be well to point out that a person who acquires a desire for prestige as a result of relatively humble origins is unlikely to look down upon anyone else. He has no pretensions to superiority; rather, he is seeking to assure himself that he is a reasonably worthy individual who is reasonably welcome in polite society. If he ever felt solidly established, then perhaps he might become a snob, but it is one of his saving graces that he seldom loses his inner uncertainty, even when he acquires all of the prestige that he can handle comfortably. This uncertainty keeps him busy and inwardly rather humble. Snobbery, on the other hand, is more likely to be a failing of someone who is trying to protect his accustomed status than of someone who is trying to increase his status: It is a defensive, not an aggressive, maneuver.

The prestige drive does not go on without end. Like water seeking its own level, prestige-motivated people tend to achieve a certain level of importance in their companies and communities which they find satisfactory and beyond which they really have no wish to advance. Perhaps it takes them quite a while to believe that they really have made it and that further pushing is unnecessary, but at length it becomes possible for the successful prestige-motivated person to relax. For some, this is actually a point of exposure, because other people may assume that they will respond to even greater heights and so thrust them (with the best of intentions) into more demanding or more conspicuous positions. Such misguided attempts to push men into higher status levels than they can adjust to comfortably often result in the first failures in otherwise successful careers. Because prestige needs do tend, at length, to be satisfied, we see them most often in younger men. Older men are more likely either to have reached a status level that satisfies them or to be resigned to the improbability of altering their prestige.

Another motive which is talked about a good deal is *security.*

Actually there are two different forms of security motivation, and they are quite different from one another. We need not say a great deal about conscious security motives since these are for the most part quite realistic and easy to understand, although they have ramifications that are often overlooked. Ordinary prudence dictates some degree of concern with the routine hazards of life: We do what we can to reduce our exposure to danger and to minimize the impact of unavoidable losses. All men are, after all, vulnerable to accidents, wars, diseases, and the vagaries of economics, and there is no doubt that when men are buffeted too hard by misfortune, their efficiency drops. Therefore, individuals and the organizations that employ them have a common interest in acquiring some degree of assurance that life's catastrophes will be blunted or staved off if possible.

It is entirely normal for a man to be guided to some degree by considerations of how best to protect himself and his family from these hazards, especially as he grows older and finds himself simultaneously more responsible and more vulnerable. Thus conscious security motives are very common, so much so that it is easy to overestimate their importance. Although it would be difficult to prove the point, there is reason to suspect that many organizations have banked too heavily on the security motive. That is, they may have provided more of it than necessary to supply the minimal "catastrophe insurance" which is sufficient to protect most individuals from chronic anxiety. Excessive provision for security may make people more compliant and predictable, but it does not necessarily make them more productive; in fact, in organizations where creativity or initiative is desirable too much stress on security can actually reduce overall efficiency.

While security-mindedness can affect such major decisions as whether to remain in an organization or seek new employment, it is not likely to be an individual's dominant characteristic. Conscious security motives usually play a background role, and as a rule they operate more as inhibitors—that is, they restrain or dilute an individual's impulses—than as sources of overt action. If someone's job is jeopardized by a particular course of action, such as ignoring a rule or advocating an unpopular idea, then considerations of security can motivate him *not* to do as he otherwise wishes. Organizations can influence these conscious security motives either positively—through various benefit packages and other protective programs—

or negatively, by arousing fears of separation, demotion, or being passed over. In either case the effect is disciplinary rather than motivating, and the result is likely to be conformity rather than innovation. In other words, too much stress on man's normal and ubiquitous security motives can be just as paralyzing as too little.

But there is another, more serious kind of security motivation which is largely unconscious and which is not so obvious or so easy to understand. Some people are predominantly guided by security motives throughout their lives, commencing long before they could make any rational analysis of the "routine hazards of life" and persisting throughout their careers. The hazards against which they seek to protect themselves are vague, pervasive, and fearsome; usually they have an underlying conviction that the environment is at best capricious and at worst malicious. Their overriding need is therefore to find some measure of safety, and they usually do this by entering into unilateral "alliances" with people or organizations who seem to be able to guarantee them a reasonably unruffled life. The idea of a "psychological work contract" is very appropriate here, since these people tend to think of employers as buffers who assume a responsibility for protecting them in exchange for their agreement to enter into employment. They tend to gravitate, understandably, toward paternalistic types of organizations, but should they ever be exposed to pressures to accept some responsibility for their own welfare, they are likely to become petulant and outraged at the unfairness of it all. What seems like an unreasonable attitude on their part can be understood if we realize that their need to be protected is so strong that they project onto the organization a fictitious degree of protective power as well as an improbable degree of protective intent. When the organization steps out of this contrived role, it is in effect violating an agreement it never knew it made.

A strong unconscious orientation toward security is likely to have developed in childhood. There are several ways in which it can be implanted. One of the most common is through identification with security-oriented adults. Where the parents are patient, passive individuals who are content to take life as it comes without questioning it or seeking to alter it very much, and where no one disparages such an attitude or advocates a bolder course, it is entirely natural for children to grow up with a willingness to accept whatever fate comes along. This kind of family atmosphere occurs fre-

quently in areas of chronic economic lag, simply as a reflection of the bleak prospects for improvement. But it can also be found in the midst of economic booms. The attitude is learned very early in life and represents a basic outlook rather than an adjustment to temporary economic conditions.

To people raised in such an atmosphere, life is essentially unpredictable and unmanageable. They are likely to have little faith in their ability deliberately to alter the course of their lives. Therefore, their careers are in fact determined to a considerable extent by circumstances, traditions, or the desires of others. However, they are likely to see nothing remarkable in this and to consider it entirely natural.

This kind of security-motivated person is often very likable. He is not competitive and therefore does not cause other people to feel that they have to defend themselves against him. He is patient, perhaps philosophical, unlikely to complain, and he usually maintains his good humor regardless of how well or poorly his work is going, in part because he doesn't take it too seriously. In a word, he can be quite disarming, and this very artlessness often turns out to be his best defense. Other people tend not to expect too much of him and therefore seldom find fault with his work, and—what is more important—he is rather pleasant to have around. Such a person is therefore able to ingratiate himself into a very secure employment status, contriving without any guile whatsoever to make his working environment about as safe, tolerant, and protective as he could hope for.

Another way in which unconscious security motivation may develop is through overprotective or overindulgent treatment during childhood. In a sense the child may be provided with such a surfeit of security that he acquires a rosy distortion of reality instead of a balanced notion of what he can expect of other people and what they will expect of him. The world may seem to him to be a benevolent, tolerant place which obligingly accommodates itself to his needs; in fact, he may become quite expert at coaxing the people who make up his environment to let him have his way. Should this orientation persist into adulthood, which it often does, the individual is likely to maintain an attitude of unruffled calm regardless of whether or not he is put under pressure. This is not a matter of steely nerves but simply his inability to believe that things won't always turn out all right by themselves. Even when things are obvi-

ously not all right, he is not likely to feel any sense of desperation; deep within himself he finds it inconceivable that good fortune will ever abandon him or that things will not right themselves eventually.

Unconscious security motives, in other words, result from early experiences which portray life as either too uncontrollable to make initiative worthwhile or too benevolent to make initiative necessary. The individual therefore places himself, as it were, at the mercy of his environment, with either a sense of futility or a sense of sublime assurance. In either case the result is a preference for a predictable and protective setting in which to work.

There is sometimes a tendency to snicker at security motives, as if they were somehow less manly or less respectable than, say, the achievement motive or the money motive. It is true that excessive security motivation probably prevents many people from fully utilizing their abilities. But when it is viewed in perspective, the motive is not so reprehensible and the people who are affected by it are hardly so lamentable. First of all, industry itself does a great deal to foster security motives through its stress on pensions and fringe benefits and through its reluctance to hire older workers, both of which have the effect of reducing the likelihood that other motives will rise up to challenge the importance of security. Unions have the same effect with their stress on seniority; and governments add fuel to the fire with welfare programs which, entirely apart from their humanitarian purposes, emphasize the hazards of unemployment. So we can hardly attribute the widespread preoccupation with security solely to the failings of individuals.

Second, nearly everyone has both conscious and unconscious security motives to some degree. Life is seldom so clear-cut or simple, even in early childhood, as to exclude influences which contribute to the need for security—or, for that matter, to every other need as well. In a sense a "strong" security motive is simply one that begins to manifest itself when only a modest amount of peril is present in the environment; therefore, even a "weak" security motive could begin to show its influence if the individual were placed under enough stress. Or to put it more crudely, everyone has his breaking point, and even the most self-confident disparager of security may find himself with potent security motives of his own if luck happens to run badly enough against him. When a passive, unadventurous, security-oriented individual passes by, there but for the grace of God go all of us.

Lastly, and most important of all, people can overcome the effects of excessive security motives. Sometimes they outgrow them, sometimes they learn to derive more satisfaction from other kinds of motives, and sometimes through acts of unsung heroism they thrust themselves into the teeth of insecurity and manage to come out as better men. The security motive, then, is neither altogether bad nor altogether anybody's fault, and it is neither restricted to a few unfortunate people nor irredeemably crippling in its effects.

Chapter 14

The Money Motive

WE HAVE HAD TO DEFER A THOROUGH EXPLORATION OF THE money motive until now for two reasons. First, remarkably little is known about the psychological importance of money; except for some research such as Whyte's which indicates that the dollar is not quite so almighty a motivator as it is supposed to be, most social scientists have been content to leave the serious study of money to economists and to folklore. Second, an analysis of money motivation in our present state of knowledge depends, to a large degree, on clues in the subject matter of the previous chapters.

"Money," according to a popular quip, "isn't everything, but it's 'way ahead of whatever is in second place." Yet a sensible theory of money motivation must somehow reconcile the facts that for some people money *is* everything all the time, that for others money is everything some of the time but not all the time, and that for still others money means very little at any time. It must reconcile the facts that money can be a motivator in its own right or a vehicle of other motivators and that dissatisfaction with money rewards can be a straightforward matter of low purchasing power or a mask for less tangible frustrations. It must reconcile the terrific attraction that monetary rewards have in some situations with their almost "irrational" impotence in other situations. In a word, it must make sense out of a seemingly contradictory, highly controversial patchwork of observations.

Money's most obvious characteristic turns out, on analysis, to be its subtlest and most important: Money is a symbol. Worthless in itself, its value depends entirely on its ability to represent what something else can be exchanged for. Historically, money has been getting further removed from what it is supposed to symbolize: The transition from coins to bills to checks to reels of magnetic tape demonstrates how anything that suits our convenience can represent value and thereby become a form of money. As a convenient token of price that

can be applied to any commodity, money has an entirely rational function. But it derives its unique power as a motivator from the fact that its symbolizing power is not confined to market value; money can symbolize almost every other value that people are motivated to pursue. That is, money can represent achievement, prestige, power, or security; it can represent the cynic's only trustworthy companion or the idealist's devil.

Money can, and usually does, portray whatever the individual considers most important in this life. Superimposed on its rational function is the powerful irrational function of mirroring the hopes and fears of the people who use it. Money means whatever people want it to mean and therefore reflects the ambiguously logical and emotional nature of man. The reason people (or if you will, markets) seldom behave rationally about money is that money itself is partly irrational, and this in turn is because mankind has a predilection for projecting its deepest wishes onto some physical aspect of the world around it. Attaching non-economic values to money is a modern version of idolatry, which probably became inevitable after money was successfully used to represent material values. This is not to scoff at the economic importance of money or at the usefulness of its emotional symbolism; both are necessary, and the world would probably be a less advanced and more frustrating place without them. But the function of money in motivating behavior cannot be understood until its dual representation of material and emotional values is exposed.

As a matter of fact, if money were entirely rational and had no power of symbolizing intangible goals, it would probably be a relatively ineffective motivator. To prove this we have only to look at those underdeveloped parts of the world where the likelihood of improving one's status and power seems so remote that hope itself is almost unheard of. To such people money often appears not as a passport to greater happiness but merely as a device through which they can exchange their labor for a few simple commodities—in other words, to them money has a purely economic function. The experience of managers in such countries has often been that its nationals will work only hard enough to be able to buy a few bare essentials and no more, despite the fact that additional wages could have been earned easily enough. It is only when money becomes a credible vehicle for achieving security, station, and other intangible goals that it can begin to symbolize them, and it is only when money

symbolizes them that it begins to acquire significant motivating power.

Therefore, it would seem that the power of money to multiply its own motivating effect depends on whether it seems to make nonfinancial goals accessible. This in turn depends to a large degree on whether the individual has been able to accumulate some capital or has been spending all his income. Thrift is not entirely a matter of character, although that certainly enters into it; whether an individual will save and invest his earnings depends on whether he thinks it is possible for him to improve his lot by doing so. If his past experience has taught him to regard himself as a prisoner of his environment (which might be the case in an underdeveloped society or an underprivileged group) or as a ward of his environment (which might be the case in a paternalistic community), the future will seem beyond his control and saving will seem neither fruitful nor possible. It need hardly be added that when someone's income is at or below the subsistence level, questions of accumulating capital are entirely academic. It is only when experience shows, or at least promises, that the individual may indeed affect his own future that money accumulation on a large scale is likely to begin in one form or another. In such circumstances the possession of money will appear to be a feasible instrument for advancing one's own interests rather than a relatively impotent commodity that tantalizes but does not satisfy.

A person's efforts to accumulate capital and his optimism about the future not only affect each other, they also have an important bearing on his attitudes toward income. But the relationship is far from simple. People with little or no capital who have little reason to be optimistic are not likely to be especially responsive to monetary incentives, despite the fact that they have a greater need for purchasing power than anyone else. To be without money is not necessarily to be "hungry" for it. Especially where there is no confidence in the future, workers are often willing to forego a higher rate of income in order to insure that their employment, even at low pay, will continue: Witness the artificial rate setting in Zaleznik's "frozen groups."

For a man who has always felt himself to be at the mercy of his environment, money is no substitute for security, and security lies not in his own savings but in a continued need for his services. From his standpoint it is perfectly "logical" to keep his services marketable by refusing to accept a higher "price," even though, paradoxically,

he actually increases the overall cost of his labor by keeping his productivity low. It is not rational economics but his basic outlook on life that determines how he will respond to the opportunity to earn money.

Advancing this theory one step further, consider a man who has no capital but nevertheless has a constructive attitude toward the future. This can occur in an economy that is beginning to industrialize or, more familiarly, in young men completing their education and ready to enter the job market. The attractiveness of money is likely to be quite high for such groups, so much so that it takes precedence over everything else and creates an aura of "money madness." This is because such people will regard money as an effective instrument for radically improving their standard of living. They will be attracted toward ever-larger purchases, sooner or later requiring that they either save in order to pay high prices or enter into credit agreements which are, in effect, commitments to save in the future. So capital, in one form or another, begins to be accumulated as optimism pushes material wants toward more costly items.

Having some possessions or savings makes the prospect of increased income more attractive than ever, at least at first. Their appetites whetted for the things money can buy, these people will behave more or less like "economic men," seeking to maximize their wages and responding vigorously to incentive payment plans. The hard-driving salesman and the high-producing rate buster both illustrate this kind of reaction. (In passing it might be noted that the rate buster's "optimism" is more a matter of trusting only in himself than of any faith in the intentions of other people toward him.) The money motive thus feeds on itself, with each new gain in spending power making further gains seem more obtainable and therefore more attractive . . . but only up to a point. While this phase of high attraction to the purchasing potential of money may last for generations, as a family moves up the social scale, or for many years, as an individual establishes himself firmly in the upper middle class, it often tends to reach a point of diminishing returns. Eventually, as material wants become relatively satiated and as the individual becomes confident of his ability to earn as much as he needs, the money motive begins a subtle decline. For most people, material desires do not multiply *ad infinitum;* their appetites will at long last become a bit jaded.

At this point in capital accumulation, money does not become unimportant, and people do not turn into altruists. But money gradu-

ally ceases to be of *primary* importance. In a sense it has already bought all it can; the tangible things which it symbolized have become realities. For most people, but not all, other needs which had previously been secondary will begin to assert themselves more strongly. These may be any combination of the intangible motivators we have previously discussed: achievement, prestige, power, security, and so forth. The money motive not only slips into a secondary role —still a force to be reckoned with, but no longer acute or all-consuming—but also begins to acquire increasingly non-financial overtones. It becomes more of a symbol of the new primary motive than an instrument of purchasing power. This means that once enough capital has been accumulated, money becomes increasingly irrational, and at the same time less powerful, as a motivator. Any severe threat to earning power or to accumulated capital can quickly catapult money back into the primary role. However, in the absence of financial crises, both the potency and the significance of money motivation will tend to change as affluence increases.

The symbolic, rather than financial, role of the money motive is nowhere so well illustrated as in the upper tax brackets where a sizable proportion of earnings is never at the disposal of the earner at all and where additional earnings are largely confiscated. The principal purpose of setting an executive's salary at a very high figure is to enable the salaries of less highly placed men to be spaced at ranges that are appropriate to their status. The higher the compensation of the top executives, the more leeway there is for setting other salaries in their proper proportion to each other.[37] In other words, the high and largely unspendable income of a top executive is a way of expressing his importance to his organization relative to that of the other men in it, and the lesser salaries express the relative importance of the others in the organization. At confiscatory tax levels, financial compensation is more a matter of recognizing the extent of an individual's responsibility, and therefore his status, than of providing him with a means of paying the grocer. It is, in effect, his badge of office. Precisely because it symbolizes highly prized values—leadership, responsibility, and authority—this badge can be almost as effective a motivator as it would be if the money itself were not taxed away. Perhaps it is even more potent as a badge than as a bill payer for men who have been accustomed to a substantial capital position for a long time.

There are, of course, many devices for minimizing the actual im-

pact of taxes on high incomes. Yet the disposition of these retained earnings often suggests that symbolic, rather than purely financial, motives are being served. Thus the attempt to maximize capital as an end in itself often turns out to be a sort of highly personal way of "keeping score" in a "game" in which the object is to exceed a previous mark or to set an unbeatable mark of one's own. The game establishes one's prowess as a worldbeater. Similarly, retained earnings may be spent on luxuries which surround the individual with reassuring symbols of security or spent conspicuously on goods or services which attest to an individual's wealth and thereby announce his claims to status. They may be invested as a hedge against future insecurity or as a means of gaining command of an organization. Perhaps the most revealing point of all with regard to the disposition of a large income is that the earner often has no clear-cut goal in mind for his money and is somewhat hard put to analyze his intentions for it. He may, of course, have some perfectly rational, tangible, and specific purpose to which the money will be put. Yet for most of us it is a moot question whether it was the purpose that necessitated the desire to make money or the desire that necessitated the purpose. The compulsive, rather than purposeful, accumulation of money is by no means rare; in fact, it is probably the more powerful motive of the two. It cannot be doubted that money can inspire men to perform economic wonders; nor should it be doubted that money often moves in strange ways its wonders to perform.

Lastly, consider the attitude toward income of someone who possesses some capital but is not particularly optimistic about his ability to affect the future. This might occur in well-to-do families whose children were trained to a life of privilege and luxury rather than responsibility, or among people in retirement and others living on fixed incomes. In these circumstances money is more likely to be viewed as a right to be protected than as a vehicle for self-improvement. The *status quo* will probably seem not only acceptable but also the most favorable arrangement possible. The individual tends to view his environment as self-regulating and essentially beyond his power to change; therefore, the preservation of capital rather than its risk becomes the guiding motive. Such a person is not likely to be interested in increasing his income if there is a significant degree of risk. (Taxes should be included here as a "risk.") Further, quite a sizable increase in income would have to be in prospect to be regarded as an "increase" at all. So the reaction to earnings incentives

may once again seem to be irrational on the surface and yet be perfectly sensible if the individual's underlying attitudes toward life are understood.

If we are right in asserting that an individual's reaction to income prospects is more consistent with his capital position and with his basic sense of competence than with whether the prospect advances his economic self-interest, it follows that *the money motive varies from person to person as a function of his life history.* In a sense a man's reaction to money summarizes his biography to date: his early economic environment, his competence training, the various non-financial motives he has acquired, and his current financial status. His attitudes toward money reveal the man—his hopes and fears, his follies and his grandeur—at least as well as any other vignette taken from his life. Like the psychologist's inkblots, money is an essentially neutral object which each man interprets in terms of his own habitual ways of thinking about the world and his relation to it.

Thus far we have not dealt with what might be called the "pure" money motive: the persistent desire to maximize both income and capital which does not diminish, regardless of how much wealth is acquired. It goes without saying that there are people with such a motive, although they are probably not so numerous as is often supposed. Their true frequency is often obscured by the fact that most younger people who have not yet satisfied their capital needs and some people whose earnings potential is too low to ever satisfy their capital needs are primarily money-motivated. They have not yet tested the strength of the motive against the calming effects of affluence, nor have their non-financial motives had much occasion to be aroused. The "attrition" of money motives from primary to secondary importance becomes quite heavy after substantial incomes have been enjoyed for some time—a fact to be reckoned with as we move toward an increasingly prosperous society with a more broadly based middle class.

The chronic "economic men" with pure money motives reveal themselves through their attitudes toward money no less than their more intangibly motivated brethren. They are often people who expect their environment to show them no mercy and who have a rather unflattering estimate of how reliable or benevolent other people are likely to be toward them. They are frequently hardboiled cynics who have learned, of necessity, to be uncommonly self-reliant.

Such men have often grown up in a rejecting atmosphere in which

the fact that they were unwelcome and unloved was all too apparent. Psychologists are well aware that such beginnings are very inauspicious and often lead to delinquency or to some other form of emotional disorder; yet some youngsters manage to survive such an unfortunate start without too much damage to their egos. Somehow, by dint of wiliness and raw courage, they learn to outguess and where necessary to outfight their environments. They learn from bitter experience to trust hardly anyone. Quite early in life they become coldly realistic and exceptionally well equipped for survival in what to them is a competitive, largely untrustworthy world.

Their serious interest in money may have begun at a remarkably early age. Pint-sized entrepreneurial ventures of one kind or another may preoccupy them at an age when other boys are still diverting themselves with athletics or hobbies. Further, these money-motivated youngsters are likely to take their businesses, however small, in earnest: They manage their affairs with considerable energy and acumen. As they grow older, such people are likely to seek whatever kind of work offers the greatest monetary return for someone their age: common labor in the early teens or door-to-door sales somewhat later. At an age when most boys are just beginning to appreciate the value of a dollar, these are likely to have accumulated sizable bank balances. They are savers, not spenders; even in later life they are likely to go on living at a modest scale relative to their income and resources.

They are attracted to professions and companies offering them the maximum net incomes. Their goal, however, is not to spend these incomes on being well entertained or well known but rather to build up their capital position as rapidly as possible. A constant surplus of income over expenses is therefore essential; further, the management of this surplus through speculation and investments soon takes up the lion's share of their spare time. While they can be just as jolly and convivial as the next man, they do so with a purpose: They are relentlessly pursuing a sale or a profit. Their lack of sentimentality or of unsupported optimism helps to make them particularly successful traders of stocks, real estate, and the like. They are also very independent, and therein lies the key to their unending preoccupation with money.

Men with a pure money motive are often either in business for themselves or, more likely, preparing for it. While self-employment can have a considerable tax advantage, it also has its headaches and

is not necessarily more lucrative in the long run than employment by, say, a corporation. The underlying attractions of self-employment to these people are that their livelihood is in their own hands and that the power of an employer to affect their incomes is ended. This power, which is more or less taken for granted by most men, is a source of continual consternation to men with a pure money motive. They are likely to consider their exposure to restraints on money making to be real rather than remote, and no amount of reassurance is likely to give them much confidence in the stability of their incomes. Remember that they have been conditioned to think of life itself, and business too, as a dog-eat-dog affair. Therefore, the sooner one puts himself beyond the reach of other people, the better.

Thus money represents something which is vital but which is also in jeopardy as long as other people are in a position to dispense it or withhold it as they please. It also represents a sort of shield against disaster. Now, recall our theory that men tend to interpret money in terms of their deepest needs. It would seem that in the case of the pure money motive, money has come to symbolize love and security: the deprived experiences of childhood for which the individual still hungers even though he has no hope of receiving them from other people. Precisely because he has no hope, the longing never ceases and the quest for the overt symbol, which is money, never ceases either. Money, unlike people, is not fickle; it does not deceive or reject, and it is worth whatever it is supposed to be worth. It is not only reliable but protective; it can be used to discipline people who might otherwise be indifferent or hostile. The symbolic meaning of money for the hard-bitten, purely money-driven person is an idealized mother who loves, shelters, and above all is constant. Money is the paper doll that other fellows cannot steal. There is irony for you.

But this is only one specific meaning that money can have, and there are many others. To catalogue them all could easily require another book and more than one lifetime of research. The important point is that money derives its compelling power to motivate most people some of the time, and some people all of the time, from the fact that *it has no intrinsic meaning of its own.* It can therefore absorb whatever meaning people want to find in their lives. The fact that it also has a rational economic function helps to obscure the deeper sources of its strength as a motivator. That is, the obvious fact that money serves an overt financial purpose provides a wonder-

ful rationalization for being preoccupied with it—a way of concealing deeper motives behind an indisputable array of hard facts. To an unknowable extent, therefore, economic progress may be a matter of making the right move for irrelevant and often unconscious reasons. Which leads one to wonder whether there may not be some kind of angel watching over us after all.

So much for our survey of what is known about individual motives. There have been some obvious gaps, reflecting the incomplete state of understanding. The power motive, so obviously laden with importance, is still largely a mystery, and other important motives such as the desire to be of service to mankind and the desire to explore and experiment have not been touched upon at all. The plain truth is that research on motivation still has a long way to go and that it is much too early for a definitive book on work motivation to be written. Nevertheless, I shall attempt in the last part of this book to integrate the main ideas of current research into a reasonably coherent theory and then see how much light this theory can shed both on traditional managerial problems and on broader questions that affect us all.

Part III

Motivation in Perspective

Introduction to Part III

THE AVERAGE EMPLOYED AMERICAN, IF THERE IS SUCH A PERson, spends about 25 per cent of his time at work or commuting to work, about 30 per cent of his time asleep, and another 15 per cent of his time eating and taking care of his daily needs. He has about 30 per cent of his time available for whatever constitutes his leisure. These figures are no more authentic than guesswork can make them, but it doesn't really matter whether they are accurate or not. What does matter is that in trying to encourage employees to be more productive and less difficult, industry has concentrated entirely too much on the hours when people are not at work and entirely too little on the hours when they are. Rewards are designed to enable the employee to be well fed, clothed, and housed, and to make his leisure more secure and entertaining, to a far greater extent than they are calculated to provide him with a sense of importance or of mastery over his work. Instead of making work more inviting than it is, the emphasis has been placed on making non-work more inviting than work.

The plain truth is that for most people work is no fun at all, which is why they contrive to lighten the tedium by foiling the foreman or by idling and joking and why they often devote so much more energy and creativity to their hobbies than they do to their jobs. It is assumed, or at least seldom questioned, that work is necessarily a rather dull pastime and that most people would dislike it even if it weren't; therefore, the way to get work from the worker is to pay him enough so he can divert himself after work. The ultimate goal for which people are expected to strive is the hobby, the vacation, and that purest form of non-work, loafing. Yet much of what is unprofitable and unhealthy on the modern industrial scene derives from the fact that most people are considerably nobler than that. Doing a difficult job well is a more rewarding experience for our mythical "average" employee than a life of serene inactivity.

The paradox of modern industrial motivation is that while material needs are being satisfied and even satiated, the lack of intangible rewards has become the newest and perhaps greatest barrier to productivity. The cost of this paradox is impossible to calculate, but at the very least it means that a sizable fraction of the talent that industry is paying for does not get translated into production. It means that increased productivity will have to come almost exclusively from investment in new equipment, which is an expensive matter, rather than from greater ingenuity and effort, which are elusive but not necessarily costly at all. Thus as a matter of sound economic policy, as well as for human considerations, it is more important than ever that management learn to harness the more enduring motives of employees instead of continuing to appeal to motives that are rapidly becoming jaded. This will require an understanding of what impact the industrial environment that management creates has on the individual worker and why it affects him as it does; beyond that it will require a willingness to let motivational considerations enter into planning on an equal footing with engineering and cost considerations.

We can now outline, in broad terms, a theory that accommodates most of the research findings to date on work motivation. Afterward we shall trace the consequences of this theory for practical planning in such matters as recruiting, morale, technological change, and labor relations. It need hardly be said that research on work motivation still has a long way to go and that theorizing at this stage should be construed more as a progress report than as a definitive statement. But if this theorizing can enlarge understanding, enable organizations to achieve more effective motivation, and possibly even generate some new research—if, in other words, it proves to be useful—it will have amply fulfilled its purpose.

Chapter 15

Dynamics of Motives

THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT THING TO BE SAID ABOUT motives is that everybody has a lot of them and that nobody has quite the same mixture as anyone else. This means that there is no single motive that determines how all workers will react to all jobs and therefore no single strategy that will keep morale and productivity high for everyone everywhere. There are individuals aplenty who work chiefly for money and others who work chiefly for security and still others who work chiefly because they enjoy it; there are even those who work chiefly because they wouldn't know what to do with themselves otherwise. But the glib generalizations that are so often made about any of these motives—that they are "universal" and therefore dominate everyone's reaction to his job—simply don't hold up under scrutiny.

We have to deal with human diversity (or, to phrase it another way, with individual uniqueness) regardless of whether we find it administratively convenient or conceptually easy to grasp. And it is neither. This diversity arises from three basic qualities of human existence: that people grow up and live in many different kinds of environments, even in one country; that they are sensitive enough to have their attitudes toward life and toward themselves molded to a considerable degree by the subtleties in their environments; and that their reactions to both the subtle and the conspicuous in their environments are not necessarily rational. In any sensible approach to motivation we have to deal with people not as an engineer might have designed them but the way the good Lord did.

Much of the difficulty we have in understanding motives stems from the way they arrange themselves in any given individual. They seem to acquire a structure and to follow a dynamic all their own. The structure has sometimes been called a hierarchy; that is, one motive will usually be more powerful, and therefore more prominent in influencing the individual's behavior, than the others. An-

other will be the second most powerful, another the third, and so on. However, this structure is not fixed: A man's primary motive today may not be primary tomorrow. A reshuffling occurs whenever a motive has been so well satisfied that it sinks into the background and all the others move up a notch to replace it. As long as the "old" motive gets plenty of gratification it will remain fairly quiescent and much less likely to rouse the individual to action than one of the "newer," still unsatisfied ones.

As a homely illustration of this principle, compare the attractiveness of an ice cream sundae when you are hot and hungry with the appeal of an identical sundae after you have eaten an ample dinner. More subtly, consider how the concern of the *nouveau riche* shifts from making money to displaying it. The reshuffling of motives also works in reverse: The well-fed man will eventually grow hungry, even ravenous, if he is not fed again, and the free spender will rediscover his old thrifty ways quickly enough if he suddenly finds himself without an income. Anyone's primary motive is, therefore, a moving target, especially in economically advanced societies where satisfactions for the more basic motives are possible for large segments of the population.

But motives are not quite as unstable as all that. Some are harder to satiate than others. A motive can persist almost indefinitely if it represents a need that was severely frustrated in childhood, or if each satisfaction arouses an appetite for more. Thus a rejected child may develop a "pure" money motive as an adult, amassing money endlessly because nothing else can be trusted and because he never gets enough to make him feel welcome. More positively, an achievement-oriented person will find that each accomplishment makes easier ones seem duller and harder ones more challenging. Motives may persist, in other words, either because the individual cannot outgrow them or because his growth leads him further into them.

It would seem that the kinds of motives which can be diminished when enough rewards are given are operating as *satisfiers,* to use Herzberg's term. That is, they press themselves insistently upon the individual when they don't receive enough gratification but lapse into insignificance when they do. Hunger pangs, sleeplessness, and even monetary desires can all be appeased and have relatively little motivating power when they are appeased; their power is felt principally when they are *not* being satisfied. A satisfier affects the individual more by its absence than by its presence.

On the other hand, those motives which are not susceptible to being "appeased" are operating like what Herzberg calls *motivators.* They can continue to play a commanding role in an individual's career for a long time despite repeated successes. As a matter of fact, repeated success is precisely what will keep them alive, and chronic lack of reward is very likely to suppress them. The dynamics of a motivator are quite the opposite of a satisfier's. When a motivator goes too long without some kind of gratifying experience to sustain it, it will drift out of prominence just as a fully rewarded satisfier does, but instead of merely dwelling placidly in the background it is likely to acquire an alias in the form of some material need and continue to influence the individual's actions indirectly. In this manner a satisfier becomes a symbol or substitute for the motivator and is then pursued almost gluttonously. This can be seen in so-called "symptomatic wage demands," in which salary increases are sought even though money needs are not at all severe, because non-financial needs such as recognition and prestige are seemingly frustrated beyond hope of improvement. In effect, the individual asks to be compensated with material rewards for having to endure a lack of psychological rewards.

Motivators are likely to be highly subjective, personalized experiences like feelings of growth, achievement, and significance. In a sense they are all related to mastery of the environment, and they do not become jaded because the environment (broadly conceived) is really much too big ever to be mastered. Therefore, every success reveals a greater challenge just beyond, and the individual is drawn toward it in hopes of more exhilaration and the thrill of winning again. Being "motivated by a motivator" is clearly a sport for people who are psychologically well built, relatively untrammeled by fears, and fond of causing events to happen. Being motivated by satisfiers is a far more common way of life, both because many people still don't get enough satisfaction to cause these needs to fade and because some people do not develop beyond the point where it seems sufficient to wait passively for events to happen. Yet it is already clear that technology and expanding economies can probably do away with at least the first of these barriers, and the second may be weakened considerably as an indirect consequence of generally increased prosperity. We have every reason to expect, therefore, that "motivation by motivators" will become increasingly common whether management plans it that way or not.

There are, incidentally, some perfectly respectable social scientists

who hold that the continual pursuit of job mastery, or of enlargement of the self, that we have been describing as healthy is not healthy at all. They would say that it is a sort of compulsive inability to come to terms with mortality and with one's ultimate insignificance in a huge, indifferent universe. They would propose a sort of good-natured humility, in which satisfiers are enjoyed gratefully and only the more intolerable pressures of the environment are resisted, as a "healthier" and more peaceful way of life. The conflict between this position and the one being developed in this book is basically philosophical, and it is hardly necessary to debate the pros and cons at any length here. Suffice it to say that if the reader delves very far into certain psychiatric or existentialist writings, he will come upon a point of view which disputes the main theme of this book and of the research on which it rests.

The dynamics of motives operate in a rather devious fashion which makes it all the harder to understand them. Things are seldom what they seem in the motivational world. Three important reasons for this deceptive quality may be called masking, substitution, and maturation. *Masking* has the effect of concealing potentially important motives so well that they may not even seem to be present at all. This happens when another, more urgent motive has not yet been satiated and therefore continues to dominate an individual's actions, perhaps even seeming to be the very core of his personality and the guiding purpose of his life. The motive that does the masking because it is still unsatisfied is very likely to be a desire for material things or for security, while the masked motive is more likely to be an intangible need like prestige or achievement.

Yet, if the overhanging need can somehow be cleared away, the underlying one will increasingly take over and guide the individual into new interests and attitudes. He may seem like a "new" man, revealing unsuspected depths and potentialities. Yet he is not a new man at all; he is simply a more highly developed version of himself. Clearing away the overhanging need can be accomplished in two very different ways: either by living in an environment of abundance which provides all the comforts and security one could want or by extreme forms of suffering which lead to resignation and the abandonment of material desires. The more severe route can be seen in the lives of many artists and religious figures; the more privileged route in the lives of aristocratic statesmen and more recently in the rising demand for greater job satisfaction among technical and professional workers.

Since more people are worried about bread and butter than about the abstract joys of accomplishment, masking must be very common. Perhaps this is why the layman sometimes finds it so hard to reconcile the psychologist's stress on "higher" motives with his own experience of what people are like. Higher motives have been masked in most men throughout history—poverty has seen to that. Further, no mass conversions to altruism are likely to occur if prosperity gradually becomes more widespread. There will be more people who are unable to tolerate dull or meaningless jobs that do not challenge their abilities. The symptoms of unmasked higher motives are likely to be increased turnover and symptomatic wage demands in the company that does not understand what has happened and frequent changes in organization and job design in the company that does understand.

The second complicating feature of motives is the capacity of one to *substitute* for another. The symptomatic wage demands already described are a good illustration of substitution: In fact, they may even help to explain the phenomenon of "wage push" inflation. There are, of course, many causes for the persistent pursuit of higher wages even after monetary needs have been well satisfied and even when they cancel themselves out by inducing price increases. The causes are economic and political as well as psychological, but we shall dwell only on the latter here.

There seems to be a feeling among many working people that there is a basic, hard-to-define injustice in their lives which has not been erased by any of the benefits they have won and, furthermore, that it must somehow be management's fault that this nameless wrong continues to exist. Baiting the employer by exacting a heavier price for employment is not an exclusively economic maneuver; it may also be a device for redressing a purely psychological grievance. Argyris[38] is moving toward this point of view as he proceeds with his analysis of the effects of diminishing the leeway for individual style and variation in large organizations. As a result of this continuing psychological impoverishment, which cannot be offset by material enrichment, he believes that employees are developing a new concept of wages:

> They are seen less as rewards for productivity and more as management's obligation for the kind of world [the workers believe] management has created. Consequently, the typical wage increases are seen more as management fulfilling its obligation and less as a motivator or rewarder of work.

Thus, entirely apart from the question of whether the additional money received was necessary for purchasing things that he needed, it brings with it the grim satisfaction of making the employer share the burden of the employee's unfulfilled, unrewarding existence. The money is less of a comfort in itself than the pleasure of successfully wringing it from a reluctant and probably indignant management. But the money also serves as a somewhat inadequate form of compensation for the injustice it does not erase: the fact that the employee will continue to endure a tedious existence.

What is behind this seemingly incurable grudge against management? The Marxists have a pat answer in the class struggle and the capitalist exploitation of labor; but historically the middle class has been absorbing the proletariat rather than clashing with it, and it is a moot point who has been exploiting whom. The classical labor theorists have their own answer in Samuel Gompers' pithy statement that what labor wanted was simply "more." In its modern form this philosophy holds that not merely more dollars but a higher proportion of total company earnings should be paid out in wages. There probably are some working men who would be glad to see the social leveling that such a redistribution of income would create, even at the cost of the economic slowdown it would also create. But on the whole it seems questionable whether workers would be significantly happier or be any more relieved of their feelings of injustice if their wages cut deeper into company earnings. It is true that everyone would probably "like" more money, but if people are well paid to begin with, it does not follow that they necessarily want more money or that getting it would make a difference in their attitudes. Gompers notwithstanding, what most workers want with regard to money is not "more" but "enough."

What they will probably always want more of is a dignified and satisfying work life: less tedium, less exclusion from planning, less personal insignificance. More than they want a higher proportion of company earnings, they want responsibility for a broader segment of the production process and the leeway to decide how it should be operated. That they probably cannot articulate such desires and might even reject the idea if it were put to them in no way invalidates this point of view. Workers, like everyone else, are subject to masking which conceals their deeper needs as long as others are still acute; they reveal their motives more accurately in their behavior than in anything they are likely to say about themselves. Some, no

doubt, recognize that a dull and impotent life is one long insult; and others simply feel the insult without knowing from whence it comes. It springs from the dullness of their work rather than from any lack of money to spend on diversions after work.

Thus we arrive, somewhat circuitously, at a psychological diagnosis of excessive wage demands and at an illustration of the substitution of motives. The basic need is for a more significant role at work, which would in turn lead to greater self-respect. But esoteric needs like this are hard to express and even harder to recognize for what they are. More importantly, they are not very likely to be fulfilled. Conscious that something is missing, the worker assumes that whatever this something is must be withheld by whoever controls his unfathomable environment. Because management controls so much and he controls so little, he credits management with omnipotence and therefore blames it for his vague and troubling dissatisfactions. He cannot demand significance and self-respect; even if he sensed that they were at the root of his problems, he would hardly know what specific changes to ask for. If he has ever experienced real dignity or dared to aspire to it, he is in the most anguished position of all because he *knows* how remote and unlikely his goal is.

But if satisfaction cannot be had, revenge can. Management hates to part with its money, and the worker does not mind acquiring some more. Thus winning more money—or, more precisely, successfully pressuring management—becomes an important motive by substituting for the achievement and dignity that cannot be won. The existence of this substitute does not, in itself, produce demands at the bargaining table, but it does put the worker in a highly receptive frame of mind when his agents seek his support by proposing to bargain for more money. The company, in his eyes, can certainly afford it, and it is small enough compensation for as monotonous a job as his. All wage demands are not so irrational, of course; when they are, a complex substitution process such as this may very well be at the bottom of it. One has to wonder, therefore, to what extent inflation may be one of the prices we pay for putting men into jobs that were designed for automatons.

The third characteristic of motives which makes them difficult to understand is *maturation*. Of course it is the individual who matures, not his motives. There is, however, a normal waxing and waning of motives as the individual grows older and his attention shifts from the problems of youth to those of adulthood, then of maturity, and

finally of old age. If he is fortunate enough to have gotten the problems of one stage pretty well solved before those of another stage come along, he will slip smoothly into being concerned with a newer and more appropriate set of needs. If he has not been so fortunate, he may continue to fight yesterday's battles while new ones are, in effect, going on all around him.

Thus the young adult just entering the labor market will be concerned, typically, with locating the most promising career field and the most remunerative employer, or at least the most useful one for training purposes. Somewhat later he will be more concerned with learning how to advance himself within his chosen field and his chosen company; the actual selection of both will ordinarily have ceased to be a burning question. If he has not settled on a general type of employment in which to acquire experience and thereby to increase the price he can demand for his services in the labor market, he may continue to flounder. Meanwhile his contemporaries have begun to establish themselves and are becoming much more interested in their new problems than in his old ones. The same analogy could be drawn at any of the major milestones in career development: Each is considerably easier to pass if the previous one has been worked out successfully.

The gradual shifting of motives due to the maturation of the individual is really a special case of the "reshuffling" principle we have already described. That is, a person learns how to satisfy the needs that one phase of his life thrusts upon him, and having satisfied them, he is no longer very strongly motivated by them. Instead he anticipates newer needs. This is why it is a mistake to continue appealing to workers by satisfying needs that are already satisfied. Such a program will stimulate only the stymied or the very young, and it will leave the more accomplished individuals cold.

Thus a person's motives may not always be the same, especially if he is young and lives in a country whose economy makes it possible for him to work his way above the subsistence level while he is still young. At any given time he is likely to have a motivational potential—that is, a capacity for responding to new incentives and rewards —which he has not yet given any hint of possessing. This potential is likely to remain masked until his more basic needs are attended to and will not ordinarily spring forth merely because an incentive has been flourished before him. As a matter of fact, his overt pursuit

of a particular goal may give a completely misleading impression of what his true motivation is like. Lastly, time itself will gradually realign the importance of his motives. Motivation is not, therefore, a particularly straightforward process, which is precisely why so many straightforward schemes for motivating employees achieve such unspectacular results.

Chapter 16

The Concept of Self

DESPITE ALL THE APPARENT INCONSISTENCY, THERE IS A UNIfying thread running through an individual's motivational history. This is provided by the set of attitudes he develops toward himself. Some are conscious, others are unconscious, and many are of that murky, ill-defined variety that is neither entirely conscious nor unconscious. Further, there is a considerable element of fiction in most people's ideas about themselves. The average individual is not particularly well acquainted with himself, so to speak, but he remains quite faithful to his not-so-accurate image of himself and thereby acquires some consistency.

The young child reaches certain conclusions about what sort of person he is, or more precisely he develops certain vague hunches from the way other people behave toward him. As time goes on, these hunches fit together fairly well because some are frequently reinforced by experience while others get little re-emphasis and fall away. Throughout his life he is motivated—highly motivated—by the desire to behave in a manner consistent with the symbolic role he has accepted as "himself." His clothing, mannerisms, tastes, and opinions will all tend to fit his notion of what his kind of person ought to do. In fact, his actions are often so determined by the role he is playing that people who know him well can predict his reactions quite accurately. There is a sense, in other words, in which we all become creatures of our ideas about ourselves and of our compulsion to behave consistently with those ideas.

The outlines of this self-image are fairly well etched in early childhood; thereafter they evolve and take on specific ways of expressing themselves, but they do not ordinarily change very radically. This is why biographical research is often so revealing. Even as he sheds his childish ways and expands his adult horizons, the individual remains true to his symbolic self. He simply finds more sophisticated ways to express it. Thus the achievement-motivated adult may always have regarded himself as "destined" to accomplish great things; in

selecting his goals and persevering toward them he is only doing what he feels is appropriate for someone like himself. Similarly, a security-oriented person may always have regarded himself as a more or less helpless audience to the events that shape his fate; his passivity and reluctance to accept change are traits that a person in his predicament "ought" to have. In fact, we all tend to be somewhat captured by the roles we play, and the unfolding of motives that goes on throughout our lives is in many ways a continuing exploration of these roles.

Thus there is an underlying pattern of consistency in motivation, despite masking, substitution, and the changes of maturation. The individual does not ordinarily deviate very far, or for very long, from his basic ideas about himself. Because he wants to *be* a particular kind of person, he tailors his actions and even his thoughts to what he thinks is appropriate for that kind of person. There is, of course, a certain amount of illusion in all this role playing. Particularly if a person is immature or unsure of his status, what he is often matters less to him than what other people seem to *think* he is. This is one reason why courtesy and face saving can be so important: Few experiences are so devastating as having one's pet illusions about oneself openly flouted.

Thus the worker who fancies that he has a mind of his own and that he is capable of exercising some degree of judgment may be left without any pride at all by a production-centered supervisor. This is an intolerable situation; so to salvage some self-respect the worker may find himself hating the supervisor and devising ways to obstruct him. Anyone who places himself athwart someone else's self-concept is likely to find that cooperation is given grudgingly, if at all. Yet the same production-centered supervisor may be welcomed by another kind of worker, one who is rather puzzled by the world and reluctant to make decisions about it for himself. Indeed, without a strong hand to guide him, he would be exposed to the most damaging kinds of uncertainty and self-doubt. So it can be just as devastating to leave a self-concept unsupported as it is to oppose it.

Here lies the nub of the problem of supervision. An adult self-concept has a high degree of inertia; neither the supervisor's preconceptions nor the general opinion of the rest of society is likely to change it very much. It preserves itself, and the individual's sanity with it, by perceiving the world in its own way and by assuming, when necessary, that the rest of the world is out of step. People insist stubbornly on being themselves, and managing them can be quite

an exasperating process if their work requires that they "be" something other than themselves. But because self-concepts vary so greatly there is no single set of needs that all workers want to find satisfaction for at work. Therefore, no single supervisory style will lead to optimum effort from all workers.

The main defect of supervisory relations is not that production-centered supervision is necessarily inferior to other styles but rather that it is applied so indiscriminately. A supervisor, being human, is entitled to whatever style of supervising comes most naturally to him. But this does not make it practical to let any supervisor supervise anybody. We shall have more to say about leadership presently; meantime it is important to note that the self-concept of the individual worker is ignored at the organization's peril.

How do self-concepts grow? In youth, emerging ideas about oneself are shaped by reference to other people. Until he knows which roles he can play well enough to convince other people that he belongs in them, a child has no one to "be"; his personality is in a sense confirmed by the impressions he makes on others. He does not necessarily become the sort of person that other people want him to be; rather, he becomes the sort of person he thinks he can persuade them he is. As he grows older, his role becomes self-sustaining; now he *knows* what sort of person he is and acts accordingly, taking it for granted that the world accepts his own definition of himself. Still later he may even achieve some freedom from his role and learn to conduct himself so as to attain results that he wants, regardless of whether this means departing from his customary attitudes.

Initially, and in many cases throughout life, the self-concept is really a social concept, and other people are the standards against which the emerging "self" is measured and defined. Thus ideas of superiority, equality, and inferiority appear as the child encounters other people and seeks a consistent set of guidelines to follow in dealing with them. He discovers what kinds of activities, if any, he can excel in and what kinds he cannot do well in. Competence begets confidence and vice versa; a sort of chain reaction is established which leads to a more or less consistent level of self-assurance (or timidity, as the case may be) which may last for a lifetime.

The sense of competence has a profound and lasting effect on the activities that the individual will willingly undertake and on the amount of determination he will bring to the effort. It therefore has a great deal to do with his ultimate choice of a career and with his eventual fortunes in that career. Most people have at least some

option in deciding what they shall do for a living, and given that option, they will try to find a career that fits the role they have been playing since childhood.

However, talents do not blossom forth automatically into an appropriate sense of competence. For, in addition to acquiring a relative sense of how well he can do things, a person also acquires a relative sense of what he deserves. In childhood a sense of self-worth is not achieved but conferred; it is the attitudes of other people (especially his parents) that tell the child how much of an intrinsic claim he has on the attention and indulgence of others. The degree to which a child is made to feel welcome or unwelcome, valued or worthless, has a great deal to do with what kind of reception he learns to expect from others. It therefore colors his willingness to *try* to do things well, quite apart from his *ability* to do them well. Thus a highly capable individual may attempt very little because he feels unworthy of the rewards that come with achievement, while a person of modest talents may successfully undertake a great deal because he feels he deserves all the rewards he can get.

More commonly, however, the sense of competence and the sense of self-worth will be consistent with each other. Because of this, some people become habitual winners and others become habitual losers, while most become occasional winners and occasional losers. The important point is that their expectations become fairly stable. Most adults have learned from experience how well they can handle various tasks as compared to the way other people can handle them, and they also know fairly accurately how much applause and remuneration to expect relative to what other people get. If many people are disappointed by what they earn or accomplish, few are surprised.

The self-concept that the individual brings to his job is, therefore, an amalgam of many things: the reception his parents gave him, the roles he has learned to play convincingly with his peers, his record of past successes and failures, and his notion of what rewards he deserves. His conduct at work will reflect this self-concept, and his morale—that is to say, his attitude toward his job—will be heavily influenced by whether the job lets him be the kind of person he thinks he is.

The social roots of the self-concept, and the importance of the self-concept in industrial relations, are nowhere so well illustrated as in the process by which a person tries to determine whether he is being fairly paid. There is, of course, no single routine that everyone goes through in arriving at his judgment; most of the time the process is

unconscious and therefore rather disorderly. But despite their complexities, it is possible to analyze the reasons that are commonly given for feeling that a wage is fair or unfair and to recognize the underlying guidelines.

To begin with, income is a status barometer *par excellence.* Perhaps it shouldn't be, but it is. No doubt there are many fine people with modest incomes and many undeserving people with big ones. Income certainly doesn't reflect how nice people are or, necessarily, how hard they work or what they deserve. It reflects only the rewards they get. But despite its imperfections it is the primary measurement by which most people rate their own, and everyone else's, status. There are at least three reasons for this: First, nearly everyone receives some kind of income, so it is a standard that can be applied to practically anybody; second, most other status indicators—particularly the kind that can be consumed conspicuously—have to be purchased anyway; and, third, money comes in precise denominations and can be measured right down to the penny. It is completely unambiguous; there can be no doubt as to what is more and what is less or whether income is increasing or decreasing. Therefore, whether or not income is a measure of anything relevant, it can be measured accurately itself.

So the self-concept very often seizes upon income as its most useful single index of whether the world agrees with it. No other bit of feedback is quite so universal, so readily transferable to other forms, or so precise. There are, it is true, some people whose values are not so mundane, but few people in as socially mobile a country as America can be indifferent to so universal a status indicator as income. Our national preoccupation with income is perhaps less of a moral defect than a fascination with the possibility of actually affecting one's own status and standard of living.

In any case income takes on psychological overtones that go far beyond mere purchasing power. Granted that a level of earnings which does not permit a safe, healthful existence will be viewed as unfair, granted also that there are some sizable pockets of such incomes in the American economy, although these are increasingly the exception. Most Americans are or will be viewing their incomes from the standpoint of someone who can buy all that he needs but not necessarily all that he wants. How does such a person assess the fairness of his income?

He does it by comparing his income with what he thinks is being earned by certain other groups. These "reference groups" are usually

chosen because clues to their incomes are readily available (neighbors, friends, or people with "published" incomes such as union members or government employees) or because they represent a status level which he feels he should equal or exceed (college classmates or employees of equal seniority). In other words, he selects his reference groups either because he can hardly help but compare himself with them or because his self-concept compels him to compare himself with them. In both cases he is seeking feedback for the all-important question of whether the world agrees with his own estimate of himself.

In effect, he conducts a highly informal salary survey, but it differs from a true survey in three important respects. First, his "data" are frequently irrelevant: They may not reflect the going market price for his services, but rather a price that can be commanded by better-situated workers with whom he would like to equate himself. Second, his data are often inaccurate, being based on rumor, indirect evidence, or sheer guesswork—all of which usually have an inflationary effect. Third, his conclusions will be biased (understandably) by a rather generous weighting of his own importance in comparison with other people's. All this means that some degree of dissatisfaction with income is almost inevitable, even in someone who is being fairly paid relative to the market.

The market price for a man's services therefore lags behind the "ego price." But in an important sense the ego price has already changed the character of the wage market; for very few people are in a truly free market in which the price of their services is determined exclusively by supply and demand. A free-market price for a man's services would be the minimum cost of replacing him, but custom, contracts, and the law itself effectively prevent so rigorous a market from operating. This was not always true. In the early industrial economy described by Adam Smith, competition between workers held their wages very close to the "dry crust" level of subsistence. Many forces have contributed to the change, not the least of which is the intolerable position in which a free-wage market puts the ego —and even people who subsist on dry crusts have egos. The degradation of having to live in a world that contradicts one's self-concept is certainly no less painful than a nearly empty stomach—probably more so. Very few people will ever be paid their full "ego price" for their work, but very few people are paid the free-market price any longer, either. The wage market has been made to conform to the way in which self-concepts function rather than vice versa.

Chapter 17

The Environment

SOMETIME DURING HIS EARLIEST MONTHS A CHILD BEGINS TO sense that the universe is not entirely under his control and that there may indeed be a rather big world out there which is not merely an extension of himself. The realization continues to grow throughout life, and as it does, the individual constructs a mental image of how "the world out there" is likely to affect him. Because he literally knows no other environment, he assumes that his image is real and conducts himself accordingly. To understand the individual, his "environment" has to be defined subjectively: It consists of anything he is aware of, or thinks he is aware of, that can have an effect on him.

Whether that environment has any substance of its own does not really matter. People always behave as if the world is as they presume it is, but since they differ vastly among themselves as to what the world is really like, their actions often seem incomprehensible to each other. Walter Lippmann summarized the phenomenon rather neatly more than forty years ago:[39]

> What each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him. If his atlas tells him that the world is flat, he will not sail near what he believes to be the edge of our planet for fear of falling off. If his maps include a fountain of eternal youth, a Ponce de Leon will go in quest of it. If someone digs up yellow dirt that looks like gold, he will act for a time exactly as if he had found gold. The way in which the world is imagined determines at any particular moment what men will do. It does not determine what they will achieve. It determines their effort, their feelings, their hopes, not their accomplishments or results.

We can find examples of this much closer to home. Take, for example, the incentive pay schemes so often proposed as motivational panaceas for all workers, usually because they work well with managers and with salesmen. Yet the production worker, who ex-

pects to spend his working life at his bench, may see the plan as a device to coax him into forsaking his long-term interests for a short-term gain. That is, if he does produce more, he expects that work standards will be raised, or that he will be ostracized, so that his increased earnings simply would not be worth the continuing discomfort they bring. Because his personal environment is static and unyielding, his strategy is to make the best of an unkind fate and forego any illusions of being able to change it. The incentive pay scheme, seen against this background, is a foolish bargain that sells his peace of mind at a ridiculously cheap price. Management will usually be seen either as slyly attempting to lure him into lasting disadvantage or else as astonishingly naïve. For its part, management is likely to feel that the unresponsive worker does not know where his own best interests lie, either because he has not been properly indoctrinated or because he is remarkably lacking in ambition.

Yet the important point is that the worker behaves as if his environment were real and not as if management's or anyone else's environment were real. And management behaves as if its environment were real, and so on *ad infinitum*. Much labor–management conflict, and political conflict as well, results from a failure to realize that the other fellow may live in a very different kind of world and, accordingly, that his fundamental outlook on what is good and bad, possible and impossible, is likely to be very different from our own.

While there are, in this sense, many different "environments" within a single organization, they are likely to have at least one common feature: The individual is very seldom a villain in his own eyes. His position is clearly defensible in terms of the way he understands his environment. If there has to be a villain to account for some injustice, it is always some other fellow—who is probably acting from the purest of motives as far as *his* perspective on the environment is concerned.

The implicit notions that people have about what the world is like and about what kinds of actions are appropriate in such a world become ingrained as a result of early experiences. Perhaps the most important experience of all is the example set by parents and other adults. We have already noted how children acquire attitudes that prepare them for the kinds of economic roles their parents are already playing. As children grow older, they are exposed to the wider environment of the neighborhood, but even here they will usually

be receiving a fairly uniform set of impressions about the working world that lies a few years ahead of them, simply because their neighbors are likely to have incomes, educations, and job prospects that are similar to their parents'.

Consequently, long before he first presents himself at the door of the employment office—even before he makes the educational choices that determine which doors may be open to him—a young person will already have acquired a set of assumptions about what the world is like, what he can expect from it, and how he should conduct himself in it. Sometimes the realities of the working world will force their way into these assumptions and at least broaden them, but for the most part they are seldom questioned. As time goes on, people find that their most familiar ideas are more reassuring than new ones, regardless of which are fact and which are fiction. To outgrow a parochial attitude, especially when it puts one's past actions in a rather petty light, is a difficult process that calls for bigness of character. It is a tribute to the human spirit that it happens all the time, but it is also a commentary on the human spirit that it does not happen to everyone.

An individual's preconceptions about his environment have a great deal to do with whether he will be bold or meek, optimistic or pessimistic, vocal or impassive, for no matter what kind of world he thinks he is living in, he always tries to behave consistently with his view of it. In fact, his ideas about himself are in many ways the obverse of his ideas about his environment; they are like two sides of a coin, each reflecting the individual's experience and his attempt to explain that experience in a way that provides reasonable comfort to his ego.

Like his self-concept, the individual's implicit ideas about what kind of environment he is living in are seldom articulated or even conscious. Analyzing it is therefore a somewhat arbitrary matter. Insofar as they affect his working behavior and attitudes, however, the "pictures" that the individual forms of his environment have two important aspects: first, the power aspect—whether the environment is seen as omnipotent or as controllable to some degree; second, the reward aspect—whether the environment is seen as benevolent or harsh.

There are any number of possible combinations of environmental perceptions, but for the sake of a brief, clear analysis we shall deal only with the extremes. While this will serve to illustrate principles,

it must be remembered that portraits drawn in this manner are necessarily caricatures. People are considerably more complex and subtle, and considerably less extreme, than the "types" we shall now portray.

As to *power,* the individual gradually acquires some concept of what causes events which affect him. Broadly speaking, all of these events can be classified into those he thinks he can influence to some degree and those he thinks he can't influence at all. The proportion over which he thinks he has some measure of control is probably a direct reflection of how successful and how lucky he has been in his efforts to get what he wanted, as well as of how indulgent the people in his environment have been. If he comes to believe that he can manipulate events so that they turn out the way he wants them most of the time, then his environment and the people in it will really be his tools and his raw material, and the most appropriate role for him to play in such a world is that of the planner, organizer, and manager. He will develop the *habit* of managing and will expect to control any situation in which he finds himself, largely because the world as he sees it is so thoroughly manageable.

But suppose that the proportions are reversed; suppose the individual learns, as a great many do, that events will take their own course with him whether he tries to cope with them or not. In this case his environment will be his master, and his most appropriate role will be humbly to comply with whatever happens to come along. Instead of seeking opportunities he will seek instructions. Yet by the same token he will not be particularly shaken by disappointments because he did not expect a great deal to begin with. Precisely because his fate is largely out of his hands, he is not likely to take his career or income very seriously. While he will protest when everyone else is protesting, his main interests are likely to be in his diversions—especially in those he cannot control, like sporting events, which enable him to play his appropriate role as a passive spectator.

The *reward* aspect of the environment is largely determined by the economic level of the society in which the individual was raised, although the spending habits of his family are also pertinent. In a community where few people are able to afford more than a few sparse creature comforts, families have little leeway for generosity, and most children are apt to grow up expecting to work hard for little enough in return. In more prosperous communities there is

more room for variation among families: Some will spend freely and possibly even borrow freely in order to enjoy what they consider the good things of life; others will perhaps be equally able to spend but more likely to save. Therefore, the children of such communities are likely to expect more of their environment than the children of poorer areas: Some will learn to expect abundance and comforts more or less to rain down on them automatically, while others expect to be able to get such good things if they work, or maneuver, or plead for them, and still others expect to get only a modicum of tangible rewards and to find their main satisfactions in service.

In any event, either through his own experience or through vicarious knowledge of rewards that others receive, a person comes to regard his environment as having a certain capability for providing him with things he may want. He is likely to be quite skeptical of promises that exceed what he has learned to expect, and he is also likely to be rather outraged at rewards that fall short of his expectations. This is partly why companies with histories of strained labor relations find it hard to achieve results (at least initially) with human relations programs or Scanlon-type incentive plans: Their employees have learned to interpret any management action cynically. It is also why it sometimes causes less furor to offer no wage increase at all than to offer one so small that employees regard it as insulting.

Expectations of reward work hand in hand with concepts of power to produce an underlying notion of what the environment is like, which in turn has ramifications in motives and behavior. Since the interaction of these two aspects of the psychological environment is easiest to see at the extremes, we shall illustrate it with caricatures of the four possible combinations of extremes. Again, since most people (at least in economically advanced countries) do not have extreme perceptions of their environments, these factors will actually function with considerably more subtlety for them than would seem to be the case in these examples.

First, consider someone who has learned to have both high expectations of reward and a high sense of power to influence his environment. He will probably feel that life is full of exciting possibilities for him and that he can very likely get whatever he wants if he puts his mind to it. His dominant motive will probably be an achievement drive. The thought that he may fail at something

is no doubt rather foreign to him, and should he fail he may be baffled for a time, although he will recover soon enough and have another try at it.

He is likely to be a thoroughgoing optimist, so much so that he takes his optimism for granted and maintains a calm, unsurprised attitude toward his successes. Probably he seldom experiences much anxiety, except in the heat of a difficult situation, and even then it will be more of an exhilarating tingle than a sickening feeling of foreboding. He may be somewhat lacking in understanding of people who are more fearful or passive than he is, not out of snobbishness but merely because he hasn't much awareness of how crippling deep fear can be. He is probably the product of a fortunate childhood in a fortunate society.

Second, take a person who also has high reward expectations but who feels that he has only a low degree of influence on the happenings in his environment. His will be a rather privileged life, and much of his thinking will revolve around attempts to justify and preserve these privileges. Since bettering his position seems unlikely, or at any rate out of his hands, he concentrates on protecting what he has. He may gamble for diversion but not to enhance his estate; economic risks will not attract him because the outcome will seem capricious and unreliable. He is more concerned with failures than with successes, partly because he needs no successes and partly because failures will seem like an ever-present possibility to be guarded against.

Since his station in life will usually have been won for him by his forebears, he will be conscious of his heritage and fearful that he may not be equal to it. However, he is less likely to emulate the acquisitive ways of his predecessors than to demonstrate that he knows how to spend money in a sophisticated way. In a sense what Thorstein Veblen labeled "conspicuous consumption" is this person's way of proving that he has the taste and breeding to qualify for wealth. He is likely to be proud, gay, and insouciant when all is going well but easily alarmed by bad news.

In many ways he can be compared to a general who has to defend a plush area with untrained troops against a powerful and resourceful enemy. His life is sweet, but it is also precarious; he is well acquainted with fear although he can usually control it well enough. He is not likely to be very sympathetic toward others, largely because

he is too absorbed in his own problems to be particularly aware of other people's. He is likely to be the pampered product of a well-to-do background.

Third, take the case of someone who has low reward expectations but feels a high degree of power over his environment. He may very well decide that the environment can be reshaped to become more rewarding if he will work at it hard enough and accumulate enough money. Consequently he is likely to be primarily money-motivated and to pursue wealth with relentless vigor—perhaps even with a dash of unscrupulousness at times. Successes will seem to be entirely possible, but so will failures. Yet the game will be eminently worth the candle, and failures can be tolerated if the successes are big enough. Determination, grit, and stubborn unwillingness to quit will be the strategy most likely to pay off for him: Accordingly he will come back more energetically than ever after a setback and will not rest on his laurels after a success. He will feel a certain guarded optimism, never sure enough of success to become complacent but never really doubting that he can win in the long run.

He will be socially mobile, struggling upward—possibly with the gaudy pretensions of the *parvenu* or just as possibly with a single-minded severity that leaves little room for anything but his business. The people with whom he works will note him as a comer, a fireball, a man to watch. He will be under a perpetual strain, unable to settle for what he has already acquired and uncertain that he can acquire more soon enough. Therefore, he will be inwardly tense and may reveal this in occasional eruptions of temper. While he demands more of himself than he does of anyone else, he may be quite intolerant of errors by people whose assistance he needs. However, he knows what it means to be an underdog, and in his calmer moments he can be very generous and sympathetic toward his subordinates.

He is likely to be the product of a society that is in transition from poverty to greater wealth. It was men like him who became the first capitalists in the early days of the Industrial Revolution and who are emerging today as business or political leaders in economically awakening areas. The pattern has been particularly notable among slumdwellers in big American cities, which indicates that economic deprivation can release a terrific flow of enterprise if there are enough opportunities for personal gain to create a sense of power over the environment.

Finally, consider a person who has low reward expectations and who also feels a low degree of power over his environment. For him life will be a vale of tears. While he may acquire a peasant's wisdom that enables him to appreciate simple things and to laugh occasionally, the imminence of death and the indifference of the world will seldom be far from his thoughts. His primary motive will be to secure at least a bare subsistence for himself and his family, and if he ever succeeds in insuring even a meager income for himself—for example, by getting a salary or a pension—he may regard himself as unusually fortunate.

He more or less expects to fail in projects undertaken at his own initiative; therefore, he seldom acts except out of habit or in obedience to someone else's instructions. He is passive and pessimistic but probably not particularly disturbed at his lot. It is only when people like himself begin acquiring some safety and comfort that the possibility of improvement becomes meaningful to him, and only then can he be stirred out of his apathy by job opportunities or by demagogues.

Ordinarily, he spends much of his life waiting, or working listlessly, or socializing amiably with people like himself. He is under relatively little tension. Life holds no surprises for him since he expects no more than he gets, and it holds no terrors for him because he expects no mercy. He can be whipped into mass hysterias, because a leader who seems to understand his incomprehensible world is worth following blindly, but he is not likely to get particularly agitated about anything by himself. He is capable of a deep and genuine sympathy for other people—even those who abuse him. Economically, he is nearly inert—producing little, spending perhaps a little more than he earns—but even his debts will not be enough to enrich a lender because of his limited capacity to repay them.

Such resigned, ineffectual people have made up the majority of mankind until a few hundred years ago, and in countries which have not yet been industrialized they are probably still a majority. Nor are they uncommon in industrialized countries. What Mayo called anomie is precisely the reaction of people with little hope to a bewildering, overpowering environment.

There is a common thread running through these four fictitious sketches and through the millions of portraits that could be drawn of real people and their perceived environments: *The individual is always following a sensible strategy for getting along in the kind*

of world he thinks he lives in. He is always seeking his maximum advantage. But it is now clear that "advantage" has to be defined psychologically rather than economically. For the discredited ideas about people behaving like "economic men" were not so far from the truth after all; they failed the test of experience largely because they interpreted advantage too narrowly, in an exclusively financial sense.

But financial advantage is only one kind of advantage, and it makes sense in only some (not all) of the "environments" that people think they are living in. There are other kinds of advantage which some people seek just as persistently as others seek money. The monetary theories of motivation have lost some of their credibility because they tried to generalize the entrepreneur's perception of his world to the employee's perception of his; they failed to recognize that in a psychological sense there are many different worlds on this planet, even many worlds in one company.

Chapter 18

Psychological Advantage

THERE IS AN UNDERLYING ORDER TO HUMAN BEHAVIOR ON the job: People do constantly seek to serve their own best interests. But because they do not share a common belief in what is possible or valuable for them in this life, they define their best interests in an enormous variety of ways. From this perspective the theory of "economic man" is nothing more than a specific instance of a more comprehensive theory. Like most partial explanations, it was thoroughly punctured when it acquired pretensions of being universal. The pursuit of advantage in some form is probably universal, but the specific pursuit of financial advantage most certainly is not universal at all.

Psychological advantage—that is, the individual's private notions about what constitutes his own best interests—is a product of the way he perceives his environment and his ability to affect it. Advantage depends first of all on what seems to be possible—on what the environment can be reasonably expected to yield—and secondly on which of these possible outcomes, if any, is desirable. We can therefore expect that a man's ideas about his own best interests will be strongly influenced by whether he feels that he has much power over the events that affect him and on which rewards he regards as worthwhile.

This is the phenomenon on which so many well-intentioned and carefully prepared incentive programs have foundered. Management cannot assume that its view of the environment is shared by the people it manages. We shall have more to say on this point later; for the moment it should be noted that effective planning for incentives requires a first-hand knowledge of how employees perceive their job environment.

If the point seems self-evident, it is nonetheless not yet widely accepted in practice. Management, with its bird's-eye view of its organization, can easily misjudge the perspective from which the

individual employee, with his worm's-eye view of the same organization, will judge its actions. This is often diagnosed as a problem in communication, that is, as a failure by management to explain its intentions clearly enough, or to deliver its message convincingly enough, to its employees. But more than that is at fault. Everyone in an organization—the manager included—views the organization in a somewhat parochial light. Both their position in the power hierarchy and their functional role will color their opinion of how the enterprise should be run. There are, in other words, many competing schools of thought within the organization as to what its mission is, what its operating strategy should be, and where its main strengths and weaknesses lie.

Management's thoughts may be more "official" than the rest, but they are not necessarily more plausible or more digestible. This is why a management policy must make sense in the light of the individual's perception of his environment and what he regards as his own advantage. When that perception is understood, then perhaps misunderstandings can be cleared up, diverging points of view can be accommodated, or at least the lines of disagreement can be clearly stated. Effective communication requires a knowledge of what the "audience" *wants* to hear, since this colors what they *will* hear. Therefore, the opinions of the people who comprise the organization, and more particularly the environmental forces that shape those opinions, must be intimately understood if management is to guide the organization effectively toward its goals. This is true regardless of whether the organization seeks cooperation through appeals to loyalty and self-interest, as in an enlightened commercial enterprise, or through sheer coercion, as in a police state. People pursue whatever they consider to be their best interests regardless of whether anyone else, including those who wield power over their working lives, shares their opinion of where their advantage lies.

To illustrate this point, consider first the by now familiar problem of managing scientific and creative personnel. As the need for such specialists in industry multiplied during the 1950's, they were brought from academic and artistic environments into the far more tightly managed world of the corporation. The result was often an outright clash. To the professional, his mastery of his field entitled him to be heard with respect and to produce results in his own way, regardless of how peculiar those ways might seem to the layman. He wanted a role *within* the organization very much like the one that has been traditionally reserved for the outside consultant.

While there were no doubt some prima donnas among them, especially those who were beginning their professional careers and therefore were a bit insecure in their new status, relatively few were trying to trade on their scarcity in order to gain special privileges for themselves. Rather, it was a question of what kind of environment was most appropriate for accomplishing their work. Because they dealt primarily in ideas, and not in tangible products that could be weighed or counted, the ordinary methods of work measurement seemed inappropriate. So did the ordinary methods of assuring that work gets done; for the professional, if he is to accomplish anything at all, must exercise a considerable degree of self-discipline. Therefore, the ordinary mechanisms of industrial discipline seemed not only unnecessary but insulting.

The professional wanted *carte blanche* to operate pretty much as he saw fit in an environment full of coordination and control. He wanted to be the exception to the rule in a system unaccustomed to making exceptions. He wanted all this in the name of helping to get the organization's work done. But his motives ran deeper and were not so altruistic as all that. He also wanted to work in a comfortable atmosphere free of petty irritants, especially those which symbolized control and therefore affronted what was frequently his self-concept: an inteliectually emancipated man who thinks for himself. Going a step further, he often wore the symbols of this emancipation as a sort of badge that proclaimed his disdain for submission to control: a sometimes less than elegant appearance or working habits that were somewhat less than punctual or precise.

Thus he not only scoffed at the ordinary restraints that business imposes for the sake of order and efficiency, but he openly flouted them as well. This was frequently difficult for management to tolerate or understand. Yet the restless professional was only pursuing what he regarded as his psychological advantage: He sought freedom because he could hardly function without it and because the traditional forms of discipline prevented him from being, in real life, the kind of person he inwardly felt he had to be. He was, in other words, trying to be himself, to respond to the motives that had probably oriented him toward a professional career in the first place. His advantage lay in seeing to it that other people did not interfere with his freedom to think for himself.

Happily, most businesses have by now recognized the legitimacy of the professional's claim to exemption from the ordinary restraints on coming and going, style of operating, and measurement of

results—provided those results contribute satisfactorily to overall company goals. Some organizations, going a step further, are wondering how necessary such controls are for other kinds of personnel. But there is still a considerable amount of parochialism on both sides: The business man tends to regard the professional as a rather outlandish type, while the professional is likely to regard the gray-flannel-suit set as a vast army of conformists. Neither side fully appreciates what the other side regards as its own course of greatest advantage; each side wonders why the other does not follow the pattern that is so advantageous to it.

Factory workers are just as likely as scientists to define their psychological advantage for themselves and to react indifferently to what management construes as "logical" incentives. W. F. Whyte has shown that dollar incentives will not have much of an effect on the productivity of workers who feel that their advantage lies in maintaining a congenial relationship with each other rather than in a short-range financial gain. The impact of financial incentives on an employee's productivity depends largely on the non-financial uses to which the individual thinks the money could be put. In other words, it depends on how much influence he thinks he can exert on his environment. He will not be interested in "building a better tomorrow" if he doesn't believe that tomorrow can really be much better for him than today is. If life has taught him to expect every tomorrow to be one more drab repetition of today, it will hardly be to his advantage to acquire a few extra dollars. They will not buy him very much, but they can cost him a great deal: exertion, peace of mind, and above all the goodwill of his fellow workers. In the unchanging world in which he expects to live he will need that goodwill a great deal more than he will need extra money. Goodwill can make his existence tolerable whereas money cannot really elevate him to a better existence.

When the members of an organization think of their own advantage differently from the way its leaders expect them to, tensions are created which at the very least will make it harder for the organization to reach the goals its leaders have chosen for it and at worst can make it impossible. In the long run most organizations turn into instruments for obtaining the advantages of their members. Sometimes management can block the process, but in the conflict that is thereby created the employees can also block management from reaching *its* goals. Thus the psychological advantage of

employees—their own ideas as to what will benefit them most—becomes a crucially important element in the fate of the organization to which they belong.

This is why Rensis Likert,[40] in reviewing more than eighty studies made by the Michigan group in more than two dozen industries, found that productivity was consistently highest where both the financial and the psychological needs of employees were satisfied on the job. No one's advantage is exclusively financial; therefore, to provide only financial rewards is to create, at best, only partial motivation. It is very much to the organization's objective advantage to understand as much as possible about its employees' psychological advantage, and the best way to do this is by means of firsthand opinion surveys on a continuing basis. However, psychological advantage may also be understood, to some extent, in the abstract; accordingly we shall consider the ways in which age, sex, and promotion can affect it.

Chapter 19

Determinants of Advantage

OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE MOTIvated primarily by what their future seems to hold for them. Therefore, they will be quite tolerant of the present, provided their hopes are bolstered by occasional evidence that their future will be worth the wait. They will accept a lower standing of living today than they aspire to tomorrow, less challenging work than they would like, and considerably less status than they wish for—all with good humor and without loss of effort provided they have some grounds for optimism. It is to the advantage of a young person to build patiently, preparing himself and enduring a less than satisfactory set of circumstances for the sake of advancing to a more comfortable set. The morale of younger workers can be quite good in the face of heavy workloads and rather ordinary pay if they have high hopes for their personal betterment.

Take away the young worker's future and you have a demoralized employee who will become intolerant of the present, finding fault with the trivial as well as with the substantial aspects of his daily working life. If he happens to be an aggressive sort of person, he may broadcast his dissatisfaction to others and become, in effect, an agitator; even if he is less vocal, he will be no easier to get along with and will work no more efficiently than he must to keep his job. Such a person will feel that he is the victim of an unfair system which deprives him of his right, as a youth, to expect the future to be an improvement on the present. Therefore, it will seem to be to his advantage to redress the unfairness by striking back at what he thinks is its source. If he cannot have a future, then he can at least have the satisfaction of not wasting any extra effort to build toward it.

Whether a young person feels that he has much of a future depends partly on the amount of inherent optimism he has acquired as a result of his early experience and partly on the kinds of cues he gets on the job. This is why periodic counseling sessions, in which

the manager reviews the employee's work and indicates specific areas that need improvement, are so important for younger workers. These sessions provide feedback for past efforts and indications as to what the future probably has in store, as well as advice on what to do to make the future become more satisfactory.

It is quite true that effective counseling has proved to be very difficult for most managers to bring off gracefully and that forces are present in the interview which tend to turn them into fault-finding sessions or exchanges of platitudes.[41] The mechanics of an effective appraisal program will doubtlessly continue to be a perennial problem. The long-term solution probably lies in making appraisal a day-to-day routine based on specific results rather than an annual ritual based on overall impressions.

Employee counseling, no matter how it is done, plays a crucial role in motivating the young. It functions somewhat like a *satisfier* —to recall Herzberg's concept once again—that is, a counseling program will not necessarily improve morale, but the lack of some kind of formalized feedback will almost certainly hurt morale. This is simply because the future is so important to the young person that he will draw conclusions from a *lack of evidence* about it just as readily as he will from actual evidence. When the job brings with it no clues about what the future may be like, the young worker is likely to conclude that the future will be no different from the present; therefore, his "future" is already upon him, and he may as well quit hoping.

There are, of course, many kinds of evidence about the future other than a conference with a manager that is deliberately focused on it. The rate at which promotions occur, whether on the basis of merit or seniority; the company's own growth prospects; and the rate and caliber of new hires all provide grist for speculating about one's own future. But in most organizations an individual's future is heavily affected by the opinions of managers who are most familiar with his work; therefore, an exposure to those opinions in direct discussion is the most potent of all the clues by which the young employee attempts to foretell what lies ahead for him.

Because young men with ability and ambition are so strongly oriented toward future rewards, it can be a serious mistake to place them in positions in which they are unlikely to acquire the kind of experience that will qualify them for advancement. Repetitive jobs that require little use of judgment or self-reliance do little

to prepare men for promotion. Yet it is common to place essentially overqualified young men in lower-level positions on the theory that it will be best if they "learn the business from the ground up" or in the belief that they will handle the work more efficiently than people of humbler capabilities.

Unfortunately, not only is the able young man in a routinized position likely to become bored, and therefore careless, but he may also become very embittered when he realizes that his future may not be so glorious after all. He will feel betrayed or exploited, and this may cause him to leave the organization and require that money be spent to replace him. Or he may not feel that he can leave the organization advantageously if he is older or more specialized than the people with whom he would have to compete in the job market. In that case he may feel that the organization owes him a limitless debt—which in a sense it does, especially if he once had potentialities that were not given an adequate opportunity to develop. In the long run, then, the result of placing overqualified young men in positions with limited growth potential can be a hostile, demanding, and not particularly efficient group of employees.

Ironically, the decision to place men of this caliber in undemanding positions is often based on a desire to "cure" a high rate of employee turnover—which assumes, of course, that turnover is necessarily unhealthy. A high attrition rate is frequently diagnosed as a "symptom" of hiring poorly qualified people; the usual prescription is to do a better screening job before hiring. While this is not particularly difficult to do with the aid of modern tests and other screening aids, it does not necessarily strike at the heart of the difficulty; therefore, it may only defer the problem and possibly worsen it.

Employee turnover is a recurring cost. Yet this cost can be a blessing in disguise when the alternative is tying talented people to jobs which neither stimulate them nor lead to growth. Over a period of time, highly capable people assigned to routine detail-watching jobs become bored or bitter, or both. In the long run, recurring turnover costs may be much less of a problem than a demoralized group of capable but undeveloped employees.

It is largely for this reason that industry has employed so many younger women in positions which are quite essential but do not as a rule offer much training for decision-making jobs at higher levels. These jobs run the gamut of complexity from the unskilled

to the highly technical; what they have in common is an assisting or auxiliary role in which decisions are implemented but rarely made. The work typically calls for patience, tact, and a high degree of alertness—all qualities that the ambitious young male would probably run out of in a job that was unlikely to lead to a decision-making role of his own.

The main reason why a higher proportion of women than men maintain their efficiency and morale in these jobs is that in most cases their future does not lie in the organization anyway. They are usually oriented toward a home and family of their own rather than a career in business; therefore, the lack of a future in their work ordinarily will cause them little dismay. Their working careers are usually brief, enjoyable, and moderately well-paid interludes between graduation from high school or college and the beginning of their real careers. Consequently young women, *because of rather than in spite of* their high attrition rate, play a vital industrial role by performing functions for which capable young men may be singularly ill-suited.

If we can assume that most men's working careers last about forty-five years—that is, from the early twenties until about age sixty-five —then the phase of seeking one's advantage primarily in the future belongs roughly to the first fifteen years or so. The next fifteen years, running from somewhere in the mid-thirties to around age fifty, may be thought of as oriented primarily toward the present. These are the years during which most men reach their pinnacle of achievement, if there is to be one, or during which it becomes implacably clear that the bright hopes of youth are not going to be realized. The limits of possible attainments become more clearly outlined, and it is no longer realistic to cling to dreams that have not begun to materialize. These are the showdown years in which rewards are reaped or written off.

The morale of men in this age group is usually determined not so much by what they have actually achieved as by a comparison of their attainments to their earlier expectations. If the present includes rewards that are equal to or greater than those they had aspired to when they were younger, they will feel fulfilled and will have a generally rosy, generous outlook. If the present falls too far short of their hopes, they will feel disappointed—either in themselves or in the organization for which they work, or both.

It will be to the advantage of the satisfied men to exploit their

good fortune to the fullest by welcoming new ideas, since these may lead to even greater successes for themselves and for others, and by adopting an encouraging attitude toward younger men, since this is a way of sharing their abundant rewards. But the disappointed man has to reconcile his record with his ego, and he often protects his ego by finding fault with his environment. To maintain this protection, it is to his psychological advantage to resist new ideas, because he has no further desire to risk failure and has little hope of success, and to counsel younger men against trying too hard, because it is a consolation for him to believe that the odds against accomplishment are too enormous to be overcome.

In any case, men whose careers are in this midway phase will be much more oriented toward the present, and therefore less tolerant of its deficiencies, than younger men. They will quite often be particularly sensitive to status symbols such as job titles and office furniture, since these are in effect public indications of what they have made of themselves. They are also likely to be quite eager for recognition: The successful men want it as a confirmation of their achievements, and the not so successful ones want it as proof that their efforts are at least remembered and appreciated.

Although men at this age are less demonstrative than younger men, they are if anything even more sensitive to intangible rewards, or to the lack of them. They are easier to take for granted than younger men, and for that very reason they are more susceptible to being humiliated—albeit unintentionally—by their managers. Unlike younger people, they have learned how to be patient, yet they have less time left for waiting. Their future is in a sense already here, and therefore they want their aspirations to be realized (at least in a token way) *now*.

While the majority of employed women are in the younger age group, there is reason to believe that more mature women are going to become an increasingly important part of the labor force.[42] The ways in which these women perceive their advantage are somewhat varied, reflecting their differing reasons for working. For those who have gone back to work in order to supplement the family income, or to replace a lost income in the case of widows and divorcees, the job is a device for paying bills, and as long as it is reasonably pleasant and remunerative they will not demand very much of it. As a rule, they will be more interested in a secure income than in taking steps to enlarge their earnings. This is mainly because their families and

outside activities continue to be their major interests. Therefore, the time, effort, and risk inherent in raising one's income level will usually be seen as too high a price to pay.

To an increasing extent, women who may not have any particular need to supplement the family income at all are returning to the job market. Often these are well-educated women whose children are old enough to require only a limited amount of attention and who find that neither housework nor voluntary work offers a satisfactory outlet for their energies. They are, in a word, bored, and they go to work because they too have achievement motives. Therefore, they regard their advantage largely in terms of the kind of work they do; it is the intrinsic rewards of their work, rather than income *per se,* that weigh most heavily with them.

As a matter of fact, it is common for such women to have husbands whose incomes are well above average; therefore, they may be freer of economic restraints than achievement-motivated men and even more dedicated to the content of their jobs as a result. Paradoxically, these women are usually better paid than most other employed women—because they can qualify for more demanding jobs—in spite of the fact that both their objective and their subjective need for money is usually less. Of course, many women return to work for both financial and achievement reasons; the relative weight of each will determine whether they view their advantage primarily in a steady income or in an absorbing job.

These women will, of course, have the same need for measuring their accomplishments that men have, and they will not be content with incomes that are inconsistent with the value of what they are doing. Neither will they be very tolerant of being paid less than equally experienced men doing comparable work. The argument that they are not likely to keep working much longer does not apply with nearly the same force as it does to younger women. It is not so much the amount of their income as its relation to that earned by men in comparable positions that concerns them. Their advantage, in other words, lies in accomplishments whose worth is measured on an honest scale. They are more emancipated, more interested in intellectual challenge, more mature, and for these reasons more valuable to an employer than most younger women.

Career girls who work more or less uninterruptedly from their teens or twenties onward will, especially if single, tend to regard their work as a considerably more important part of life than will

most other employed women. Therefore, while monetary needs will affect their attitudes fairly strongly, recognition of their knowledge and reliability may be even more important to them than money. Their jobs become, in large measure, their *raisons d'être;* consequently they often handle their duties with uncommon zeal and authority. They endow their work with a degree of importance without which they themselves would feel unimportant; it is to their advantage to become both highly competent and, in some cases, somewhat possessive of the work that provides them with this outlet.

The third and final phase of most working careers commences at about age fifty and runs to retirement. The orientation of men in this phase depends to a considerable extent on how they have fared in the preceding phases. The successful individual will find the present very much to his liking and may, in these crowning years, accomplish more than he did in all the previous ones by the sheer scope and diversity of what he undertakes. The fully matured man who has never really stopped growing will be in the prime of his powers as he approaches the end of his career; in fact, he often decides not to end it at all and either postpones his retirement or launches into a heavy schedule of voluntary or consulting activities after leaving his regular job. For such fulfilled men the present is so rewarding that their advantage clearly lies in prolonging it as long as possible: They neither dwell very much in the past (simply because it was less interesting than what is happening to them now) nor project their personal hopes very far into the future (because they do not expect to experience it). Their concern with the future is for the sake of younger people and not for themselves.

It is not given to many men to end their careers in such a benign and active frame of mind. More often a career closes with mixed feelings of relief and nostalgia. As their long and not particularly rewarding careers draw to a close, some men feel at first like prisoners nearing a parole. If they have little to show for their work, then the quicker it is over with, and the sooner they can devote themselves to forgetting about it, the better it will be for their long-neglected egos.

But there is something to be missed in every career, even if it is only the repeated routines which turn out, in retrospect, to have formed the main substance of a lifetime. The older individual is likely to find himself increasingly oriented toward the past, because

that is when his major satisfactions occurred. It is also during this phase that he may begin to search for a way to identify himself with the accomplishments of his era. To be able to say that he had had a part, however small, in something significant that happened during his lifetime often becomes a compelling need. Consciously or otherwise, he is likely to be moved by an idea that Justice Holmes expressed when he was very old: "I think it is required of a man that he should share the action and passion of his time at peril of being judged not to have lived."

For these reasons the older employee is likely to do a great deal of reminiscing, of pointing with pride to whatever is deserving of pride in his record, and more often than not of concluding that the good old days were a lot better than the present or even the future is ever likely to be. His advantage lies more in reliving than in anticipating; he enjoys tributes, mementos, and above all the role of a mentor because these things confirm his sense of how important his own past has been. But respect for elders is not a typically American virtue, and all too often the older employee is ignored or taken for granted. At this age, monetary incentives and even the prospect of promotion are likely to have less appeal than gestures of appreciation and gratitude.

One final comment about the way in which age affects an individual's perception of his advantage. It obviously varies a great deal as a function of personalities: Some men are "psychologically old" in their twenties, and some men never lose their youthful outlook at any age. However, they are the exceptions; most men's thinking is heavily influenced by the career phase through which they are passing. This is why the wise manager pays attention to the age distribution of his employees and adjusts his motivational strategy accordingly.

The possibility of promotion is one of the most effective of all motivators, partly because, like money, it can actually serve many different needs, and partly because several varieties of promotion have been evolved that suit the advantage of people in differing circumstances. It is therefore a rather flexible instrument—possibly the most flexible one we have—for stimulating people to work more effectively. However, as we shall see, it does not necessarily suit the advantage of everyone.

There are at least four main groups of motives that promotion may serve. It is difficult to say which is the most important; this

of course depends on the person. For the individual who has learned his job well and thereby enlarged his sense of competence, one of the main attractions of promotion is the opportunity it offers for further personal *growth*. In effect, the environment of the man who has become competent in his work has become a little more pliable —a little of the control that his environment used to have over him has changed hands. The experience can be rather intoxicating.

This is why dissatisfaction with one's current assignment often begins to be expressed so soon after it has been mastered. The mastery itself carries powerful psychological rewards with it, greatly enhancing the individual's feelings of power and worth and promptly creating an appetite for still more growth. The prospect of spending years doing work that one has learned to do well—which usually makes good economic sense and will help to repay the company's training investment—will often seem rather bleak to the individual himself. He is likely to believe that it will be boring, lacking in excitement and challenge, and above all a wasted period during which he will merely stagnate without accomplishing anything toward his own development. Because he has already experienced some growth he is very likely to feel that his advantage lies in any channel that provides more growth; consequently he may consider himself ready for promotion long before his superiors do.

A related motive is the desire for *autonomy*. To the extent that a man feels capable of making for himself decisions which are reserved for his superiors, he is in effect prevented from being completely himself at work. That is, he is constrained to play a more dependent, less competent role than he feels is necessary. In his eyes this is a wasteful misuse of his talents; furthermore, it requires an often painful sacrifice of prerogatives to which he feels entitled. Therefore, promotion is often viewed as a device for getting out from under burdensome restrictions and operating more independently. To be one's own boss is very much to the advantage of someone who feels able and willing to make his own major decisions.

Promotion by its very nature has strong overtones of *prestige*. Ordinarily, the pomp and eminence that are associated with certain positions are ways of recognizing the amount of responsibility they entail. The more reliance that the rest of an organization must place on a man in a given job, the more it acknowledges the importance of that job through attention, respect, and so-called status symbols. In

a sense, prestige is a way of identifying people with key functions and is therefore a sort of informal, but vital, communication tool.

Since promotion generally brings greater responsibilities, prestige follows as a sort of corollary. It is worth noting that sometimes people are promoted for the sake of prestige alone without any corresponding increase in the scope of their duties. That is, they are promoted as a way of thanking them for devoted service or as an acknowledgment that they have acquired more value to the organization by virtue of their lengthening experience. In any case, promotion calls attention to the man who receives it and indicates quite clearly that the organization looks with favor upon him, whether for his demonstrated ability or for his continuation in its employ. This kind of favorable attention may be highly prized, either as an indication that the future is increasingly rosy or that the past is appreciated and not forgotten. Advances in prestige serve the advantage of both the rising, mobile young man who needs periodic proof that he is still rising and the relatively immobile man who needs proof that the time he has contributed is appreciated by his employers.

Finally, and importantly, promotion is nearly always accompanied by an increase in salary or other income. We have noted how the motivating power of money tends to pale somewhat because of a "diminishing returns" effect; that is, the higher one's earnings rise, the more of an increment is required to produce a significant increase and the less likely such an increment becomes. However, promotion helps to overcome this effect in two ways. First, by combining a financial gain with a psychological gain, promotion creates a total motivational impact that is considerably greater than the same amount of money could achieve by itself. Second, promotion often takes the individual into a higher salary classification, thereby increasing the upper limit of earnings to which he may eventually rise, or it may introduce new forms of income such as stock options. Consequently, the increase in income entailed in promotion may be much more than the usual addition of a relatively small percentage of the previous income. It could result in a sharply higher standard of living.

It is because of this prospect of radically improving one's earnings that ambitious men are frequently willing to accept a modest financial loss in being promoted. This can happen, for example, in changing from non-exempt to exempt status or from commissions to

straight salary. The promotion, in effect, brings significantly greater incomes within the realm of possibility. Therefore, it can dispel the indifference with which most men regard incomes they cannot realistically hope to achieve. It is also for this reason that men in organizations where promotion comes slowly, or where some men are more likely to be promoted than others, often feel that the only way to realize a sizable improvement in income is to seek out another employer who will start them at a higher salary level.

There are three main classes of persons to whom promotion is likely to be, in effect, a psychological disadvantage. First, people who have already achieved a modest rise in status and income, and achieved it painfully, may often feel that it is better to settle for what they already have than to struggle further. The uncertainty of the struggle, and the added burden of responsibility should it be won, both exact too high a toll from someone who has already spent much of his energy for the sake of a small gain.

The veteran employee who finally breaks into management, for example, will frequently consider himself to have all the status he really needs, and the prospect of rising further may actually make him rather squeamish. Since his promotion has cost him a great deal, it is to his advantage to conserve what strength he has left and enjoy his present role to the fullest rather than risk his peace of mind for unnecessary rewards. It is reservations like these that often make it most unwise to press a promotion upon a deserving but reluctant older man; he would be almost literally "not himself" in such a position because he has knowingly made a bad bargain.

Second, there are some people who cannot easily tolerate the alienation that promotion often produces with former peers who suddenly turn into subordinates. The ties of old loyalties may be too strong and the prospect of forming new loyalties too uninviting to make the promotion seem worthwhile. Transferring the newly promoted man to a new location does not necessarily solve the problem. For one thing, he may be reluctant to give up familiar surroundings, and for another he may be so thoroughly at home in one status level that he would need ties to that level in *any* community. Consequently, promotion may seem quite disadvantageous to people who find it difficult to cope with loneliness. Yet they may continue to need recognition in some form, and therefore some kind of substitute for promotion has to be worked out for them. This is fre-

quently found in converting their role (if not their title) to that of a combined consultant, teacher, and troubleshooter.

Third, there are those who may wish for promotion, if it could be had on the same terms that everyone else gets it, but consider it so unlikely to occur or so difficult to handle if it did occur that it is not really worth hoping for. These are commonly people who have some kind of social disadvantage, such as being members of a minority group—including the world's largest minority group, women. For those to whom promotion seems far beyond the realm of the possible, it scarcely exists at all as an effective motivator, and should it ever loom into likelihood, then the handicap of playing a high-status role among subordinates accustomed to being their "superiors" is likely to seem enormous. It takes uncommon courage to want to be promoted when it will probably bring a continual struggle to establish the right to have competed for it at all.

Yet the top ranks of American industry are full of men whose parents and grandparents belonged to yesterday's not-too-welcome minorities; in fact, much of the dynamism and growth of the U.S. economy may be traced to their willingness to compete for promotion and the willingness of the business community to let them compete. The lesson is plain: It does not benefit a nation to have any of its citizens feel that it would be to their disadvantage to compete for prestige and responsibilities. To restrict opportunities in such a way that racial, religious, or other groups lose their incentive to compete produces nothing and costs a great deal in unused talents, in unheard ideas, and in atrophied abilities. Of the three situations in which promotion may be seen as a disadvantage, this is by far the commonest and by far the most unjustified.

Chapter 20

Leadership

THE THEORY OF MOTIVATION WE HAVE OUTLINED THUS FAR has stressed three broad concepts. First, any individual has some fairly persistent ideas—usually too vague to be articulated—about what kind of person he is. This is his self-concept. *He tries at all times to behave as much like the kind of person he thinks he is as his environment permits.* When his environment restricts him from acting in ways he considers appropriate for himself, he will feel frustrated and will cooperate only as much as he must. His instinct, no matter how strongly his environment suppresses it, is always to be himself.

Second, the individual's understanding of the environment he lives in does not necessarily correspond to the ideas of other people living in the same "objective" environment. He draws most of his conclusions about the kind of world he is living in long before he has access to all the facts, or even the judgment to weigh the facts, and he seldom revises or even questions his assumptions about the world. *As far as he is concerned, the world has certain constraints and certain opportunities built into it for him, and he is unlikely to try to escape from these self-imposed boundaries regardless of whether anyone else thinks they are there.*

Third, *any individual is likely to conduct himself, most of the time, in such a way as to enhance the likelihood of being able to be himself in the kind of environment he thinks he is living in.* This strategy is what we have called his psychological advantage. It may vary all the way from exuberantly seizing opportunities to passively making peace with the lack of them, but in every case it represents what the individual thinks is the optimum compromise between what he wants to be and what the world is likely to permit him to be.

Psychological advantage has to be conceived more broadly than financial advantage alone. Financial advantage becomes primary only under certain conditions, as we have seen. As a matter of fact, psy-

chological advantage is much more a matter of trying to *be* a certain kind of person—to play a real-life role corresponding to one's favorite ideas about oneself—than of trying to *have* certain material things. Money and the things it can buy are usually more important as accessories for playing a desired role than as ends in themselves.

What, then, is the role of leadership? If people are motivated primarily by a desire to become more and more like their self-concept, does it follow that permitting this would lead to bedlam and that leadership must necessarily be restrictive in the interests of order and efficiency? Even if it were possible to run an organization by accommodating its methods to the psychological advantage of all of its members, would this not merely encourage the lazy to be lazy and the incompetent to remain incompetent? In fact, given the economic demands on any organization, is it not compelled in some degree to ignore or even to suppress the psychological advantage of many of its members?

Some of the most advanced thinkers in industrial social science would answer these questions with a carefully hedged "yes." For example, Harold J. Leavitt of the Carnegie Institute of Technology[43] argues that most organizations still manage to get along quite well by telling their members exactly what to do and by preventing most of them from "being themselves." Granted that people who can only comply with decisions made for them by others are not likely to be very happy in their work; granted also that their resistance to working under such a system can penalize the efficiency of an organization. But the penalty has not, as a rule, been intolerable, and there are enough ways of easing the strain to prevent the resistance from getting out of hand.

The human relations enthusiast must somehow reconcile his theories with the facts that not only does industry as a whole continue to be run on an authoritarian basis but it even seems to be thriving on it. Armageddon has not come. In fact, it is increasingly apparent that the need to be led, to be given a routine to follow and a way of life to conform to, is at least as common as the need to be in command of one's own destiny. Further, there are many functions in industry which are run more efficiently when a boss enforces a prescribed routine than when the workers set their own standards and their own pace.

This in no way invalidates human relations theory; it merely helps to place it, belatedly, in its proper perspective. Leavitt notes that the

human relations advocates have swept the field so thoroughly that they have very nearly fallen into the same trap—overgeneralizing—in which they caught the "scientific managers." The need for a job that provides scope for personal growth is not universal, and industry cannot carry on efficiently when every department is run with due regard for every ego in it.

More through trial and error than by following the tenets of any sophisticated theory, industry seems to have stumbled upon a practical way of distributing power so that egos get their share and the organization gets its share. To the extent that a job requires originality and judgment, the individual is given more leeway to define the basic problem for himself and to come up with his own solution. To the extent that a job has already been analyzed and engineered to the point where it can be handled most effectively by following what amounts to a prescribed program, management insists on compliance. Thus, in research and development, outside sales, some engineering activities, and other creative or professional functions, the enlightened firm permits considerable individual self-management. On the other hand, routinized production and administrative functions are likely to be run by a manager who enforces a set of rules. Possibly he exercises the light touch of employee-centeredness, but he is still the final arbiter as to what may and may not be done on company time.

Leavitt does not regard the permissiveness with which management has learned to deal with the researcher as the entering wedge of a progressive "democratization" of entire organizations. For just as management is relaxing its control in some areas, management is reinforcing it in others. Leavitt feels, for example, that this enhanced control may be particularly evident in departments which produce input data for computer systems or operate on the basis of their output data. In either case it is essential that the human operators handle their work in a manner that is consistent with the programs being followed by the computer. Consequently, the overall picture is one of redistributed controls or what Leavitt calls "management according to task." The degree of latitude or control that is applied to a particular function is being selected more and more in order to expedite that function. Leavitt argues that large organizations cannot really be managed as "unified wholes" with a single managerial strategy being equally appropriate for all of its varied subsections:

> If this interpretation is correct, we should be seeing less and less uniformity in managerial practice: more of a class system, if you like—though a fluid one—in which the rules governing everything from hours of work to methods of evaluation to systems of compensation may vary from one group to another within the same parent organization. And, further, the many variations will be understandable in large part if one looks at the tasks that each group is trying to accomplish, and secondly at the tools, psychological and technical, that are at the moment available for working on those tasks.

Where the task at hand cannot be reduced to a reliable program—or at least where it is not yet feasible to reduce it to such a program—it is to the organization's advantage to rely on the liberated judgment of the individual worker. Further, there is probably some tendency for people with strong needs for self-expression to gravitate into careers where the work is essentially "unprogramed." But can we safely assume that people in "programed" jobs do not have important ego needs and that even if they do, the organization can safely ignore them? Granted Leavitt's main point—that both jobs and people have differing requirements for latitude at work—the question still remains as to what is the optimum distribution of control in an organization. This question is complicated by the facts that the structure of many jobs is changing under the impact of technology and, furthermore, the population from which working people are drawn is also changing as a result of education and social mobility.

It is still a moot question whether increased automation will make jobs more repetitive by tying men to the pace and logic of machine systems or whether jobs will actually increase in scope and variety as a result of automation. Floyd C. Mann and L. Richard Hoffman, both of the University of Michigan, have studied the impact of automation on the employees in power plants[44] and observe that management can design newly created jobs either way. From both the economic and the human standpoint, they conclude, it would be more profitable to design new jobs in ways that maximize the role of the individual's judgment and the breadth of his understanding.

Automation has thus far tended to displace large numbers of workers in relatively routinized functions with smaller numbers of workers in positions requiring considerable skill and awareness. These trends suggest that in the coming years there is going to be a boom-

ing employment market for people who can think independently and diagnose complex problems, and a declining market for people who need to be guided by pre-tested rules or by the judgment of their supervisors. We seem to be moving, in other words, toward a greater proportion of sophisticated jobs in the total employment mix; therefore, the optimum degree of control in most organizations is likely to shift toward broader use of participation and toward management by results rather than by controls.

Higher education is becoming the mode rather than the exception. One reason for this, of course, is that a college degree is usually regarded as a passport to the highly paid, prestigeful world of the unprogramed job. In many technical fields master's degrees are now quite common and doctorates are no longer rare. The trend toward an increasing proportion of well-educated people in the population at large will undoubtedly continue, partly because the demand for educated people in industry shows no sign of weakening and partly because education is an indispensable element in the social mobility that motivates so many Americans so strongly.

Higher education not only teaches the individual to think critically and to analyze problems for himself, it also makes him rather intolerant of restrictions on his right to do so. This is why the first few years of employment after college can be so disillusioning: The young man often finds himself having to unlearn the thinking role he has been accustomed to play in college and to fit himself into a hierarchy which gives its younger members little opportunity to be analytical. But before long many of them find their way into jobs requiring supervision, planning, research, or analysis—into what Leavitt calls the unprogramed areas. Those who don't get such opportunities are likely to become discontented with their work and either to pressure their managers for more stimulating assignments or seek them elsewhere. Consequently, the net effect of a more educated pool from which employees can be hired is an increasing pressure to enlarge both the scope of jobs and the degree of latitude given to individuals in these jobs.

The long-term trend, then, would seem to be toward a gradual spreading of permissive management to most organizations and a redistribution of functions to take greater advantage of the increased capabilities of a more sophisticated workforce. It seems quite unlikely that hierarchical controls will be replaced altogether or even that they will cease to be the major managerial technique for in-

dustry as a whole. But their monopoly on organizational strategies has already been broken, and there is good reason to believe that their influence will continue to diminish, at least in the foreseeable future. Leavitt is right: Employee-centered management is not a panacea, and every organization must seek its own optimum balance of latitude and controls. But Likert is also right: The future will belong increasingly to managers who can teach their subordinates to manage themselves.

The Michigan studies have by now been extended into organizations doing many different kinds of work, and Likert[45] sees enough similarity in the results of these studies to suggest that effective leadership has the same basic characteristics in nearly any setting where work is being done. (To raise productivity to a sustainable high level, the man in charge must find ways of adapting his daily supervisory tactics to support, not block, the psychological advantage of the men whose work he directs.)

This is not easy, but neither is it as hard as it may appear. Unless they have been suppressed too severely for too long, most men will tend quite naturally to use their jobs as a sort of stage on which they can enact their favorite roles: The egotist will seek an audience to impress, the worrier will check and doublecheck for flaws in the product, the innovator will experiment with different ways of doing his job, and so on. The leader doesn't have to encourage them to play these roles; he only has to let them. He must, in other words, within the limits of common sense and a reasonable regard for orderliness, avoid imposing his own preferences or a prescribed set of methods on his men's own natural styles of working. The most productive leader, according to Likert, is the man with enough self-discipline to let his subordinates do their work in their own way (provided, of course, that it does get done) rather than compel them to operate as mere copyists of his own working habits.

It is important to remember that Likert is not philosophizing about some theoretically ideal supervisor but is describing the actual managerial style of men who were in charge of the most productive departments in the many companies surveyed by the Michigan group. Controls were loose, standards were enforced in a rather general way, and uniformity of procedure by the various workers was not considered particularly important. What prevented chaos? The workers themselves did, largely because their managers had suc-

ceeded in making the group's production goals a vehicle by which men obtained their own psychological advantage:

> The common assumption that non-supervisory employees, given increased freedom, will loaf and not produce does not seem to be borne out by the evidence. Their behavior depends on conditions accompanying the freedom. Managers who achieved high performance in their units accompanied by a sense of freedom supervise by setting general goals and objectives and by providing less specific direction than do the managers of low-producing units. . . . They use more participation and achieve higher involvement, greater interest in the work, and more responsibility for it than do the low-producing managers. . . .
>
> The low-producing managers, in keeping with traditional practice, feel that the way to motivate and direct behavior is to exercise control through authority. Jobs are organized, methods are prescribed, standards are set, performance goals and budgets are established. Compliance with them is sought through the use of hierarchical and economic pressures.

The high-producing managers do not surrender control of their departments to their men; they set performance standards and use the normal measurements to see whether they are being met. The difference is in the attitude with which these management tools are used. To the more effective managers, standards and measurements are only tools rather than ends in themselves. They *expect* their men to get their work done properly and use measurements largely to find out where they can be more helpful. One of the secrets of their success may be the discovery that faith in an individual often has to precede the justification for it—that the best way to bring out the best in a man is to expect it of him. On the other hand, the less effective managers are likely to feel that the measurement report rather than the product is the reason for the group's existence and that the measurement can never be right unless they personally see to it that no one deviates from his prescribed role. In a sense, both kinds of leaders get what they ask for: The employee-centered leader gets high productivity, which is largely controlled by his subordinates, while the production-centered leader gets lower productivity, which is very much under his own direct control at all times.

One of the ways in which the effective leader bridges the gap between the individual's and the organization's goals is by creating a loyalty to himself among his men. He does this by being an influen-

tial spokesman for them with higher management. Since the men are favorably disposed toward him, communicating his "infectious enthusiasm" for doing the job well is not very difficult; his audience is already receptive to him because he is the members' advocate.

The effective leader also benefits from group loyalties. These operate to enhance productivity, rather than restrict it, because his men achieve their productivity by themselves and therefore take pride in it. There is a world of difference, as far as psychological advantage is concerned, between men who can see in productivity the fruits of their own ingenuity and those who can contribute nothing of themselves to production but mere obedience to orders. A good production record is a very flattering form of feedback for men who can build their egos by working well together; therefore, the group pressures on anyone who diminishes this feedback can be enormous. The phenomenon works in precisely the same way as the ostracism of rate busters by work-restricting regulars. The only difference is that this time the regulars have the same goals as management.

When leadership contributes to productivity, it is usually because an atmosphere has been created which the employees regard as compatible with their psychological advantage. As a result, they are likely to involve themselves more wholeheartedly in their work. The employee is seldom aware of precisely why he feels free to give so fully of himself to his job; usually he can only point to the fact that his manager is a nice enough fellow, as are his fellow workers, and that the work itself is rather enjoyable. He cannot be more specific because there is nothing tangible to point to. *He is reacting to a general atmosphere created by a managerial style that symbolizes a supportive attitude.*

The effective manager's style of handling his own job conveys his willingness to let the employee determine what his style of handling his job shall be. It clearly implies that he trusts the employee's intentions and, within reasonable limits, will tolerate the employee's idiosyncrasies. The effective leader, then, is above all the architect of an atmosphere that supports whatever his subordinates happen to regard as their psychological advantage; what is more, he usually creates this atmosphere unconsciously by what his facial expressions, vocal inflections, and other involuntary styles of communicating suggest about his underlying attitudes.

For that matter, the ineffective leader also creates an atmosphere by these involuntary styles of communications. The difference lies

in what the atmosphere does to the employee's self-concepts. The ineffective leader manages somehow to convey the idea that the job is basically an endless re-enactment of certain rituals which, to be accomplished properly, require that one's individual quirks be suppressed until quitting time. He creates this dreary impression without necessarily intending it or even realizing it; his men simply read it into his manner.

Some groups are productive in spite of failing to suit the psychological advantage of their members. Usually these are performing highly routinized work which cannot be affected very much by enthusiasm or the lack of it, or jobs set in a coercive environment (such as a labor surplus which suppresses normal advantage seeking with the threat of replacement). In any case, the productivity of such groups is not so much the result of their leadership as of the system of work flow or the pressure of external events.

It is vitally important to realize that any group reacts to the *totality* of cues in a leader's behavior and not just to those cues to which he wants them to respond. The real communication between a manager and his men includes much more than the bald text of their conversations and correspondence. More importantly, it includes what is *not* said; it also includes shades of meaning and emphasis; and it even includes ambiguities into which the men can read whatever fits their preconceptions best. This subtler form of communication between the leader and the led is all the more persuasive because it is largely unconscious and therefore neither edited nor analyzed by either party. In effect, the leader is likely to communicate a great deal more than he intends. Consequently, it is the rare leader who can expect, realistically, to be taken at his word by his men until—and if—he proves to them that he can be.

In order to understand the leadership process more fully, it is necessary to dig back into the antecedents of the attitudes that a leader projects, willy-nilly, to his men. His attitude toward them is determined by his concept of how his job ought to be handled, by the "management climate" created by his superiors, and by his own psychological advantage. While all three are interrelated to some extent, we shall consider them separately for the sake of a clearer analysis.

A manager's tacit ideas about what his job consists of are not necessarily much like his formal job description, largely because job descriptions make no assumptions about the manager's motives. Most

managers evolve their own ideas about what their jobs require of them, which results in considerable diversity of approach. This is, or can be, very desirable since it enables the organization to fit the manager to the job that is most susceptible to his style. Regardless of whether or not he is assigned because of his ideas on management, the impact he makes on his men will be very much affected by his assumptions about how they ought to be managed.

To illustrate the point, let us consider some common assumptions that are often made about leadership: that the group's work must always be done by the most qualified man available, even if he is the manager; that men can be manipulated like puppets by making a few stereotyped concessions to their egos; and that if the manager can instill enough enthusiasm into his men and sustain it at a high level, they will get the work done properly by themselves.

If the men are doing work that the manager used to do at one time, and especially if he was promoted because of his expertness in their work, he may conclude that the best way to keep from having to redo most of the work himself is to handle the harder jobs personally and scrutinize the remainder very closely. Thus he becomes a sort of player–manager; inevitably he is drawn further into the minutiae of the work and becomes less available for the over-all direction of his department. He works harder than any of his men—indeed, harder than most other managers—but since he is in effect encroaching on his men's work, they gradually relinquish responsibility for it, which pulls him deeper into a trap of his own devising. Thus his unwillingness to let work be done by others because he can do it better undermines the men's willingness to cooperate—and with it the manager's usefulness as a manager. The moral is that you cannot lead a group successfully unless you are willing to rely on it.

Some managers operate as if their men had to be tricked into doing their work. For them management is a contest of wits in which the prize goes to the side with the most ingenuity. They assume that hardly anyone wants to work and that the typical worker, when left to his own devices, will find ways to appear busy while getting as little done as possible. However, they do not resort to anything as crude as coercion to insure that the job gets done; instead, they try to cajole their men with what they think of as "human relations."

This is how the floodgates were opened for the many courses, books, and manuals that reduce human relations to a form of etiquette. Managers who want a simple formula to change antagonism

into harmony have created an apparently limitless market for prescriptions telling with a few well-chosen words how to keep workers happy. There is nothing wrong with being friendly toward one's subordinates, but it does not really solve any of the fundamental problems that cause conflicts and restriction of output. At best, the stylized courtesy that passes for human relations may mollify a few sensitive employees; at worst it may be bitterly resented as sheer manipulation.

Some managers regard work as basically tedious and attribute slowdowns and waste to boredom more than anything else. Their solution is to turn work into a sort of game, usually by setting up some form of competition with another group or with some previous record of productivity. If the hygiene of the group (to recall Herzberg's concept) is in good enough order—that is, if the men feel fairly paid and get along well enough with their supervisors—these devices can add a little excitement to the job and stimulate some extra effort. In effect, the manager simply avails himself of a pre-existing work-group that is friendly toward management and gives it a short-term goal to work toward.

The addition of some sort of prize as an incentive may help by giving the production target an attractive label; that is, the prize symbolizes the larger psychological reward of demonstrating the group's productive prowess. However, prizes may introduce secondary motivations, so they have to be planned thoughtfully lest they undermine rather than reinforce the basic motive, which is the desire of the group to be able to congratulate itself on its proficiency. The key considerations regarding the effects of a prize are the apparent likelihood of winning it, the question whether it will be widely shared by the group or awarded symbolically to a few of them, and the value of the prize itself. If the production target is too remote, the prize is likely to be regarded as a cruel hoax, and efforts may actually slacken in a show of resentment. Similarly, if the target is too easily attainable, the prize may be taken as an indication that management is either unaware of the group's capabilities or uninterested in achieving very high goals, either of which will dampen enthusiasm. A prize shared by the entire group—such as individual mementos—will usually be more effective than a prize destined for a few of the members, unless these few are regarded with such affection that they can legitimately serve as the others' proxies and accept the award in their behalf. Finally, a prize which is too common-

place or costs too little will often be regarded as an insult, implying that the group can be cheaply bribed, while one that is too costly may arouse internal bickerings and tension which will actually harm efficiency, especially if the group cannot reach the target. It is worth noting that the greatest prize of all—the preservation of the company as a reliable source of livelihood for the group—has provided the most effective settings for Scanlon-type incentive systems.

Regardless of what device the manager uses to create enthusiasm, none is likely to work very well if the group's hygiene is not in good order. Suspicious or demoralized workers will not be charmed out of their corner very readily, simply because what they lack is not a prize or a bit of competitive spirit but a sense of being dealt with fairly. Contests and appeals to team spirit assume that the prizes will be regarded as extra treats, but where they are regarded instead as dangled substitutes for rewards that are already deserved, they will produce little except a deepened conviction that management is clumsy and malevolent.

Finally, there are those leaders who are apparently convinced that no one ever works so hard as when he fears for the security of his income and who use the threat of dismissal or demotion as their main device. The method works, but it works deceptively. It produces considerable bustle when work is observed, even some "staged" activity for the benefit of the observer, but a compensatory swing toward non-activity is likely when the workers are no longer being watched. Similarly, if measurements are used instead of formal observations, various unmeasured activities will suffer so that the measured ones will look good. From which it is clear that leadership based on fear is an insult which creates the need to retaliate as safely as possible by deceiving the leader.

In any event, the response of the group is not determined by the leader's attempts to glamorize a production goal, or by his protestations of wanting to understand them, or by his way of scrutinizing their work. It is determined instead by their impressions of what his real attitudes toward them are: by what he inadvertently betrays and by his handling of "trial" incidents in which his character is surreptitiously tested. This is why human relations tactics—when they are used as tactics—are often so ineffective: their purpose is transparent. It takes no special sophistication for a worker to distinguish between a supervisor who is a "phoney" and one who is a "regular guy"; he has only to trust his intuition, which is informed by the

subtleties in his manager's style. Consequently the only leader who is likely to profit much from human relations training that concentrates on overt tactics rather than on clarifying his basic appreciation of what his job really requires is the one who happens to be a consummate actor.

A leader pursues his own psychological advantage in an environment that consists largely of the informal management climate in which he operates. This climate is communicated to him by his superiors much as his own attitudes are communicated to his men: That is, he reacts to the style of his company's leaders as well as to formal directives and job descriptions. This climate, in turn, is compounded of the organization's history, its current economic position, and, most of all, the way in which the dominant personalities at the top of its hierarchy interpret the organization's mission.[46] Particularly if he was "tutored," as it were, by older managers before assuming his current duties, the leader will absorb some rather clear notions of what must and what must not be done if his own advantage is to be protected. This is why it is so hard for a company to put on a truly new face; the effects of past policies linger for a long time, and the record of past actions is usually a more convincing communication than a statement of current intentions.

The management climate is actually an informal but highly effective communication system which steers the manager toward certain leadership styles. For example, he may be compelled to adopt impersonal controls over his men by the simple mechanism of loading himself down with too much paperwork. This has the effect of making him unavailable to his men, which turns him into a rather aloof and distant figure as far as they are concerned. Further, since the department's measurement reports become the manager's principal form of communication with his own superiors, he learns to press his men hard to make the reports look good. Consequently, an organization that requests too many reports from people who should be supervising instead of clerking induces them to rule from afar by fiat. The climate makes it advantageous for a manager to ignore the advantage of his men.

Another way in which the management climate influences leadership styles is through an unbalanced emphasis on the organization's various goals. Most companies want both high productivity and good employee relations, rightly insisting that there is no inherent incompatibility between the two, yet it takes only one or two dramatic

overreactions to a difficulty in either area to convince managers that either can be sacrificed to the other. In effect, they are told that to miss the first of these targets may be undesirable, but to miss the second would be catastrophic, or vice versa. Their own advantage is made to lie in reaching the presumably more valued target at all costs, including, if necessary, sacrificing the less valued one. They are therefore induced to become either overly solicitous of their men or callous toward them, depending on which kind of failure has aroused their own superiors to the more dreadful type of wrath.

Probably the key element in the shaping of leadership styles within a company is the manner in which delegation is handled by top management. If most major decisions are made at the top, the managers of the various departments will be largely concerned with administering those decisions rather than with trying to contribute to them. They may find fault with the policies they enforce, but unless their opinions are obviously valued and heard in good faith, they may not be willing to reveal them. They will tend to interpret regulations literally, avoiding opportunities for applying them flexibly for fear of overstepping their authority. Their leadership styles will be rather rigid: very strict in matters where they have specific instructions but possibly quite lax in matters that are not covered by directives.

On the other hand, an organization whose top managers set broad goals for their subordinates and delegate a considerable degree of authority to them for reaching these goals is likely to release a variety of leadership styles. Freed of restraints upon their own advantage, all the managers will display their natural styles. For better or worse, they will be able to be themselves in their jobs. The resultant diversity can be used to good advantage if style is matched with the task of the group and with the particular motives of the men in the group. But, if managerial assignments are made without regard to the limitations of natural style, there may be enough mismatches to make top management want to homogenize styles again by reassuming most of the authority it had delegated. In fact, it is precisely this danger—that delegation will be short-lived—that gets decentralization off to a slow start in companies that have historically been controlled tightly from the top.

No matter how strongly (or weakly) the management climate superimposes itself on the leader's own inclinations, these are never altogether absent. He is, after all, every bit as human as his men or

his superiors, and he pursues his psychological advantage as best he can in the environment created for him by both of them. While there are as many specific kinds of strategies for doing this as there are leaders, they have certain common elements which are well worth examining. Chief among these is the fact that anyone who wields authority possesses a tool which can reshape his environment. Consequently, opportunities to become leaders—either within organizations or through self-employment—are avidly sought by people whom life has taught that the environment can be dominated.

It is a leader's job to see to it that things get done, and on a scale that no ordinary man could accomplish by himself. Using the group as his instrument, the leader tries to bring about sizable changes in his environment. That is, he produces a *willed event,* in the form of an achieved production goal, which stands in marked contrast to the unwilled, unanticipated, and often undesired events that fill the lives of most people. Therefore, leadership can provide an exhilarating sense of mastery of the environment—of piloting events, if you will, rather than being their passenger.

However, not everyone in a position of leadership is able or even wants to cause events to occur through his group as he wishes. After all, effective leadership is often a subtle, indirect process which requires the leader to prevent his own ego from obtruding onto his men's egos. Many of the traditional trappings of leadership—such as the presumption that the leader knows best, the unquestioning acceptance of his decisions, the deference and outright flattery accorded to him—must be sacrificed to some degree if the group is to be motivated for top performance. There are some leaders to whom these trappings are more important than the operating results obtained by their groups, so much so that they would insist that they are not trappings at all but the indispensable tools of the leader's trade.

We have to distinguish, in other words, between the leader who seeks his advantage in exercising some control of the *results* achieved by the group and the leader who seeks his advantage in controlling the *conduct* of the group. The one finds confirmation of his prowess in the achievements of his group, the other in the decorum of his group. This is, of course, a somewhat artificial distinction, since very few real managers fit either stereotype perfectly. But to distinguish between two types of leaders in this way brings into focus *the uses to which they put the power that their jobs give them over the lives of other men.*

This is probably the most important and least well explored question in industrial relations. As for its importance, consider the fact that it lies at the bottom of McGregor's distinction between Theory *X* and Theory *Y*, which are not theories at all but rationalizations for seeking to satisfy differing motives in a managerial job. As for how well we can claim to understand it, let us remember that while we know a great deal about the psychology of the led, we have made very few systematic explorations of the psychology of the leader. Most leadership studies have concerned themselves with the kinds of social interaction that can be observed between a leader and his men, which is something like describing the moves in a chess game without knowing why the players prefer their characteristic strategies. In this particular chess game the players rarely know why they play as they do; in fact, they rarely even wonder about it. But industrial psychologists are wondering about it, and until they are able to come up with some firm answers, we are not likely to see any real breakthroughs in the art of managing people successfully.

At this point it is possible to suggest seven hypotheses about the relationship between power and leadership style. Whether these hypotheses can be substantiated by research remains to be seen; meantime they have at least the slim merit of being consistent with what is already known or believed about motivation.

First, *anyone who possesses power tends to use it to satisfy his own motives.* That is, power becomes an instrument of the leader's psychological advantage.

For example, a person who feels at the mercy of his environment may habitually ally himself with people or institutions which seem strong enough to protect him. Therefore, his main advantage will lie in preserving the benevolence of his own leaders. Precisely because this type of person will usually be loyal and reliable, he may be selected for a leadership position in which he is given the power to control the behavior of other people. Yet he will probably continue to seek the goodwill of his superiors by carrying out their instructions quite literally and by avoiding the presumption of interpreting these instructions as the circumstances of his group may require. His advantage, in other words, lies in enforcing instructions from above while ignoring messages from below. In this way a man who uses power to secure his own safety becomes a bureaucrat.

On the other hand, a person who feels that his environment is susceptible to improvement will take on one ambitious project after another. Success in one area reinforces his certainty that it can be

had in others also. He becomes confident, enterprising, and expert at finding ways to circumvent obstacles that more modest men consider insurmountable. Because he acquires a reputation for getting things done, he too may be given a position of power. But his advantage will continue to lie in accomplishments rather than in the attitude taken toward him by either his superiors or his subordinates. Accomplishments make his environment more agreeable to him, and the people above and below him are important only to the extent that they can help or hinder his efforts to control events.

He may be friendly, unfriendly, or indifferent, but the pragmatic streak in him will probably teach him to insure the sustained cooperation of the people who can affect the results he is trying to achieve. Thus he will probably learn to abide by the broad intent of policies while feeling free to apply them as he sees fit and to direct his group with a light touch without having to tolerate poor workmanship. A leader who provides his own security will be neither subservient to his own leaders nor suppressive of his men. He is likely to win both high morale and high productivity from his subordinates despite the fact that he is not, strictly speaking, either production-centered or employee-centered: He is accomplishment-centered.

Second, *the possession of power creates guilt.*

There are at least two reasons why this is so. Everyone has the experience, during childhood, of a prolonged period of subservience to the will of others. This usually leaves some indelible impressions of the nature of power and especially of the damage it can do to egos and the kinds of bitter retaliatory desires it can arouse. A certain capacity to identify with the underdog—largely because we have all been underdogs ourselves for a long while—usually lingers on in the adult. This emotional link between the leader and his own memories of being led can have a number of different effects. In some men it leads to compassion; in others to a refusal to recognize the legitimacy of anyone's resentment of their power. But in mature leaders it brings the realization that *the antagonism of the led is a natural burden of leadership,* which can only be dispelled through the responsible use of power. That is, the mere fact of leadership creates antagonism because it resurrects the outgrown relationship of a parent to a child, with the former deciding what the latter may do, and it almost inevitably places itself athwart most adult self-concepts. Thus the leader has to deal with a rather inconvenient link in his own past to the predicament he creates for the people he leads. There

is a certain discomfort in a leadership role which the best leaders try never to ignore.

A second reason why the leader is likely to feel guilty about his power is that the temptation to use it irresponsibly keeps recurring. His job is, if anything, more frustrating than that of a man who can only do as he is told. Delays, obstacles, confusion, and sometimes the sheer cussedness of people keep cropping up to prevent him from attaining the results he wants. Unlike the underling who can do little about his frustration aside from dragging his heels, the leader can dispel many of his obstructions by using threats or direct commands. Such "solutions" are usually short-lived and may in the long run create more severe frustrations for the leader than they remove, but even so there are plenty of occasions when he will be sorely tempted to risk them. Add to this the fact that the leader, being human, will accumulate some resentments and dislikes of his own on the job and that these too will tempt him to use his power to alleviate them.

The leader therefore finds himself in this unenviable predicament: He is the natural target of dissatisfactions which obstruct him from achieving his goals, but he cannot take direct action to suppress them without jeopardizing those goals in the long run. His alternative—if he is worthy of his job—is to endure his frustrations while gradually dismantling the dissatisfactions that create them. But this endurance is not easy, and the constant temptation to resort to short-range solutions creates guilt. It is one of the peculiarities of the human mind that we can feel every bit as guilty for an act we *wish* we could commit as for one we actually do commit; therefore, the effective leader is seldom a stranger to pangs of guilt for the things he does *not* do because he knows he should not do them.

Third, *faced with the normal guilt feelings associated with leadership, the leader uses his habitual ways of alleviating them, and the devices he employs to protect himself from guilt give him his characteristic leadership style.*

For example, he may work off his guilt by using his power with great care and fairness, thereby earning the moral right to hold it. Fortunately, this is a very common mechanism for dealing with the emotional problems created by positions of great power, as evidenced by the many instances of public officials who, though initially of rather ordinary stature, have unquestionably grown in office. The same phenomenon has occurred in the thousands of young military

officers who have learned the hard way that the right to wear their bars is earned not in officer candidate school but afterward.

Another, less fortunate, mechanism for dealing with guilt consists in walling it off by denying that it exists and even that any grounds for it exist. This is usually an ineffective mechanism for a leader because, first of all, guilt cannot really be suppressed. It can only be disguised; it reappears to haunt its would-be denier in some new form, such as feelings of foreboding or deep gloom. Secondly, it is ineffective because a leader who does not submit to the discipline of his own guilt feelings is likely to be unaware of how highhanded and arbitrary his actions will seem to his subordinates. Thus the habitual denier of inconvenient emotions neither escapes them nor avoids their consequences. He only succeeds in cutting himself off from the attitudes of his men and from the guidance of his own intuition, and he becomes, in the end, the typical stuffed shirt.

Fourth, *the possession of power creates an appetite for more power.* This happens primarily because power is so useful for enhancing the psychological advantage of its possessor. It therefore becomes highly prized as a means for fulfilling one's favorite fancies about oneself. Sometimes this works out very much to the advantage of the led, as in the case of leaders who have strong achievement or service motives and use their power to inspire or stimulate their men. Sometimes, however, a leader's desire for more power can be quite detrimental to his men. Take, for example, the man who must make continual displays of his authority as a way of reassuring himself that he is not really as inadequate as he fears he is, or the chronic egotist who discovers that power offers marvelous opportunities for self-glorification.

Fifth, *the desire for power often underlies otherwise rational differences of opinion as to how power should be allocated in an organization.*

There is normally a continuing competition for power between the various levels of management, often buttressed by theories about the relative merits of centralization, decentralization, and the like. It cannot be denied that a legitimate question of management philosophy is involved in this competition; yet the perpetual tug-of-war between men who exercise power within an organization is fueled by more than just philosophy. Probably the single most onerous aspect of a manager's job is the list of written and unwritten restrictions which his own superiors impose on his right to manage as he

sees fit. The psychological (as opposed to organizational) effect of these restrictions on the manager's power is to require him to suppress certain actions or decisions which he intuitively feels are right —in other words, to prevent him from being fully himself on the job. He thereby has to trade away some of the more grandiose aspects of his psychological advantage in order to preserve the very large advantage he won when he became a manager in the first place. He is somewhat in the position of a man at a banquet who cannot have his dessert because it is, in a sense, the "price" of his dinner, and he quite naturally resents it. But his superiors may be reluctant—just as naturally—to give up too much of their "dessert." The result is the familiar debate over where decisions should be made. It is a valid and necessary debate, but it is hardly without its psychological overtones.

Sixth, *the most effective leaders will usually be those who have no need of power as a means of protecting or enhancing their egos but use it instead as an instrument for accomplishing what cannot be efficiently accomplished otherwise.*

The effective leader knows very well how to use the full weight of his authority in order to get things done, but he also knows *when* to use it. This ability to discriminate between occasions that call for power plays and those that don't is a crucial mark in distinguishing between the leader who can bring out the best in his men under any circumstances and the leader who is successful only in a particular kind of setting. Furthermore, this sensitivity to the requirements of leadership, as well as the repertoire of styles with which a leader deals with varying situations, is primarily a product of his basic motives rather than of his intellectual equipment or his training. The effective leader is able to use power selectively and responsibly because *he does not need* to use it to aggrandize himself, to shore up his own security, or to compensate for secret feelings of inadequacy.

Seventh, since leadership style is primarily the reaction of an established personality pattern to the experience of power, *the main determinant of leadership styles in a given organization is the process of management selection.*

While management training, with or without courses in human relations, serves important functions—especially the informal one of introducing young managers to the climate of management in their organization—it hardly produces any major changes in their natural leadership styles. If it is true that leaders are made and not

born, then much of the making occurs before they are formally appointed to leadership, and the remainder occurs when the challenges of their jobs bring out the best in them—or the worst, as the case may be. No leader evolves inevitably into his ultimate leadership style, but the nature of his psychological advantage tends to focus him strongly toward a limited range of styles within which he eventually finds his own.

In effect, everyone has a latent leadership style which is fairly well formed by the time he becomes an adult but which becomes manifest only if he is given the experience of power. Consequently, the decision to promote a man into management, and thereby to give him some measure of power over the conduct of other people in an organization, is itself a crucial determinant of how power will be used in that organization. Further, the original decision to hire a man will largely determine not only the character of future leaders but the attitudes of the men they will lead as well. In fact, since neither hiring nor promotion changes the fundamental character of a man, it follows that the processes by which an organization acquires its people have a greater effect on motivation and productivity than any personnel action it can take afterward. It is fitting, then, that we begin our review of the practical consequences of motivation with an examination of recruitment.

Chapter 21

Recruitment

DESPITE ITS IMPORTANCE, RECRUITMENT IS USUALLY A rather haphazard process in which the most crucial decisions are often made casually, without the awareness of the organization's recruiters, and on the basis of little if any reliable information. Recruitment is after all a two-way affair in which the individual must first decide whether he wants to seek employment in a particular company before the company can decide whether it wants to employ him. No organization (with the possible exception of the armed services during a universal draft) ever has access to the entire pool of workers it might wish to employ. Particularly when it seeks employees with a great deal of potential or with skills that are in short supply, an organization is very much at the mercy of whatever myths, half-truths, and truths about it are accepted as fact by the people it is trying to attract.

If the organization is fortunate enough to attract many capable applicants, most of the men it hires will probably work out satisfactorily regardless of whether it uses crude or sophisticated methods of choosing among them. On the other hand (and more commonly), a company which can attract only a small proportion of desirable candidates among the total mass of men who apply to it becomes extremely dependent on the methods it uses for sorting and classifying its applicants. Historically, most companies that have placed the greatest emphasis on methods of measuring men—primarily various psychological tests—have done so because they were heavily exposed to applicants who would not, in the long run, measure up to their standards. Tests can perform a useful screening function and reduce (but not eliminate) the likelihood of unfortunate hirings. But tests are seldom *used* with nearly the degree of sophistication that goes into their *design,* and for this reason they have acquired a tinge of notoriety. This taint belongs more rightly to those personnel de-

partments that use tests as substitutes for, rather than as aids to, judgment, and aids are all they were ever designed to be.

It is doubtful that tests can become a great deal more useful in predicting performance than they already are, even if the habit of relying on them excessively could somehow be erased. This is because so much of anyone's job performance is determined by factors outside himself for which he can hardly be tested (such as the standards by which various supervisors may judge him) and by factors that are extremely difficult to measure objectively in a few hours (such as his self-concept and the way he perceives his environment). Testing, in other words, is hardly a panacea, and it may already be running into its own limits. The emphasis in recruiting is therefore shifting away from selection itself to a consideration of why people seek employment in a given company and not in others and to what might be done to increase the proportion of promising people who do apply.

Broadly speaking, a job seeker may seek employment in a particular organization for any of three reasons: He may choose to do so deliberately because he thinks that it best suits his advantage; he may do so because he has no real notion of where his advantage lies and finds this organization about as attractive as any other; or he may have no real alternative because of limitations on his own marketability. The deliberate choice probably occurs most frequently among fairly well educated people of middle- and upper-class origins who can opt for one of the many specialized kinds of jobs in large organizations and for whose services these organizations compete. Default choices occur at all social levels and result primarily from a passive attitude toward the environment. The "choices" that are economically compelled occur chiefly among the poorly educated for whom there are increasingly fewer opportunities in a technologically advancing economy.

When a job seeker is allowed a free choice, his search is usually a thinly disguised version of psychological-advantage seeking. He seeks a job in a company and an industry which, as far as he can tell, provide the kind of environment which is most compatible with his psychological advantage. Thus the security-oriented individual will be attracted to the solidly established firm with a reputation for paternalism, while the socially ambitious man will seek a firm which he thinks is likely to advance him rapidly to a position of prestige or at least to reflect a little of its corporate glory onto him. The man who feels capable enough (or lucky enough) to outwit

the law of averages will be attracted to the job that pays a piece rate or a commission; the man who dreads the effects of unpredictable dips in his income will seek a steady salary. The man who craves excitement and a sense of involvement in the action of his times will be drawn to a firm that seems willing to experiment and to innovate; the man who enjoys being surrounded by familiar problems that have familiar solutions will seek a job (in which he may eventually become highly skilled) in a relatively static industry.

However, the individual's impression of the environment offered by a given job or company is seldom very accurate, especially if he has not had much firsthand experience with it. In the absence of facts, not many people are willing to suspend judgment about the nature of careers or companies. The all-too-human tendency is to accept certain recurring myths or to concoct a stereotype of one's own on the basis of very limited evidence. This is how "images"—the popular, unexamined, and as a rule grossly overgeneralized ideas of outsiders about what something they do not know very well at all is "really like"—are born.

The list of inaccurate but accepted stereotypes that guide prospective employees toward some job openings and away from others is enormously long. In most cases there is at least enough truth in them to make it easy for the casual observer to ignore instances that do not fit his preconceptions. Some of the more enduring myths are that successful salesmen are necessarily glib, cunning, and rapacious; that a good advertising man is a commercialized demagogue with a veneer of urbanity; that any scientist worth his salt is absent-minded and inner-directed; and that auditors have to be fussy, suspicious, and literal-minded. Whole industries are often tarred with a brush that applies, if at all, to only a part of them. For example, the civil service (a natural target for detractors, since nearly everyone finds himself being regulated by it at some point in his career) is often thought of as being a haven for the officious and unimaginative; while the oil, motion picture, and aerospace industries (to name a few) have managed to acquire images that smack of swashbuckling adventure.

It is by now well accepted that companies acquire fairly well defined images of their own, so much so that a public relations industry has sprung up to alter, repair, and if necessary manufacture corporate images that presumably put the public in a more receptive frame of mind. However, an established image does not give way very easily to public relations, partly because habits are never easy

to extinguish when their possessor is not motivated to lose them and partly because many people cherish their images of various organizations as a sort of foil that sets off and enhances some aspect of their self-concept. Someone who likes to think of himself as rather daring, for example, may find considerable satisfaction in holding some company up as an example of stodgy conformity. To admit that the facts indicated otherwise would be to surrender a particularly convenient way to play at being what one would like to be.

A company's image as a prospective employer results from the more or less random accumulation by individuals of four kinds of information, which they tie together with a good deal of guesswork to form a loose web of impressions. Their chief sources are the prevailing folklore about the company, suggestive evidence, direct contact with the company's personnel or products, and exposure to the formal recruiting process. Of these, folklore is by far the most important, since it effectively precludes many people from seriously considering the company as a potential employer at all.

The prevailing mythology about a company is, in other words, a very effective filter which prevents much of the available labor pool from passing through its evaluation process and compels it to make its selections from a much narrower segment of the population. This would not be particularly unfortunate if the folklore had a substantial basis in fact, so that it deterred those who would not find the company environment to their liking and attracted those who would. However, the prevailing gossip and rumor about an organization do not tend to be either accurate or complimentary, and as a result the organization gets an opportunity to hire only those who are unaware of the folklore, or who do not believe it, or who are willing to tolerate it. Precisely because the folklore screens out people who find it objectionable, the company becomes in fact more and more similar to its own image, even though that image may have been largely fictitious at first.

Suggestive evidence is any encounter with a company that implies, however remotely, that it has a particular trait or quality. News stories, advertisements, exposition displays—even the company's trademarks and letterhead—all lend themselves to interpretation as external symptoms of the company's internal character. So do the architecture of its buildings, the styling of its products, and the personal "images" of its more prominent spokesmen. Even casually acquired information with little relevance to actual employment policies can help to shape someone's convictions about a firm.

Meeting an employee face to face is a particularly convincing form of image building. Not only do the employee's overt references to his company weigh heavily as firsthand information but, more importantly, his apparent morale and his demeanor are often taken as representative of the company as a whole. In this way, every member of an organization is a recruiting advertisement for it, willy-nilly, and the impressions he makes on outsiders reverberate onward through second- and thirdhand observations of him, *ad infinitum.*

Finally, those people who subject themselves to the recruiting process are very likely to develop strong first impressions about the company as a whole on the basis of their exposure to its personnel department. These impressions are likely to be particularly lasting in the case of persons who are not hired and are therefore unable to correct their first impressions on the basis of later experience. They can and do, however, repeat their observations to other outsiders, thereby contributing their little bit to the prevailing folklore about the company.

It should be noted that not all images work to the detriment of an organization. Sometimes they do more to bring needed kinds of people into the organization than the most sophisticated selection devices could hope to do. The U. S. Marine Corps is a prime example of how an image can, in effect, reach out into a community and pluck from it the particular kinds of individuals it needs. On the other hand, images can grow obsolete. This has caused some problems for the Air Force, which has had to modify its somewhat romanticized image of risky exploits in "the wild blue yonder" in order to attract scientifically oriented men who are qualified to deal with its sophisticated technological activities.

Despite their imperfections, images are one of the major devices through which a free labor market operates. Consequently it should be a matter of continuing concern to any organization to influence its image in such a way that its manpower needs are properly met. That is, images should enhance the likelihood that the most qualified people in the labor market will make themselves available to the company that needs them most. Too many inaccurate images have the effect of preventing people from entering the organizations in which they can do themselves and their employers the most good.

It is easy enough for a company to put on a new face by restyling its stationery or by changing its advertising approach, yet in the last analysis it is not an organization's face but its character that makes itself felt in the community. Consequently, the kinds of people

that a company hires and the history of its relations with them will gradually dominate the fictitious and speculative aspects of its image. So in a very real sense the people who are already in an organization exert a strong, if unconscious, influence on the kinds of people which will enter the organization in the future. Therefore, every selection not only commits the organization to a man but also limits the field from which future selections may be made.

Persons who choose employers by default—because they have no particular preference of their own—are often among the major "customers" of costly recruiting efforts that many large companies launch each year with the new crop of college graduates. The annual descent of corporate recruiters onto American campuses has given many young men a comforting feeling of certainty that not only will financially attractive jobs be waiting for them when they graduate but free "vocational guidance" in the form of company training programs will presumably deposit them in the particular kinds of jobs for which they prove to be best fitted. The passive youth is thus relieved of the necessity of making his own career selection: His environment is full of employers vying for the privilege of making it for him. Instead of choosing a career, he may choose fringe benefits and starting salary and let the career take care of itself. It is certainly a moot question whether young men of this type eventually enter careers that are suited to their basic motives or careers that suit the needs of their companies at the time they happen to be available. Yet this may not really matter very much; they are able to pursue their psychological advantage rather casually in an undemanding environment which permits them to assume no more responsibility than they wish for determining their own fates.

This is not to suggest that college recruiting programs and industry training programs appeal chiefly to passive people who allow their careers to be determined mainly by default. Rather, passive people who can qualify for these programs are likely to find them extremely attractive, because it seems to them that the company and not the individual is taking all the risks and making all the choices.

There is another set of circumstances in which careers are largely determined by the social context in which the individual finds himself. This time, however, the environment is restrictive and the individual's choice of a job is largely dictated by tradition, rather than surrendered to a presumably benevolent employer. This occurs when one particular group in a community exercises what amounts

to a monopoly over opportunities to join a particular organization. Jobs are kept "in the family," or rather in a limited number of families, by preferential hiring practices, by restrictions on union membership, or (as is often the case in underprivileged groups) by the unavailability of alternatives.

When a career is, in effect, determined by social origins rather than by desires or abilities, the result is very much like that of a caste system. Initiative usually flickers out early because it accomplishes so little, and interests shift away from the job, where so little satisfaction can be had, to recreational or social interests. This withdrawal of interest frequently leads to low productivity, disciplinary problems, and a conviction on the part of some managers that an inherent distaste for work must be at the bottom of it. Thus the effect of precluding employment opportunities amounts, in the end, to an enormous social and economic waste. By compelling people to seek their psychological advantage away from their jobs, it turns work into a necessary evil which receives the least possible effort.

"Family businesses" are a special case. On the one hand, the individual's job choice is not necessarily predetermined: He can elect not to enter the business, or he may use the business as a vehicle for accomplishments that surpass those of his predecessors (if he happens to be so motivated). On the other hand, the passive youth who grows up with an unshaken faith in the goodness of his environment may enter a family business feeling that any problems that crop up can be trusted to work themselves out. Whether a family business turns out to be a stimulus to achievement or a haven for the weak depends, in the last analysis, more on the ways in which families raise their children than on how they run their businesses.

In all probability, unrestricted career choices are still the exception rather than the rule, even in economically advanced countries like the United States. Many people can make only a limited choice, lack the information to make a realistic choice, or do not really want to make a choice at all. These restrictions, plus the more basic limitations imposed by aptitudes and education, have the effect of directing people toward careers and employers by geographical and economic factors that have little if any bearing on the satisfaction or challenge they will find in the work.

For these reasons the job applicants reaching most companies tend to have qualifications that are only randomly related to the em-

ployers' needs. In the long run this has two important effects: It makes work a dull and possibly frustrating trap for many people, and it causes employers to place heavy emphasis on their procedures for evaluating prospective employees. Anomie is as much a product of restricted career choices as it is of subordinating job design to machine design. Personnel testing—that helpful but imprecise effort to rationalize the process of assigning people to jobs—gets its impetus from the largely chaotic nature of job seeking.

Motivation is notoriously difficult to measure with paper-and-pencil tests, and it is largely for this reason that even the best testing programs are limited to a statistical, rather than an individual, validity. That is, when a group of tests are valid, they will give an accurate forecast of job performance more often than not, but one never knows in advance whether they will forecast accurately for any given individual. Most testing programs are built around individual measurements such as aptitude or intelligence tests, because most jobs require at least a minimum degree of aptitude if they are to be handled successfully at all. There is, in other words, a certain intellectual "threshold" for most jobs, below which it is most unlikely that a person could cope with a job adequately.

However—and this is important—there is seldom a significant increase in the likelihood of effective job performance *above* this threshold. As a rule, most people who score above it are about equally likely to succeed (or to fail, to look at the obverse of the same fact). While the odds are that a man who scores above the threshold can do well on the job if he wants to, aptitude tests tell nothing about whether he *will* want to. The reason some people with high aptitude test scores become successful in their work, while others with equally high scores fall short of success, is simply that aptitude scores do not measure the energy and persistence with which a man characteristically uses his capacities. They merely measure his capacities and indicate whether he could deal effectively with the job at all.

There are, of course, many tests which attempt to measure interests, attitudes, values, personality traits, and other more or less stable products of an individual's underlying motivation. Many were designed for clinical purposes; that is, to detect signs of psychological malfunction. Others were designed for vocational guidance, and some of these (especially vocational-interest tests) have amassed a very respectable statistical record in their own right. The projective type of test attempts to analyze the unconscious forces that some-

times reflect themselves deviously in the products of an individual's fantasy. Aside from the difficulty of plumbing anyone's emotional depths during a comparatively brief period, all of these testing methods share the common handicap of artificiality: That is, they are hardly likely to reproduce the social environment in which the testee would be living on the job, and therefore they often fail to sample his way of interpreting his psychological advantage in that environment. In effect, they provide a partial portrait of the individual, which—even if accurate—is often irrelevant.

This is not to suggest that personality tests of various kinds have no place in personnel testing. When properly used—with a careful regard for their limitations, for the complexity of the individual they are supposed to be measuring, and for the kind of environment in which he would be working—they can add to the statistical validity of a test battery. Like most devices that yield helpful but fallible guidance, personality tests are considerably more useful than their detractors believe but not nearly as reliable as their enthusiasts claim.

Tests are by no means the only selection method available, and they are seldom the most important. The key factor in the hiring decision generally is somebody's "intuition." More precisely, the decision depends on whether one person manages to create a subjective impression that corresponds to another person's preconceived notions of what a desirable employee looks like. It is therefore useful to examine the sources of these preconceived notions in order to determine the ways in which they affect the manpower input of an organization.

To begin with, it must be noted that preconceived notions are not always misleading. They are often based on extensive (if not well analyzed) experience, and they can acquire a respectable (if seldom calculated) statistical validity of their own. Their principal defect, which is a serious one, arises from the tendency of many managers who make hiring decisions to become ego-involved in the accuracy of their preconceptions. The result is the common habit of overlooking one's errors and taking credit for successes that might well have been due to luck. Consequently it is a rare hirer who knows whether his "intuition" is reliable or not—or who questions it at all, for that matter.

Most preconceived ideas about hiring are based on an uncritical acceptance of stereotypes: the folklore that tags most jobs with certain characteristics which are allegedly crucial for success. One

amusing side effect of the widespread acceptance of stereotypes is the equally wide pretense of fitting them which job applicants make during interviews and tests. Where decisions are guided by stereotypes, or where applicants *think* they are being measured against stereotypes, it becomes psychologically advantageous for the job seeker to pretend to be what he is not. It is equally advantageous later to keep up the pretense at meetings and conventions and on other occasions where employees believe they may be observed and evaluated.

Reliance on preconceived hiring standards has both predictable and unpredictable effects on the organization. The predictable ones include the reduction of personality clashes, at least of the more obvious variety, through the simple mechanism of screening out applicants for whom the hirer develops an instant and compelling distaste. Despite the temptation to classify decisions of this kind as entirely irrational and prejudicial, they should probably be credited with helping to avoid some unnecessary tensions and disharmony. Another predictable effect is the gradual "homogenizing" of an organization if most of its recruiters share the same preconceived ideas about whom to hire. As the employees of a given firm become increasingly similar, the firm acquires an image that deters people who do not resemble that image from applying. However, most corporate images are highly oversimplified versions of real employee populations. There are two important reasons for this: Recruiters usually have differing preconceptions, and many applicants who do not fit the stereotypes can succeed in making the recruiters think that they do. As a result, the employees entering most large firms are actually quite diverse.

The unpredictable effects of preconceptions about hiring occur when the hirer's ideas are only partially valid or not valid at all and when the applicant succeeds in deceiving the hirer into believing that he has the desired qualities, or both. The hiring then is really a random choice, even though both parties may think otherwise. What results can ultimately be achieved by the employee are quite difficult to predict. This has led many hirers whose "intuition" consists largely in unfounded biases to conclude that human motivation is essentially unfathomable and that attempting to predict how an applicant will perform on the job is merely an exercise in speculation.

Chapter 22

Morale

MORALE IS SUBJECTIVE, CONSISTING IN FEELINGS THAT PEOple have about their work, and therefore it is hard to measure and easy to ignore. We ordinarily think of morale only at its extremes, when it has obvious outward manifestations. Thus, when people are charged with enthusiasm, we say that their morale is high, and when they are dispirited, we say that their morale is low. When, as is more commonly the case, their outward behavior gives little evidence of how they feel, we are not likely to think in terms of morale at all, but morale of some kind is always present. Further, it is capable of making itself very obvious indeed after long periods of apparent dormancy. The fluctuations of morale are not really sudden or mysterious; they only seem so because we seldom study anyone's morale when he is not causing us any trouble.

Herzberg[47] has summarized the results of some two dozen published studies of the effects of morale on productivity as follows:

> In 54% of the reported surveys high morale was associated with *high* productivity; in 35% morale and productivity were found not to be related; and in 11% high morale was associated with *low* productivity. . . .
>
> The relationship is not absolute, but there are enough data to justify attention to attitudes as a factor in improving the worker's output. . . . [Low] correlations mean that many factors other than job attitudes must also be affecting productivity.

These figures, of course, refer to studies and not to workers or jobs. No one has taken a census of morale effects in all jobs, but it seems clear that the effects of morale on productivity are not at all simple. Morale enhances productivity under certain conditions, especially when the product is affected by craftsmanship or creativity. There are other conditions under which morale does not have much of an effect one way or another upon productivity. This is largely true of machine-paced jobs or those in which the individual is essentially

following a program and need not exercise much judgment. In those cases where morale is actually associated with low productivity, it is usually because a frozen group has developed which restricts productivity as a price of membership. The regulars who enjoy the security of belonging to the group will be fairly content and may register high morale scores on many attitude scales, but they will also tend to be uniformly low in production. The few rate busters will usually resent their isolation rather bitterly, and this will be reflected on attitude scales as low morale, yet their productivity will run high. The result is a negative correlation.

Despite these complexities, the maintenance of high morale must be considered a permanent responsibility of management. At its worst, poor morale can lead to strikes, featherbedding, malingering, and other reactions which can undermine the productivity of any kind of job. The long-term trend, as the economy becomes more technological and specialized, is a growing proportion of jobs which are definitely affected by worker attitudes. (Automation has the effect of absorbing routinized jobs and creating new jobs that call for judgment and analysis.) Further, low morale can have long-range effects that are even more damaging to the organization than short-range lapses in productivity. Managerial and professional talent is much more likely to develop when morale is sustained at a high level, and the image which a company presents to prospective new employees is quite likely to reflect any widespread internal conditions of morale. It is therefore necessary continually to analyze the forces that are affecting morale and to take appropriate actions to preserve it rather than to respond only when emergencies develop.

As a rule, changes in morale occur rather gradually. Morale has an inertia which reflects the history of employee relations in a company and which strongly conditions both the speed and the direction of the employees' reaction to various events. For example, when morale has been high for some time, adverse conditions will depress it slowly rather than cause any precipitous drop. There is a backlog of goodwill, so to speak, which continues to support morale even though the workers may have to endure some pressures. They are likely to regard these pressures as only temporary or as due to some purely local lapse. Only when the pressures are unrelieved for a long while will employee optimism begin to crumble, and even then some especially patient characters will continue to expect that good times will be restored shortly. If morale collapses—as evidenced,

for example, in a strike or a wave of absenteeism—it may seem to have done so suddenly, but actually the collapse will have been building up for a long time during which morale was buffered by a fortunate past.

On the other hand, if morale has been at a rather low ebb for a prolonged period, even a minor stress can produce a quick, steep decline. Trivial events or even rumors may be interpreted as a signal that management is up to no good and that the workers had better brace themselves for a fight or else resign themselves to a long spell of deprivation. The reaction may seem irrational to an observer who does not know the point of view from which the workers are interpreting the event that triggered it; yet the potentiality for interpreting almost any event in the worst possible light will usually have been present for a long while.

Inertia also slows morale on its way up, but to a lesser degree in groups which have enjoyed a good history of morale. Steps taken promptly to alleviate an undesirable condition will produce a quick rebound of confidence, although the longer these steps are delayed the more likely the workers are to be wary even after the source of their distress has been removed. Where morale has been poor, even dramatic attempts by management to relieve an unsatisfactory condition may produce little reaction for many months. This slowness to respond has caused some managers to wonder whether it was worthwhile to try to restore morale at all. Once morale has been allowed to deteriorate, it takes a long time to rebuild: Working people have long memories. It is much simpler and less costly, in the long run, to devote a continuing effort to maintaining morale than it is to try to restore it after it has suffered a collapse.

In addition to the history of past management–employee relations, morale is affected by the ability of individual employees to absorb stress. If they habitually regard their environment as fairly benevolent, or at any rate as not particularly threatening, they are likely to treat job stresses as nuisances rather than calamities. If, on the other hand, they have learned to consider their environment as a sort of untrustworthy bully that may try to abuse them at almost any time, they are likely to be forever on the defensive and ready to interpret any stress as the entering wedge of disaster. Very few employee populations are made up exclusively of either extreme, but to the extent that either one constitutes a significant minority in an organization, the volatility of morale is likely to be affected. Thus

a group of young managers who have already started to rise in a company's hierarchy will be likely to shrug off difficulties which might cause older, less successful men to become disheartened.

Three basic concepts help to explain the fluctuations of morale. First, any individual employee is likely to be more or less constantly surveying his job environment for signs that may affect his *psychological advantage.* That is, his job may enable him to play roles at work that are close to his favorite ideas about what kind of person he is; or, conversely, his job may prevent him from being himself to the extent that he would like. Even in a fairly static environment, psychological advantage is a continually live issue—not in such sophisticated terms, of course, but rather on the everyday level of preserving whatever dignity one has at work and hoping, perhaps, for more.

When the job environment seems to be about to bolster or enhance someone's psychological advantage, his morale goes up; when it seems ready to deny him part of a role he cherishes, his morale goes down. For example, when a security-minded person sees signs that there will be no layoffs nor work stoppages, he is likely to feel relieved and even a little elated. And when a prestige-minded person begins to think that some of the prerogatives he has been accustomed to may now be taken away from him—as, for example, through the rise of some new "elite" which takes precedence over an old one—he is likely to become outraged and then depressed.

Second, the various kinds of information (or rumors) about his job that reach an individual are judged as *supports* to morale, as *pressures* upon it, or (more rarely) as neutral. Information which has no apparent bearing on psychological advantage will not, as a rule, affect morale. But because so many different clues are constantly available at work—in the form of gossip, speculation, and even occasional facts—about factors which may affect individual roles and aspirations, morale is in a fairly constant state of fluctuation. Most of these changes are temporary and insignificant, but when a sizable group of employees begin to find that their working world is *consistently* full of pressures or supports, a morale trend is likely to develop. These trends, once under way, tend to be more lasting than changes that come swiftly in response to some spectacular event. If morale is in an uptrend, a minor grievance may cause brief demonstrations of anger, but these will usually disappear soon enough. If morale has been in a downtrend, even a major concession

by management may not produce more than a temporary lightening of the gloom. Consequently, major morale trends are far more important than brief reactions, and wise morale policy is geared to the long term rather than to reactions that can be produced quickly.

Third, morale depends far more on whether employees feel able to influence management decisions that affect them than on any specific decision in itself. A decision to grant a pay increase, for example, may not have more than a mollifying effect if the workers feel that future grievances will not be taken seriously by management without a prolonged struggle. On the other hand, prompt responsiveness to evidences of employee dissatisfaction will help to sustain morale even if management decides, upon investigation, not to make any changes. Morale depends, in other words, upon the existence of adequate *grievance channels.*

Regardless of whether these channels are provided by a militant union that compels management to respond to grievances or by man–manager relationships built on mutual confidence and respect, their very existence builds optimism and thereby supports morale. But where employees feel cut off from management—unable, in other words, to enter even the processes that affect the environment in which they work—they find no middle course between abject submission and outright opposition. The result, depending on the kinds of personalities among them, is either a marginally productive frozen group or recalcitrance and a tendency to strike.

If management does not make it possible for employees to protect their psychological advantage by providing adequate grievance channels, then either these channels will be forced upon them or the employees will pursue their psychological advantage elsewhere than at work, which in most cases will drastically reduce their productivity. It is, of course, possible to deny grievance channels by suppression, as in totalitarian countries or, in milder form but with the same effect, during periods of high unemployment when the mere possession of a job may seem so precious that other advantages are readily sacrificed to preserve it. But suppression merely postpones the demand for a voice in affecting the working environment. It encourages conspiracies to outwit authority and eventually to overthrow it. In the long run, sustained productivity rests on grievance channels through which employees expect to be heard and to protect themselves against the intolerable.

Consequently, the first line of defense for morale is the relation-

ship of the individual employee to his immediate supervisor. If the supervisor is approachable, willing to judge a problem on its merits and to champion the employee's cause if he is convinced of its rightness, morale will tend to be high. If the supervisor is aloof or preoccupied, if he usually regards employee requests as unreasonable or without merit, or if he will not risk the wrath of his superiors in order to get satisfaction for his men, morale will tend to be low.

However, underlying this first line of defense and in many ways determining its effectiveness is a question of philosophy. Traditionally, the employee has been regarded as someone who rented his services to the company: His obligation was to do his job in the way management wanted it done and in no other way; management's obligation was to pay him for his services and nothing else. The idea that an employee acquires a certain proprietorship of his job by virtue of performing it, not because he has financed the job or organized it but because it is psychologically important to him, is still considered rather revolutionary.

But entirely apart from whether this "proprietorship" has any basis in classical economics or in law, the fact is that many employees already feel entitled to it, and many more are likely to in the future. For the employee is not merely selling his services to the organization, he is also selling his career and his ego. They are inseparable from his services and therefore enter into the bargain whether management wishes it that way or not. For this reason the employee may feel that he has, or at least should have, a right to influence his working environment, and accordingly he also feels that management's control of the enterprise, while it takes precedence over his own control, cannot be absolute.

There is, in other words, a trend for workers to claim an effective grievance channel as a right. This trend, not yet codified as law, has been recognized by no less a lawyer than Adolf A. Berle, Jr., of Columbia University:[48]

> There is beginning to be apparent . . . a counterforce which . . . in time may modify in certain areas the absolute power of business discretion. In our system it emerges in time as law; and good lawyers watch for it.
>
> In American thought, an economic system, like a political government, is made for men. If it denies rights of men to life as they understand life, or to liberty as they understand that, or to property,

> whatever modern property shall turn out to be, the community gathers itself for a kind of revolt whose results are unforeseeable. Happily the long tradition of the common law and the American Constitution offers . . . a group of institutions making it possible to protect and develop (these rights).

Thus a statutory grievance channel which gives employee opinion, at least about matters directly related to the job, a significant role in management planning may some day be created, perhaps as an extension of the "due process" provisions of the Fifth Amendment. But long before that happens, if it ever does, there is likely to be a wider recognition that adequate grievance channels support morale and enhance productivity. Further, the very existence of such channels often tends, after a time, to diminish both the number and the severity of the grievances that arise. Not only does management become more circumspect, but, what is more important, employees become less sensitive to minor trends which they would previously have regarded as threatening.

In large organizations a first line of defense for morale may not be sufficient; a second line may be needed in the form of periodic opinion surveys. The larger and more decentralized the organization, the more difficult it is for top management to obtain a current, comprehensive portrait of morale. It is not unusual for the conception of field morale at a remote headquarters to be based on situations that have changed or months ago ceased to exist. At local levels there may be a very good understanding of morale conditions, but the existence of trends that encompass many localities will of course be hard to detect. Perhaps the most important reason why surveys may be needed to supplement local observations is the reluctance of many employees to express themselves with complete candor to the managers who evaluate them and who may have a decisive role in determining their future in the company. An employee's advantage lies in persuading his immediate superiors that he is not troublesome or disloyal; he is unlikely to risk creating an impression of discontent unless he is desperate. This is why even the most discerning managers are often unaware of the depths to which their employees' dissatisfaction may run or indeed of its causes—unless it has reached the boiling point.

Surveys help to support morale in two important ways. The most obvious is the detection of budding problems before they have grown to serious proportions, so that preventive action may be taken. In

a similar vein, problems that have grown serious can be diagnosed so that corrective actions can be addressed to their underlying causes rather than to surface manifestations. (Since "surface manifestations" often take the form of symptomatic wage demands, a misdiagnosis can lead to a temporary, and therefore costly, "solution.") Perhaps equally important, surveys often reveal that morale problems which were thought to exist do not, or that they are of insufficiently serious proportions to warrant costly programs that might otherwise have been launched to correct them.

The second way in which surveys support morale is subtler. Employees frequently like them. In effect, they are provided with a useful "escape valve" through which they can vent their feelings, a process which usually has the effect of calming people down and permitting them to get a more balanced view of the situations that have been disturbing them. Once a survey program has been established, the knowledge that management is interested in its employees' opinions and intends to consult them periodically on a confidential basis has the effect of eliminating the blockage in the grievance channel created by unwillingness to risk offense. Being asked for one's opinion is after all a rather dignifying experience, especially for people who have chafed under circumstances in which their opinions seemed to count for very little.

It is sometimes feared that opinion surveys will worsen morale by focusing employee attention on dissatisfactions which might otherwise have remained in the background or that employees will assume that the company's internal problems will now be settled by a majority vote. As far as stirring up the proverbial hornets' nest is concerned, it is seldom if ever true that significant morale problems will lie quietly in the background as long as no one disturbs them. If they are causing real dissatisfaction, they will be very much in the forefront of employee feelings and discussions regardless of whether or not management is aware of them. Further, problems that are truly trivial do not become inflated through being discussed openly; rather, their triviality becomes all the more apparent to those who discuss them.

The fallacy in avoiding opinion surveys in order to "let sleeping dogs lie" is that the "dogs" are never really asleep; rather it is management that sleeps if it assumes that unexplored problems will evaporate if they are ignored long enough. It is true that during periods of severe morale disturbance it may be inappropriate to

conduct a survey, more because the findings are not likely to be reliable than because of any worsening effect the survey could have upon morale. Morale trends rise or decline in response to forces that are much more elemental than any impact a survey might have; therefore, a decision to avoid surveys in order not to stir up a morale problem is tantamount to flying blind in hopes of not stirring up a storm.

As for employees concluding that surveys are a sort of referendum by which the company will be governed, this seldom occurs because most employees are very well aware of the power structure in their companies and much too realistic to assume that it has suddenly been turned upside down. Opinion polls are by now a fairly familiar fixture of the American landscape. Even if an employee has never participated in one at work, he usually knows about them through reading about pre-election polls, television audience ratings, and other surveys that periodically take the public pulse without, in themselves, deciding issues. The employee is likely, in other words, to be fairly sophisticated about how polls work, at least in the sense of realizing that they are used for guidance and not, as in the case of actual elections, for decisions. Opinion polls are therefore quite unlikely to create the illusion that management is abandoning its prerogatives.

The content of morale—that is, the specific issues that operate as pressures or supports—varies greatly, but in general it falls into three broad groups. The first concerns off-the-job satisfactions that are expected from work, such as income, security, and stature in the community. The second concerns on-the-job satisfactions—for example, job interest, opportunity for advancement, and prestige within the organization. The third concerns highly personal satisfactions derived from the job: growth, achievement, power, job mastery, or the like. These factors are arranged in a sort of hierarchy; that is, when there is dissatisfaction with the first group of experiences, nothing in the other two is likely to matter very much, and dissatisfaction in the second group can prevent the third from becoming significant. Dissatisfactions in the third group usually have a trivial effect unless the first two groups are well satisfied. These dissatisfactions consist primarily in annoyances with obstacles (such as inadequate budgets and equipment) which prevent the individual from growing on the job. This is why "griping" that consists

primarily in complaints about tools or methods and that ignores wages, job security, and other more basic issues is sometimes considered a "healthy" morale problem—which does not mean, of course, that it ought not to be corrected.

In the last analysis, morale depends upon the relation between expectations and reality. The closer the individual's environment comes to providing the kinds of rewards he expects, or at least to showing promise that these rewards will be forthcoming, the better his morale will be. The converse is also true. Consequently, any thorough exploration of morale must first define what employees expect of their jobs and how these expectations arise. This kind of investigation sometimes reveals that management has inadvertently been creating a morale problem for itself by an unbalanced emphasis on certain rewards at the expense of others.

As a rule, an employee's expectations of the satisfactions that may be anticipated from his job are developed from three sources. The first, and probably the most important, is the employee's own motives. He brings with him to his job the same tendencies to seek certain kinds of goals that he carries into every other aspect of his life. The second source of expectations is the stated policies of his employer, which usually take the form of slogans or mottoes that express, in vague but memorable form, those values that management tries to be guided by in its dealings with employees. These policies are about as effective as management makes them through its day-to-day actions: Some are regarded as unshakable principles and others as amusing little myths. (Management actions that set precedents have the same psychological effect as policy statements regardless of whether they were intended to or not. Therefore, precedents also enter into employee expectations.)

The third source of employee expectations is subtler. It consists in implications that employees interpret as promises or in inaccurate ideas that are never corrected for fear of hurting an employee's feelings. The commonest form of uncorrected illusion concerns promotion and salary increases. An employee is given a vaguely hopeful indication which can be, and usually is, interpreted as a promise that he can expect to be advanced by an unspecified but not-too-distant date, and having been allowed to draw this conclusion, he is not relieved of it. Consequently, he becomes quite embittered when time passes and the "promise" is not kept. Strictly speaking, no promise was ever made, but management did create a situation in which such an inference was possible and therefore became obligated, in the

employee's mind, either to clarify the ambiguity or to live with its consequences.

An unbalanced emphasis by management on certain kinds of rewards can build such strong expectations that there will be serious morale problems if these expectations are not met. For example, firms that recruit specialists by stressing the prospect of expanding job opportunities may find that laying off even a few of them will cause the remainder to "stretch out" their work while surreptitiously seeking steadier employment elsewhere. Once a strong expectation is shattered, it causes all other expectations to be questioned. There is much to be said for seeing to it that employee expectations are not built up to unrealistic proportions, either through overenthusiastic "communicating" or through failure to correct employee illusions.

Morale can never be permanently assured, largely because new dissatisfactions will normally keep arising as old ones are relieved, forgotten, or replaced. It is neither possible nor desirable to satisfy employees' needs so well that they no longer find things to be unhappy about. Wanting something more is a normal, healthy, human trait—albeit a troublesome one for management—that makes progress possible.

But it is important to realize that the kinds of things that employees want more of are changing, slowly but inexorably, as a result of economic and technological forces. Monetary needs and the related needs for fringe benefits are becoming less acute, not because people are necessarily satisfied, but because they increasingly expect to be able to win their just share of their employers' revenues. Even in low-wage industries the power of working people to bargain effectively for the highest price their services can bring is no longer in doubt. Barring a major depression that would shatter these expectations, the trend of employee desires is likely to continue shifting away from wages toward less tangible kinds of rewards from work, such as dignity, stimulation, and personal growth. The trend is certainly not universal, and it will probably be succeeded in due time by other trends that are as yet unpredictable. But in the foreseeable future, widespread purchasing power and optimism about wage bargaining will probably combine to make money a less potent issue in the maintenance of morale than it has been traditionally.

Another force causing changes in employees' needs, and therefore

affecting their morale, is change in the industrial environment itself. This is largely being brought about by organizational growth, by the rise of new products and services and the decline of old ones, and by that group of machine-controlled operations that are collectively referred to as automation. Change has become so prominent a part of industrial life, and is so clearly destined to become even more important, that we must inevitably examine the ways in which it is affected by motivation, and vice versa.

Chapter 23

Change

IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE AXIOMATIC THAT WORKERS RESIST ATtempts to change their accustomed ways of working or the organization structure within which they work. This resistance is reputedly grounded in a natural preference for the familiar, in the difficulty of "unlearning" ingrained habits, and in a certain laziness which makes most men unwilling to exert themselves if they can avoid it. It is quite true that history is full of instances in which workers have been opposed to change, sometimes violently, but to say that change is always resisted by working people is a gross oversimplification of the truth. Workers frequently acquiesce in change without any special inducements, and under certain circumstances they may actually advocate it quite ardently.

Attitudes toward change depend on whether the individual thinks the new system would be advantageous or disadvantageous to him. If he has experienced comparable changes in the past, he is likely to assume that new changes would affect him in more or less the same way that the previous ones did. If he has not seen much change, his attitude will depend on the extent to which he is satisfied with his position under the existing system. He may also have preconceptions about change which are based on gossip, on his own hopes and fears, or even on hard facts. Lastly, his own basic motivations may incline him to support or to oppose change.

In analyzing the forces affecting attitudes toward change it will be quickly apparent that the prospect of having to alter a habit has a complex motivational effect which is often easier to understand in retrospect than to predict in advance. We shall first consider the organization's past experiences with change, since these affect the thinking of all the individuals who belong to it, and then proceed to an analysis of personal attitudes toward change.

Most methods changes of any magnitude require the cooperation of the people who have some degree of vested interest in the methods

that are to be replaced. These people can hardly be expected to cooperate, however, if that seems to be contrary to what they regard as their best interests. The effective installation of new methods therefore requires that employees be given careful explanations of what to expect and that they be assured that they will not "pay" for the change by sacrificing privileges they currently enjoy. It is, in fact, a common practice to assure employees prior to the installation of labor-saving equipment that those whose jobs are eliminated will not be laid off but will be assigned elsewhere in the organization. Without such assurances even the most "rational" changes can produce quite "irrational" delays and inefficiencies.

To a considerable extent, the smoothness or turbulence with which an organization carries out a transition to new ways of operating may be predetermined by its history of prior changes. This interesting possibility emerges from a review by Floyd C. Mann and Franklin Neff,[49] both of the University of Michigan, of the experiences of four companies which had introduced major organizational changes. They found, for example, that the employees of a company which has had to make fairly frequent changes in the past can be expected to take further changes more or less in stride. On the other hand, a previously stable organization which has to undertake a major modification of its methods may find the transition unsettling or even chaotic.

In companies which have already experienced previous changes, the way in which the conversions were managed will almost certainly be remembered, and these memories will have a decided influence on the employees' willingness to cooperate in future changes. For example, if in the past the reasons for the new methods were carefully explained and assurances were given regarding direct effects of the changes on their jobs, the employees are likely to think of change itself as a fairly benign process in which their own interests are not threatened. In contrast, if prior conversions created uncertainty and confusion, and especially if some workers were demoted or displaced because of the new methods, the remaining employees are likely to regard any change as a stratagem used by management to further undermine their security.

In addition to the previous experience of the organization as a whole, the individual motivations of its members will have an important effect on the overall reaction to change. There are four main reasons for the way in which a given employee reacts to the prospect

of change in his working environment. The first of these is economic. The kinds of changes that have been taking place in industry on a large scale—for example, the increasing proportion of clerical workers, the displacement of many traditional jobs by automatic equipment, and the rise of whole new industries—clearly work to the economic advantage of some workers and to the disadvantage of others. Broadly speaking, the younger and better-educated person with no old skills to unlearn is likely to be the beneficiary of change, while the older man with a lifetime investment in obsolescent skills is likely to be the loser.

The second reason for individual attitudes toward change is, in a sense, "political." That is, it depends on the individual's position in his company's power hierarchy prior to the change. New operating methods can change the power relationships within an organization or at least create the possibility that old power distributions can be challenged. If an employee has a skill on which his employer is critically dependent, if he belongs to a group that traditionally wields a strong influence on policy, or indeed if he enjoys any other form of leverage over income and power under the existing system, he will have a stake in preserving his favored position. Whether he opposes change or accedes to it will depend to a large extent on whether he thinks he can continue to exercise the same prerogatives under the new system that he enjoyed under the old one. On the other hand, if an employee does not have a particularly influential position under the existing system, he will have little to lose under a newer one. Accordingly, he is likely to support a change if it promises to put him in a stronger position or to be neutral toward it if it seems unlikely to affect him directly.

The third major influence on attitudes toward change is the individual's own motivation or, to put it more precisely, the degree to which the job environment under the old system supported his psychological advantage. The effects of motivation on attitudes toward change can be illustrated most clearly by the security motive and the power motive. However, in the following examples it should be remembered that what matters most is not so much the individual's dominant motive as the extent to which that motive gave him a stake in preserving the *status quo*.

Consider first the security-oriented person who, under the traditional method of operating, enjoyed what he considered to be a fairly high degree of importance. His income was safe, and his prospects

for increasing it also were safe; in any contest with other groups in the company over prerogatives of one kind or another he felt pretty sure of not coming off too badly. However, his safety probably lay in his situation rather than in his prowess. He was, organizationally speaking, in the right place at the right time; his good fortune was more than likely achieved by good luck—or at least he is likely to think so. Therefore, he has a very strong stake in preserving the circumstances to which he owes so much. What he will dread most is not so much a loss in prestige or political influence or even the diminution of his earnings prospects but, rather, the fact that with change the future becomes unpredictable. Lacking confidence in his ability to control events once they have begun to move in new directions, he will fear the worst. He will find it hard to accept even the prospect of change and may even try to ignore it as long as possible. His "resistance," if it comes to that, is more likely to be passive footdragging and a decidedly unenthusiastic attitude than a more militant form of opposition.

Second, consider another person with the same kind of security motives, but this time one who was not particularly privileged under the old system. For him, the principal advantage of the old system was that he knew it well; it was at least predictable and that, for him, was not a small advantage by any means. He will not welcome a change, but he is not likely to resist it very much, either. He considers resistance useless, and besides, he expects that in the long run all systems will work out about equally for him. On the whole, then, such a person tends to have an indifferent attitude toward change or perhaps to view it as a nuisance that upsets comfortable old habits without any compensating gains for him. The best thing he can say about a change in methods may be that it is no worse than the old way of getting the work done.

Third, consider a man with strong power motives—someone who likes to have a controlling influence over people, resources, and events—and who had exactly that under the traditional way of operating. He more than likely arrived at his position of power deliberately rather than by chance. Such a person usually acquires a sensitivity for trends that may affect his position: He will probably have assessed any pending change in methods or organization long before it actually occurs and will have decided whether or not the new method will detract from his power. However, he will not necessarily oppose a change, provided he thinks he can take control of the new

method too. His instinct, in other words, is simply to move from one power position to another rather than to tie himself too tightly to any particular technique of getting the work done. Therefore, he may try to maneuver himself or his department into a position of control over a new process, and if he succeeds in doing so—which will not be unusual—he will become an open advocate of the change. However, if some other group in the company manages to take control of the new method, his tactics will he different. He will oppose the change if he feels it can still be stopped; or, if it cannot, he will continue trying to persuade top management that the new process would work better if it were reassigned to his department.

Fourth, consider a man with strong power motives who did not enjoy much power under the old system. He is likely to be on the alert for potential ways of upsetting the existing power structure and to champion any cause that seems likely to bring this about. He is, in other words, a rebel in search of a cause. Sometimes he may even support changes that hold no immediate prospect of improving his own position, if only because they will unsettle the *status quo* and perhaps make it more vulnerable to a later change that would be directly beneficial to him. If a change were in prospect which permitted some "unprivileged" group in his company to rise in importance and perhaps replace the older "elite" groups, he would probably ally himself with the group that seemed destined to rise. More than that, he might even try to make himself its spokesman.

The fourth factor affecting attitudes toward change is information. The opinion of an individual as to whether a change would benefit him is not always realistic; especially if the change has far-reaching ramifications, he is likely to be unaware of many of its salient points. It will not be uncommon, either, for him to have prejudged the issue on the basis of previous experience, rumor, or an emotional bias for or against change. Sometimes, therefore, opposition to change will be due to a misunderstanding of its consequences. This is why a clear and convincing explanation of how changes will affect employees is a prerequisite for effective management. Lack of information is also the reason why some workers try to delay the introduction of a new method. They are not sure how it will affect them, and therefore they play for time in hopes that the implications of the change will be clarified. This has sometimes been interpreted as "resistance" to change, but it is really more of an attempt to explore the change than to block it.

Organizational and technological changes can have a profound effect on the satisfactions derived from work. Status may be enhanced or decreased, the challenge to one's skills may be increased or lessened, and job security may also be affected. Consequently all changes can impinge, potentially at least, on powerful motives. For this reason decisions about changes are seldom made exclusively on their own merits, and the debates that sometimes are engaged in prior to their implementation seldom have to do exclusively with what is best for the organization. The contention between parties that think they stand to gain or lose is likely to begin as soon as the potential effects become apparent. The jockeying for position to reap the benefits of a change or to avoid its penalties may continue covertly until it eventually merges into an argument over whether the old change should be succeeded by yet another change.

This is not to suggest that advocates and opponents of change in an organization are motivated solely by self-interest or that the decisions which are reached about prospective change are not based primarily on the interests of the organization as a whole. The point is simply that everyone in an organization has an unsuppressible interest in having the organization support his psychological advantage as strongly as possible, and accordingly his attitude toward specific changes can hardly escape being colored to some extent by the effect he expects it to have on him.

Once it becomes known that some kind of change is in prospect, the various members of an organization are likely to begin trying to estimate its impact on them. It is precisely at this stage that a factual explanation is in order; for the longer people speculate in the absence of facts, the more believable their speculations become, until at last the facts may seem like fiction because they are inconsistent with what is already believed. However, even though careful explanations of *why* the change is contemplated and *how* it would affect the individual worker will usually lessen resistance, explanations are not a panacea. Neither are the various devices for giving the employees an opportunity to "participate" in the decisions on how the change shall be introduced.

When a change works against an individual's psychological advantage, or even if he merely thinks it will, he is quite likely to regard with contempt any effort to have him participate in what he considers his own undoing. The human relations approach to reducing resistance to change works only when the environment after the

change will clearly continue to support the psychological advantage of the individuals who will be affected. Therefore, the planning of the post-change job environment is actually a more potent device for dissolving resistance than group discussion or any other method for the "engineering of consent."

Take the predicament of an individual who actually stands to lose some prized advantage as the result of a change. The starkest example of someone in this position is the man whose work will be taken over by automatic equipment, absorbed by another group, or simply discontinued because the product he makes no longer has a market. Unless he can be offered some alternative which at least softens the blow—such as a guarantee that he will be retrained for another assignment or that some kind of equitable arrangement will be worked out between him and rival candidates for available jobs—he can hardly be expected to cooperate in effecting the change. Depending on the amount of power he believes he has for preventing the change, he can be expected to try to block it, to compel the continuation of previous methods (featherbedding), to find as many defects as possible in the new method (and possibly to invent a few), or simply to yield ground to the new method as slowly as possible. Attempts to "solve" the problem created by such resistance by means of incentive payments are usually doomed to failure; the resistance is not a way of extorting higher pay but an attempt to stave off an intolerable turn of events.

Consider next the case of men whose mistrust of management has hardened into a more or less permanent state of antagonism even before the change itself is begun. This kind of attitude often predates any direct experience with a particular management and represents an indoctrination by ideologies or "class" feelings which in some groups are handed down from generation to generation. In other instances hardened suspicion results from management's own ineptness in failing to permit its employees to experience enough dignity and self-respect on the job. When situations of this kind continue for any length of time, employee opinion will become mobilized against management with or without the aid of agitators. Employee groups which have developed long-standing grievances against their employers are particularly ripe for easy and effective agitation by outsiders. When this happens, management sometimes mistakenly assumes that the agitators have persuaded previously "happy" employees that they have "problems."

When explanations of a change are attempted against such a background, they are quite likely to be interpreted as a form of trickery. In fact, explanations may raise suspicions higher than ever, since the workers will assume that management is concealing its real intentions and will be chiefly concerned with discovering what those (presumably unfriendly) intentions are. Unfortunately, once the relations between management and employees have been allowed to deteriorate to this point, resistance to change can scarcely be avoided, regardless of whether or not the change will create any substantial advantage or disadvantage for the employees. In this sense, the cost to management of permitting morale to decline and remain low is very severe indeed; poor employee morale deprives management of much of its flexibility in the face of market or technological conditions that require changes in methods.

However, despite resistance, most changes are eventually put into effect, and it then becomes necessary for everyone affected to adjust to his new role. The difficulty is due primarily to the strain, if any, that the new method places on the individual's abilities and his tolerance for the new social role that the change requires him to play in his company. If he finds that his job has become more difficult (which is not unusual in the case of men who work with equipment that has been redesigned with new technological features), his feelings of competence will probably decrease. Even if he is able to overlook his productivity problems, other people will not; his reputation as a craftsman will suffer. He will, in effect, find himself no longer quite so well qualified for his job as he used to be, and therefore he will be to some extent deprived of whatever satisfactions he previously enjoyed as a result of being able to master his work.

On the other hand, if the change has made his job less challenging (which happens when jobs requiring judgment or skill are split into smaller, repetitive operations for the sake of mass production), he will probably find that his job absorbs only a part of his energy and interest. He will be tempted to daydream and to socialize with nearby employees. He may regard this change as a rather welcome relief from the burdens of full-time work, or he may feel superfluous and therefore in danger of having to leave his department.

The main factor that determines whether a simplified job will be welcomed or resented is the contrast with the satisfactions provided by the previous job. This means that industrial engineers are

often in a position to *improve* job satisfaction when redesigning jobs that are dull and unabsorbing and that they perhaps ought to think twice before redesigning jobs which already provide considerable interest for the men holding them. Unfortunately, the cost of undermining morale is seldom estimated, and the power of job interest to support morale is seldom appreciated.

As for changes in social role, an employee may find that after a change the job environment has become more compatible with his psychological advantage, or less compatible, or that it has not changed appreciably. In the latter instance he is not really called upon to make a social adjustment at all, although of course he may still have to endure the inconvenience of shedding old habits and acquiring new ones. However, the discomfort of converting habits will be considerably easier to tolerate when it is not accompanied by a major social adjustment as well.

If the change places an individual in a role that is more satisfying than his previous one, he will probably feel rather elated at first, but after a while his reaction may be modified somewhat as he discovers the limits of his new prerogatives. If he is fortunate and the position offers him the full scope he needs, but not more than he can handle, he may seem to blossom with assurance and energy; in effect, he will find himself able to behave more in accordance with his instincts and less in deference to the opinions of others. Or he may become preoccupied with his responsibilities and rather too busy to be aware of the fact that he is better off, emotionally, than before; even so his improved situation should be obvious to those who know him well, if only by virtue of the fact that he seems less bored, and complains less, than before.

Lastly, there are times when a change in job status may actually propel a man too far in the direction of satisfying his needs. He may find himself, for example, with more freedom to make decisions than he is prepared to handle or with more prestige than he can live with comfortably. The problem of too much authority occurs most commonly with promising young men whose performance at lower levels creates such enthusiasm among their superiors that they are thrust ahead too rapidly, with the result that they themselves are awed by their job or their superiors are disappointed to discover that they are not really as mature as they seemed to be. Similarly, an organizational change may provide a man with a marvelous opportunity to pursue his own psychological advantage at the expense

of everyone else's. This can happen easily enough with a power-motivated person. Despite his satisfaction with the kind of environment that the change has created for him, however, the organization may think better of it and have to undo what it has done in the first place.

Being saddled with too much prestige—or too much authority—is most often a problem with a man who arrived at his previous position after a long, difficult climb and is therefore quite likely to regard that position as a sort of personal pinnacle. To be elevated beyond that pinnacle not only bestows an unnecessary reward but also requires him to deal as a peer with men whom he is accustomed to think of as superiors. He has to make a difficult adjustment for the sake of a reward he does not need.

If the job environment after a change is less satisfactory for a given individual than it was previously, he may at first try to rebel, but the avenues open to him for safe rebellion are likely to be few, and unless he is prepared to hazard everything he is likely to become rather depressed for a while at the prospect of having permanently lost his old prerogatives. He is in a situation in which something has to give: Either he downgrades his self-concept and contents himself with fewer satisfactions than he previously felt were his due, or he preserves his self-concept and becomes permanently dissatisfied with his environment. The latter is by far the easier course. Accordingly, he may become a malcontent, or find solace in some ideology that considers the existing social system to be unjust, or perhaps just pine for the good old days and find fault with newfangled methods of all kinds. He may even embark on what amounts to a personal strike against the local economy by refusing to accept employment at a lower income or status level than that to which he is accustomed. This has apparently happened with former production workers whose jobs have been displaced by automation and who apparently prefer long-term unemployment to available jobs in service industries which do not pay as well as their vanished factory jobs. This phenomenon is of course abetted to some extent by unemployment compensation.

The real victims of change are those people who cannot work out some kind of viable compromise with it and still retain enough of their original self-concept to feel that they have been left intact. From a purely psychological standpoint, it is probably better for the individual to stand bitterly on the sidelines, ignoring economic reali-

ties as long as society permits him to, than to succumb to what he would forever regard as a crushing humiliation. But sheltering people from reality is not really in their long-term psychological interests, and it is hardly a wise public policy, either. Therefore, the solution to the human problems created by the necessity of change must lie in making viable compromises possible for more of the affected people. The alternatives they are faced with must not be too starkly defined. There must, in other words, be a careful planning of the human aspect of change, and this must go hand in hand with its organizational, technical, and financial aspects. Further, this planning cannot be confined to a particular change. It must be integrated with the continuing policies of the organization so as to minimize human problems *whenever* changes become necessary—as they almost inevitably will.

For example, in operations which are likely to require less manpower as productivity increases or as demand slackens, it is wise to absorb the inevitable decrease in personnel through normal attrition as much as possible. Consequently, such departments should not be staffed unnecessarily with people who have long-term employment needs, such as younger men, or with people who may be difficult to reassign, such as relatively unskilled workers. It would be better to utilize young women, who usually have fairly short-term employment needs, or older men who will be approaching retirement when the transitions are occurring. Men in departments that are "change prone" and who can be usefully reassigned elsewhere, without necessarily requiring an equally skilled replacement, should be moved while the alternative is available. This would guard against the likelihood that the supply of adequate alternatives will not equal the demand if everyone needs to be reassigned at once.

Normal personnel policy should, in other words, anticipate the effects of change and thereby limit the difficulties concomitant with a change. This is important precisely because those problems which cannot be prevented will frequently require special consideration for fairly long periods, and this kind of attention suffers badly from dilution. Management can rightly expect to be preoccupied for a considerable period with the disposition of even a small number of adjustment problems caused by a major change; consequently both ordinary business prudence and humanitarianism require that the effects of change on individual employees be anticipated and that appropriate action be taken as early as is practicable.

Chapter 24

Labor Unions

AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS, WHICH INCLUDE IN THEIR MEMbership approximately one-quarter of all employed persons in the United States, have gone through three main historical phases. During the first phase, prior to the Wagner Act of 1935, unions were primarily *defensive* in character. That is, they served as a means of providing at least some protection for the interests of employees against the then-overpowering influence of management. During the second phase, which began after the Wagner Act and lasted for about twenty years, the role played by unions shifted from the defensive to the *offensive*. They grew rapidly, both in size and in power, and undertook an aggressive advocacy of social changes that favored the interests of employees. Either through negotiations or through various forms of pressure, unions effected a sweeping redistribution of the power that was once held exclusively by management.

More recently, unions have begun to enter a third phase in which they seem destined to play a more conservative role. That is, it is increasingly necessary for them to concentrate on preserving the gains they have already won instead of seeking to advance union power much further. This is not to say that there is any lack of zeal for expansion among unions, but rather that they seem—for the moment, at least—to have organized nearly all the susceptible groups. Organizing drives are encountering more disinterest and outright resistance from unorganized workers than they previously did, largely because the industries which remain unorganized attract employees who consider unions either unnecessary or degrading. Meantime, the power of existing unions is being eroded by various political and economic trends as well as by more sophisticated personnel management policies. Finding themselves, so to speak, with their attacks repulsed and their home territory under mounting pressure, American unions are for the first time in their history becoming advocates of the *status quo:* They are now finding it to their advantage to attempt to control change or even to prevent it.

In this chapter I shall examine some of the reasons why this has come about, with emphasis, of course, on the apparent motivational factors. Going a step further, I shall try to anticipate some future trends in union–management relations on the basis of factors which are already evident. However, the union movement is so complex that any attempt to analyze it from a single standpoint can only result in oversimplification. In fact, even the motivational aspects of unions will have to be oversimplified somewhat, since a thorough treatment of the subject might easily fill a volume in itself. However, the concepts of psychological advantage and expectations of the environment can be helpful in explaining a number of important features of the union movement. First, let us examine the question of why some workers are attracted to labor unions and others are not ıttracted, as well as the reasons why unions are resisted by some nanagements and accepted by others. We shall then consider the ›henomenon of the strike and close with some thoughts about the ·ole that American labor unions may play in the future.

For the sake of simplicity, we shall consider only "voluntary" unions that the individual worker joins because he freely chooses to do so. We shall also confine our discussion to relations between union and management, setting aside the jurisdictional problems that arise between rival unions. It goes without saying that a closed shop or a coercive union imposes itself upon the desires of many individuals and leaves little chance for motivation, as such, to affect their actions.

The man who elects to join a voluntary union may have many immediate and practical reasons for doing so, such as protecting himself from arbitrary dismissal or improving his chances of receiving a higher wage, but underlying all these specific reasons will be the more general one of strengthening his ability to bargain with his employer. The basic motive favoring the formation of a voluntary union is, in other words, power: It is the employee's desire to be able to determine, or at least to influence, what his role in his company shall be and what his rewards for that role shall be.

The fundamental right of unions to exert this kind of power in their members' behalf is now established, but what has never been established is the limits of that power. No specific issue of wages or fringe benefits is ever contested quite so fiercely as an issue involving the scope of union bargaining rights; witness the reactions to the unions' demands for a voice in the financial management of organized companies and to management's attempts to reassert control

over local work rules. In effect, the scope of union bargaining power is itself a bargainable issue, and it is a potential issue at every bargaining session. Consequently the actual limits within which any union bargains for its members are very much a function of its power vis-à-vis the employer and of its interest in extending that power. The converse is also true: When management is in a strong bargaining position, the range of bargainable issues is not likely to expand and may even be narrowed.

The desire of an employee for greater power over the decisions that affect his job can be understood on both economic and psychological grounds. The economic argument for labor unions is rooted in the fact that no economy has ever produced a large enough total product to satisfy the needs of all the parties to it. (Even though the advanced economies of the United States and Western Europe have acquired this capacity, the problem of distributing the product so as to wipe out various pockets of poverty and underconsumption still remains.) The system by which an inadequate total "pie" is to be divided is a question in which everyone has a direct, tangible interest.

No industrial society, including the Communist type, has ever divided the total national product on a completely equalitarian basis; some kind of unequal distribution has always been considered necessary for various reasons. The essence of what we call the free enterprise system is that any given individual is likely to receive a much larger "slice" of pie when the pie itself is enlarged than when a smaller pie is divided equally. The main economic problem confronting society is therefore not the distribution of existing wealth but the provision of dynamic forces which will increase the total wealth. This is accomplished by permitting those individuals who can successfully organize such expansion to receive a disproportionately large slice as an incentive for doing so.

However, the limits of this process have likewise never been defined. It is very difficult to specify at what point, if any, increasing the entrepreneur's reward begins to produce less expansion of production. Presumably no one who is not an entrepreneur ever knows exactly whether he would benefit from agreeing to an even larger incentive for entrepreneurs than he currently tolerates, or whether he would be merely acquiescing in payment for a service he doesn't really need. As a matter of fact, the entrepreneur doesn't know, either; it is more a question whether more profitable alternatives

are available than whether a given enterprise has ceased to be profitable "enough." So, even though very few Americans (including unionized Americans) have any quarrel with the free enterprise system as such, there is likely to be continual suspicion that somebody else is getting a larger slice of the pie than he needs and is thereby compelling everyone else to get along with a smaller slice than he might otherwise receive. It is this impossibility of exactly defining a "fair share" for anyone that produces the continual tension between employers and employees, and for that matter between all buyers and sellers, in a market-based economy.

There are of course many competing claims upon the revenues of a given company. Employees want their wages and benefits, management wants its salaries and other perquisites, stockholders want their dividends, customers want lower prices and better quality, the government wants its taxes, and the business itself demands investment. The demands of each of these claimants are subject to the jealous scrutiny of all the others. However, the crucial task of allocating funds for these various purposes rests with management, although it can make its decisions only within the limits of restrictions imposed on it by the claimants. Given this competition, it is in the best economic interests of any claimant to create such restrictions in order to protect himself from the claims of the others. One instrument with which employees are able to create restrictions on management's allocation of money is the organization of a labor union, which in effect compels management to buy its labor from a single source. Actually, it is often an even more effective restriction not to organize at all but merely to threaten to do so, thereby placing management's freedom of action at stake in the bargaining.

Not all workers calculate their economic advantage quite so coldbloodedly, and for that matter economic advantage by itself does not necessarily determine their attitudes toward unionization. From the psychological standpoint, there are a number of conditions in which unionization will not seem attractive, despite economic factors that favor it. Two main psychological variables affect employees' thinking about unions: The first is their expectations of their employer, and the second is the relative power position of both parties as the employees see it.

We can trace the consequences of several possible combinations of these perceptions on attitudes toward unions. However, it is important to bear in mind that what matters most is not the "objec-

ive" situation but the way the employees see it. Consequently, there may be, in any group of employees working for the same company, instances of any or all of the attitudes depicted in the following illustrations.

Consider first the man who regards his employer as both benevolent and powerful. By his standards there are no real grounds for complaint about his pay or his various benefits. As a matter of fact, if he happens to have rather modest expectations, almost any form of "extra" compensation will seem like an undeserved gift for which he should be grateful. Even with fairly high expectations he may, if he works for a company that makes various health and recreational services available to him at moderate cost, feel somewhat overwhelmed by "the good life" that comes with his employment. On the other hand, he also regards his employer as strong-willed and well able to protect his entrepreneurial freedom against anyone who seeks to limit it. An employee who perceives his employer in this way is not likely to resent the fact that the decisions affecting his livelihood are reserved by the employer; he accepts the system under which he works as legitimate because it has proved itself to be a reliable guardian of his interests.

The fact that many people can work contentedly and without any sense of shame under such a "paternalistic" system has caused many a social critic to shake his head in disbelief or dismay. The point he often fails to grasp is that accepting managerial control in exchange for material abundance is degrading only to an individual who is convinced that he could fare as well without such control or to whom independence—or the illusion of it—is a great deal more important than security and comfort. For a man who values his comforts and is convinced that a powerful corporation can do a better job of looking after his interests than he can do for himself, paternalism is not degrading at all; it is a rather good bargain for him. It is so good, in fact, that he will be quite wary of doing anything that could jeopardize it. He will therefore look upon unions as not merely unnecessary but even dangerous to his continued good fortune.

A union has little to offer such an individual. He receives what he regards as fair compensation—even more than fair, at times—and we may assume that he also expects that whatever grievances he may encounter will be settled equitably. His faith in his employer's benevolence probably includes a strong presumption that he will not be dismissed without just cause or laid off except in the

direst necessity. Unionization would give him only a new cost (dues) for benefits he now receives at no cost; an indirect channel of communication with management to replace a direct one with which he has no complaint; and, most damaging of all, a high risk of antagonizing management and causing it to become less magnanimous than it has been in the past. In brief, the union organizer approaching a worker like this one, who views his employer as both benevolent and powerful, will in all probability be regarded as an unwelcome meddler. There are circumstances in which employees do not want their interests to be protected or management's freedom to govern their working lives abridged.

Second, look at the man who is satisfied with his employer's benevolence but does not consider him to be especially powerful. (For example, the employer's financial or competitive position is known to be difficult, management has shown an essentially placating or accommodating attitude in its dealings with the employees, or, possibly, the employees include in their own number a group of strong-minded individuals to whom management seems, by contrast, rather weak.) However the idea gets implanted, employees who believe that their managers are basically friendly but poorly armored are likely to develop a rather unique interest in *protecting management.* It is to their advantage, in other words, to help preserve conditions under which management can continue to deal with them as generously and fairly as it has in the past.

This kind of paternalism in reverse occurs more often than is generally realized, and it takes two principal forms. In one the workers seek to protect management from outside competition by raising productivity and holding down costs (including direct wage demands). This form is seen when employees of companies—especially young, struggling ones—that are known to be in financial straits forego wage increases or even accept decreases in order to help tide the company over its difficulties. (Sometimes this kind of forebearance occurs even in unionized companies.) A similar reaction occurs in Scanlon Plan companies where employees may in effect abstain from wage increases that are not supported by productivity increases. It is worth noting that Scanlon-type arrangements seem to work best in companies which are in some danger of foundering and whose employees accordingly are likely to feel a strong interest in helping to preserve them.

The second kind of management "protection" by employees is

much subtler since it results in the formation of a union, but in this case a non-affiliated union which resists domination by the large international unions and whose members are usually confined to the employees of a single firm. The major threat seen by the employees in this instance is the international union, which could compel the company to accept costs that it cannot bear as well as its larger competitors. Also, an aggressive international union could disrupt the close, agreeable relationship that the employees enjoy with management. Employees who find themselves in this situation are quite likely to think of international unions in terms of racketeering and corruption, which gives them an interest in protecting themselves from exploitation as well as in protecting management from what they regard as a form of extortion.

There are, however, advantages to both employees and management in the formation of a "single firm" unaffiliated union that has an essentially benevolent attitude toward the company. Arthur B. Shostak, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania who has studied some forty such unions, makes these observations:[50]

> Leaders [of single-firm unions] frequently boasted that amicable union–management relations are due to the union's basic structural and "personality" characteristics: partly its divorce from other unions, its focus on the plant and the employer, and its open commitment to industrial harmony. These leaders believed [that affiliated] unions are obliged to honor disputes that originated elsewhere among other locals of the parent union. They believed international union representatives stir up trouble to justify their salaries or to forward their own political ambitions. And most felt that employers prefer single-firm unions and will help sustain them against [affiliated] unions.

Unions of this type are not an isolated phenomenon. At the time of Shostak's study there were about 1,400 of them with a total membership of approximately 400,000 throughout the United States. While they have been formed for various combinations of reasons, it seems plausible to conclude from Shostak's sampling that many are oriented toward assisting the employer to maintain a mutually satisfactory *status quo.*

Third, what of the employee who does not feel that his company is as generous, or even as just, as it could be but that it nevertheless seems to occupy a very strong bargaining position? In effect, the employer gives the appearance of being able to continue being un-

generous and/or unjust as long as he likes, since nothing the employee can do seems likely to persuade him that he should do otherwise. This kind of feeling of being overpowered by a niggardly employer quite often occurs among migratory workers, recent immigrants with language handicaps and no marketable skills, persons who are deeply in debt, or indeed anyone who is, economically speaking, at the mercy of his environment.

Whether a worker finds this situation degrading or not depends a great deal on whether he expects very much from life in the first place. For example, a lifelong tradition of poverty, especially if preceding generations have also known poverty, frequently produces a stoic acceptance of even the most penurious existence. On the other hand, a man who has once known a more rewarding life, or even believes it to be possible, will find the same situation very hard to tolerate. Nevertheless, rebellion is quite unlikely if he really believes that his employer is too strongly situated for rebellion to succeed. Therefore, the unfortunate man who cannot content himself with such a hard lot has little choice but to let it rankle.

While such people may be sorely in need of a union, they are not likely to form one or even to welcome an organizer. They will be preoccupied with maintaining secure, or at least reasonably steady, employment; any action which risks giving offense to an employer who can easily cut them off from further employment will seem like sheer folly. To have dealings with an organizer will seem not merely futile but dangerous, since it could be taken as a sign of becoming more troublesome than one is worth. But, perhaps most important of all, the organizer himself is not likely to be attracted to such workers, since they are in no position to finance their own organizing drive, much less a strike to enforce their bargaining rights, and they are hardly likely to be sufficiently militant to stand fast in a showdown. There is a rather cruel paradox here: The most easily exploited workers are perhaps the least likely to seek or to attract union representation.

Last, take the case of those employees who are not satisfied with the way they are treated by management and who also feel strong enough either to bargain or to coerce their way to improvement. What matters here is not the size of the employing organization nor the resources it can bring to bear to discourage unionization but its apparent vulnerability to having its labor supply cut off by the concerted action of its employees. In other words, before

workers are likely to feel strong enough to challenge management, they must first convince themselves that they can deny management access to the labor market and by so doing bring the company to its knees.

Many large and powerful companies have been unionized because their employees were not merely dissatisfied but also aware that they could enforce their demands if they organized. Both elements —a sense that justice is not being done and a belief in their ability to win in any direct confrontation of their power against management's—must be present before unionization is likely. Without both, unionization would be pointless and perhaps dangerous; with both it is a logical and attractive course for employees to follow.

The same conditions that make unionization likely will, if carried to extremes, encourage the irresponsible use of union power. There is some evidence[51] that organized companies which are overly permissive in their union relations incur more wildcat strikes and other labor abuses than companies which are firmer and less tolerant of such tactics. A weak management—weak, that is, relative to the tactics and attitudes of its unions—in effect encourages them to commit their power over relatively minor issues. A stronger management compels its unions to conserve their strength for bargaining on issues of greater importance.

Thus the company's *apparent* power position—its ability and determination, in the minds of its employees, to resist their pressure and to direct counterpressures at them—affects not only unionization itself but the conduct of union-management relations afterward. It follows that these relations are likely to be rather antagonistic for some time immediately after unionization because each side will be seeking to restrict the other's power in an atmosphere of bitter memories, suspicion, and mutual dislike. Such strife is very likely to continue until, and if, management succeeds in convincing its employees that it has become more benevolent or more powerful, or both.

There are, then, certain conditions under which workers will find a voluntary union attractive, and others under which they will not be attracted to it at all. While these conditions are strongly colored by economic factors, they are not entirely economic by any means. Dissatisfaction, for example, may be based on apprehension regarding job security, in which fear of the unknown often plays as big a role as fear of losing one's income; on lack of dignity; on

inability to get a fair hearing for grievances; or on a died-in-the-wool ideological dislike of "bosses"—all of which are psychological factors that can be present even when economic needs are well satisfied. Similarly, the employees' belief in their ability to bargain from a position of strength is not entirely a matter of their employer's dependence on them as a source of labor or on his ability to withstand a strike. It also depends on whether the employees can be aroused to militancy and on whether the employer seems timid, placating, or unaware of his own strength.

The attitude of employers toward unions is likely to be affected by both economic and psychological considerations. Economically, management usually expects that the effect of a union will be continually increasing costs coupled with less freedom to control costs. Unions are therefore seen as a threat to profitability and are resisted for precisely the same reasons that any rising cost would be resisted. However, management attitudes toward unions go deeper than that. Some employers consider the effect of a union to be a net gain for the enterprise despite the costs, while others view unionization as not merely costly but morally indefensible as well. In order to understand the variation in management reactions to unions it is necessary to consider the way in which managers perceive the power aspects of their own working environments: that is, the extent to which they feel that their environment controls them or that they can control their environment.

Consider, at one extreme, an employer whose perception of his environment leads him to feel that his own efforts to influence it will be rather insignificant. Life itself may seem an unpredictable, unfathomable mystery which moves people and events around in an apparently random pattern. To a man with this orientation toward his environment, the events of life are essentially the results of being toyed with by some blind but irresistible power that is beyond anyone's control. If this portrait seems inconsistent with the typical "image" of entrepreneurs and managers, we should remind ourselves that not all managers have heroic concepts of their role in business life and that many of them have had management responsibility thrust upon them rather than seeking it actively by themselves.

In any case the characteristic strategy with which such men attempt to deal with the responsibility of running an enterprise is

to limit their risks as much as possible, to avoid the folly of analyzing in depth or planning too far ahead, and to accept unquestioningly any arrangement which seems to reduce their exposure to unexpected difficulties. Like all strategies for pursuing psychological advantage, this is a sensible one if the premises about the nature of the environment are granted.

From such a perspective the problems posed by management–employee relations are essentially insoluble. The demands of employees will probably seem inexplicable, except in terms of the supposedly "limitless" appetite of all humans for a greater share of the available wealth than they deserve. The running of the enterprise will therefore be very similar to the passage of a defenseless group of travelers through a forest full of robbers, paying tribute at almost every step and having no alternative but to continue the difficult journey. Employee relations, then, are *expected* to be difficult, and management welcomes any form of control over them —even if it means introducing a costly third party.

However, relations with this kind of management are likely to be difficult for employees, too. Needs that they regard as legitimate will not be anticipated by management, and their presentation may be greeted with signs of amazement or dismay. It is as if management refused to take them seriously, and experience will eventually seem to show that the only way to get anywhere with such obtuseness is to threaten it. A pattern of employee militancy will emerge, and each incident will reinforce the employees' belief that management responds to nothing but force—at the same time reinforcing management's belief that the employees are using their power irresponsibly.

Unionization will be most probable, and the union will very likely adopt a hard, demanding line in its dealings with management. In time it may discover, if its leaders are clever, that its strongest lever in bargaining with management is to maintain discipline over its members in exchange for concessions on wages, fringe benefits, and other financial gains. Thereafter the union will attempt to take over the enforcement of work standards and of attendance and punctuality requirements and, above all, to prevent slowdowns and work stoppages—all of which it can accomplish far more effectively than management can. For this reason management will probably learn to appreciate the union despite its militancy. Each side, from its own standpoint, has made a rather good bargain. And so, paradoxically, a stable relationship is likely to emerge,

with management regarding the union as a useful adjunct to its own efforts to run an orderly enterprise, and the union regarding management as quite reasonable to deal with, provided it is kept under a certain amount of pressure at all times.

Now consider a management group with a diametrically opposite psychological orientation: one which regards the environment as basically controllable although full of competing efforts to exert such control. The strategy it will adopt will be above all else to maintain its freedom of maneuver, so that it will always be able to bring the full weight of its managerial judgment and resources to bear on any problem that may be encountered. No problem seems insoluble to men with such an attitude if only they are not hamstrung in their attempts to solve it; in fact, the main barriers to the success of both the enterprise and the economy as a whole will seem to be not the classical ones of supply and demand or competition and profit but rather the interference of non-managerial pressure groups in management's efforts to run the enterprise. They will therefore adopt a laissez-faire philosophy and consider the claims of unions (as well as governments and even stockholders) to limit their authority as basically incompatible with the common good—and therefore as a wrong.

A union will be seen by such a management largely in terms of a challenge to its managerial ability. That is, management earns its mantle of authority because, in its own eyes, it can run the enterprise by itself in the best interests of all parties more effectively than any other party or combination of parties. Consequently, any attempt to restrict that authority can be interpreted only as a slur on management's professional capacity and an attempt to usurp powers which are rightfully management's alone. This is why management frequently believes that the union is not merely bargaining for employee rights but attempting to encroach on managerial prerogatives as well. What is at stake, in other words, is not merely the distribution of the company's revenues in wages and profits but the distribution of the authority to manage the company.

A union which is at all militant strikes directly at the heart of such a management's self-esteem, and the issues between them are seen in moral terms with strong political and social overtones. The union will seem to be tampering with vital economic processes that are already in the most competent hands. But beneath this resentment of interference is a still more fundamental source of

management antipathy: Unions by their very existence carry the implication that management is incapable of properly administering the enterprise by itself. Unions are perceived, by managers who hold this view, as living indictments of managerial failure. It is taken for granted that in a properly run company there should be no need for protests loud enough to require an institution to voice them and that when unions win over the employees, it is because an organizer has been able to find a flaw in management's stewardship and has succeeded in exploiting it. That there should be such a flaw at all is embarrassing enough, and that it should be found out by an unwelcome critic is doubly galling. Therefore, it is not just the manager's freedom of action but his professional pride that is at stake. There can be scarcely any wonder that managers and employers as a group tend to look upon unions in a considerably less than kindly light.

The ability of a union to bring the operations of a company to a halt by means of a strike is its ultimate weapon and its principal source of bargaining strength. Indeed, it would have hardly any power position at all without at least the potential ability to call an effective strike. Yet this weapon is unique in that it is just as dangerous to its wielder as to its victim. For the essence of a strike is that each side flirts with its own extinction on the assumption that it can stand the tension longer than the other. The result is something like a contest between two water polo players to see which one can hold the other's head under the longest.

A strike is basically suicidal for both parties. Like suicide, however, a strike can serve a useful purpose if the mere threat of carrying it out compels other people to change their attitudes. Just as many suicide attempts are artfully staged so that "rescue" is nearly inevitable, strikes are usually undertaken in hopes that they won't have to last very long to be effective. And, just as successful suicide attempts often result from a dreadful miscalculation rather than a genuine wish for self-destruction, a prolonged strike often results from failure to estimate correctly the other side's willingness to endure one.

The strike is, in other words, a basically irrational weapon, unless either a short strike or the mere threat of a strike is sufficient to terrify the opposition. The main function is to intimidate: to be brandished as an awful possibility, thereby (presumably) softening

up the opposition and making it more willing to compromise during negotiations. Attempts to put the opposition into a psychologically disadvantageous position for negotiations are, in some industries, an almost standard feature of the bargaining process. This is one reason why so many labor–management disputes are not seriously negotiated until a strike deadline is approaching. It is also why so many strikes surprise at least one of the parties when they occur: One side has underestimated the other's willingness to go that far.

Despite the basically suicidal nature of strikes, they cannot be dismissed as entirely irrational. For one thing, they sometimes work quite well as a means of achieving union goals, especially if management capitulates quickly, before the cost to employees in terms of lost wages has become too severe. They work even better when the same results are achieved with the threat rather than the actuality. However, an easy capitulation, even on a minor issue which is hardly worth a strike, may encourage the union to use similar tactics over even less consequential issues in the future. To avoid being continually led to the brink of a work stoppage because of minor disputes, management may choose to take a stand and endure a strike if necessary, in order to demonstrate its unwillingness to be intimidated. The union may then find to its surprise that it is saddled with a strike it did not really want over issues that will be hard to justify to its members. The point is simply that even when it seems likely to achieve the goals of one side to a labor dispute, a strike can easily boomerang.

Sometimes a strike can serve as a valuable "reconnaissance" in which the intentions of the other side are tested and are made clearer and more credible. For example, it can demonstrate the seriousness of a union demand, as well as the union's steadfastness and discipline, to a previously skeptical management. From the union's standpoint implanting respect for its ability to interpret employee needs and for its fighting strength may be well worth the cost of a strike. In effect, it may make future strikes unnecessary because its demands will seem more genuine and its threats will seem more convincing. Similarly, a previously permissive management may sometimes have no other way of convincing a union that it intends to be firmer than by enduring a strike, thereby compelling the union to endure its penalties as well. If the strike persuades the union that it must moderate its tactics in the future, it may be well worth its cost to management.

Granted, then, that a strike can serve some useful purpose for either side. But all too often a strike occurs unintentionally or for irrational reasons to which the parties, being human, cannot readily admit, and in either of these two cases they are likely to justify the predicament in which they find themselves by inventing "plausible" reasons for them—plausible, at least, to themselves. To be caught in a position where one has to flirt with suicide or accept humiliation is itself a humiliating experience. The choice will nearly always be to accept a strike, since to abandon one's bargaining position chiefly to avoid a strike might seem like a fatal weakness in either side's armor, exposing it to domination by the other side. But it must surely be a bitter, infuriating experience to discover after attempting to bargain for some positive goal that one has actually been trapped between two highly undesirable alternatives.

The bargaining may well have been bungled. After all, the world is full of poor strategists, and even though very few of them are deliberately suicidal, it is easy to blunder into an extremely dangerous position when the pride of both sides is at stake in a dispute. In all probability only a minority of strikes are deliberately planned for, and then usually in hopes that the other side cannot possibly endure for long; most strikes probably occur when at least one side fails to offer the other side options which it feels it can accept honorably. Yet once the die has been cast, it makes little difference how it happened or which side has blundered the most. No matter how chagrined each side may feel, the overriding issue is now to preserve the credibility of one's bargaining power. The opposition must not be given any reason for hoping that one can be intimidated. In effect, then, a strike becomes its own basic issue: a mutual demonstration of indomitability supersedes the original causes of disagreement.

Each side then proceeds to paint the other as the villain, not merely for propaganda purposes but also to encourage its members for the struggle that lies ahead. The "sins" of past episodes in management–employee relations are dusted off and recalled with suitable bitterness. If necessary, new issues are injected into the dispute which may not have figured strongly in the actual negotiations. Everything is done, in other words, to make the fact of the strike more palatable.

The stirring up of emotions that occurs when a strike begins has three principal effects. First, it blinds both sides, at least temporarily, to the substantive points at issue between them. They become pre-

occupied instead with the challenge to their courage and dignity represented by the other side's willingness to accept a strike. Second, it makes the arguments of each side seem to the other like outrageous distortions of the facts. This is because neither wishes to bear the guilt for the catastrophe and can escape it only by blaming the other. Regardless of the facts, the awful burden of guilt will be avoided with all possible agility. Third, there is a tendency to ignore the strategic errors one has made in the bargaining process, so that the lessons which should be learned from them are likely to be lost. The net result of these defensive reactions to the guilt created by a mutually penalizing strike is that the ability of each side to bargain realistically is weakened. Consequently a strike is much harder to cure than it is to prevent.

Once a strike begins, a great deal more than the unresolved issues of the bargaining process is at stake. There are also the unbargainable intangibles of pride, enmity, and an outraged sense of justice. It is precisely to avoid such psychological barriers to negotiation that "cooling off" periods are invoked, and it is for the same reason that mediators try at all costs to keep the two parties talking rather than brooding and plotting by themselves. If a strike is not settled quickly enough, it will begin to feed on itself, generating hatred, until at last what justifies its continuation is not the issues over which it was called but the villainy of the other side.

Despite the traditional antipathy of both unions and management to arbitration, it is probably looked upon by both parties to a protracted strike as a face-saving way out of a dilemma that neither can afford to solve by compromising its stand. Saving face—in this instance, preserving at least the formal credibility of one's bargaining power—is the main underlying reason for most prolonged strikes, and it is much easier to save face by acceding to the suggestions of some neutral party than to accept the same terms because the opposition has been insisting on them since the strike began. If free collective bargaining ever gives way to compulsory arbitration, it will not be because the interests of unions and management are incompatible, it will be because too many bargainers were unrealistic and incompetent.

Strikes are likely to go out of fashion eventually, but not without a final blaze of glory in connection with the reduced employment requirements of certain industries. The issue has been postponed for years by means of featherbedding provisions in union contracts

which in effect provide for the employment of superfluous personnel. But such arrangements will be increasingly resisted by management, owing to competition and declining profits. The employees who are exposed to displacement, however, are likely to perceive the prospect as a life-or-death struggle in which no really suitable alternative to the *status quo* is available to them. They will therefore insist that generating profits and meeting competition are management's problems and not theirs, and that the attempt to make them pay for technological progress by sacrificing their security is an injustice that must be resisted to the last gasp. Unless convincing and attractive alternatives are offered them, the not-too-distant future is likely to witness a series of long, bitter strikes in many industries.

Even if this gloomy forecast for the near term proves to be accurate, strikes are likely to become less frequent and less important in the long run, chiefly because of the inefficiency of strikes as instruments for obtaining either union or management objectives. Of course, it might be argued that strikes have always been inefficient and that this has not deterred people from resorting to them in the past. This is true, but the persistence of any form of profitless behavior is usually due to a certain emotional blindness to the fact that it *is* profitless, and this kind of impassioned thinking is likely to give way in time, if not to experience, then to the more moderate opinions of younger men who have never experienced the privations that caused the blindness in the first place. As the English say, the poacher has a way of turning into a gamekeeper in the long run.

It is increasingly apparent to men who have endured strikes that those which last a few weeks or more are quite likely to cost union members at least as much as they gain, even if their demands are ultimately met, and that they probably cost much more than they gain when such strikes are settled, as they usually are, by compromise. The "gain" in long strikes, if there is any at all, is the purely psychological one of punishing a poorly regarded employer and flaunting the employees' unwillingness to be abused. Such revenge motives cannot be discounted as a cause of strikes, particularly in companies with a history of many long ones. Still, it is not really a very common factor, and eventually it is likely to shrink as management grows more sophisticated in dealing with the underlying causes of antagonism.

Therefore, one change to be anticipated in the coming phase of

union history is a decrease in the use of the strike. Another probable change is a further slowdown in union expansion, possibly even a gradual decline until the number of unionized workers stabilizes at a lower level. This contraction will not, however, signal any fading out of existence for the unions. They will still be very necessary in many workers' eyes, although more as institutions hovering protectively in the background than as gladiators ready to do battle with recalcitrant employers. As the usefulness of militant tactics declines, unionized employees are likely to turn to their unions more for service than for representation at the bargaining table. Effective administration of contract terms, especially regarding individual grievances, and effective dispensation of various union-sponsored social benefits will probably be the main demands that workers make of their unions.

By becoming, in effect, specialized mutual-insurance companies that protect their members against economic disaster, take their side in any disagreements, and pay out "dividends" in the form of health services and the like, unions can continue to find a ready market for their services. Indeed, if they do not adapt themselves along these lines, they may find that their ability to command the respect and loyalty of their members will be badly impaired. This is simply because the main battles for which union militancy was necessary have been fought and won: The right of employees to organize and their right (with or without organization) to the largest possible share of company revenues, consistent with the overall health of the enterprise, are established in practice as well as in law. While the memories of men who lived through the great union struggles of the thirties and the postwar years may be long, the younger generation does not find its environment so full of injustice and inequity. There is, in other words, less to fight about, and accordingly an institution which offers to fight a worker's battles for him is likely to face a shrinking market for its services.

Yet, by converting themselves into "mutual-insurance companies," unions will also be limiting their own power to expand. For the services they offer can in many cases be offered on at least a comparable scale, and at less cost to the employee, by companies with effective grievance channels and modern benefit programs. Moreover, other factors will restrict union expansion. One of these is the reputation for tolerating corrupt officers and coercing members which some unions have acquired and which has to some extent

tarred the entire union movement with the same brush. It is probably true that this type of consideration is more likely to outrage a middle-class owner, manager, or professional than a man who works for an hourly wage, but it can hardly help the union cause, especially among those workers to whom movement into a higher social status seems both possible and attractive.

The whole phenomenon of social mobility is, indeed, another restriction on union expansion. The man with aspirations for higher status is not likely to want to be identified with what is essentially a working-class movement. (Neither will he necessarily want to be identified with an employing or managing class; he will most likely want to think of himself as a craftsman or professional who gains his stature from his competence.) Since the effect of wider educational opportunities and technological changes is to increase mobility, a corresponding shrinkage in the proportion of young people who are susceptible to unionization may be expected. In fact, unions are already having their troubles with members who aspire to upward mobility. One study indicates that such persons are quite likely to be indifferent to union affairs, ignoring meetings and other activities.[52] On the other hand, the more active union members tend to be more content with their social status or at least less likely to want to improve it.

Yet another barrier to union expansion is what may be termed the "ideological" character of workers in those geographical areas and job groups who have not been widely organized already. These include the newly industrializing sections (such as the Southeast) which have traditionally held to the independent outlook of the small farmers and merchants who live there; white-collar employees of all kinds (with their high concentrations of young women whose work is not their career, as well as men who feel that their work is at least quasi-managerial and that, accordingly, unions are neither dignified nor necessary for them); and engineers and other highly educated specialists, who usually feel able to handle their relations with employers quite well by themselves. In other words, there are vast sections of the unorganized working population for whom unions are unlikely to seem particularly advantageous and may indeed seem to offer little but a life of strife and disorder.

All these considerations suggest that unions will increasingly find themselves in the position of rendering a protective, negotiating, and benefit-dispensing service to a relatively immobile group of

workers. Their function will be to make working-class life as comfortable and secure as possible. The villains to be guarded against will be automation, cheap foreign labor, or expensive but highly educated domestic workers who are capable of rendering old production methods obsolete. Their negotiating will therefore be defensive in character, bargaining to make the methods and capabilities of an immobile group competitive with other methods, and, failing that, to secure the rights to retraining or alternative employment.

In brief, unions are likely to become increasingly conservative. They will not chastise employers or proselytize among unbelievers, at least not to the same extent they once did. The tough, inspirational organizer will give way to the helpful administrator as the prototype of a union leader. In effect, the typical union will look more and more like a smoothly running corporate personnel department, with the single and important exception of being employed by its members rather than by the corporation.

As union militancy fades, so will management antagonism to unions. The two sides are never likely to embrace each other, and employers in particular are never likely to welcome unions where they do not already exist or to encourage their aspirations for wider control in the companies where they are established. But unions will be less of a threat to management's freedom of action, and therefore they will be easier to tolerate where they do exist and less of a specter where they do not.

On the whole, then, the near-term trend of labor–management relations will undoubtedly include some severe disturbances of a more or less climactic nature, but the long-term trend should reveal a gradual shift from struggle to cooperation. There will probably always be instances of prolonged strikes and irreconcilable hostility between unions and employers, but these will be increasingly recognized as instances of poor generalship on the part of one or both parties. Either because they have learned to be better bargainers, bidding or asking within ranges that the other side can afford to buy or sell in, or because legislation and public opinion has compelled them to settle their differences without injuring people who are not parties to their disputes, or for both reasons, unions and employers are likely to evolve a smoother, more cooperative relationship in the future.

Chapter 25

The Meaning of Motivation

SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH INTO THE MOTIVATION OF PEOPLE AT work has had a late start, partly because the sources of other people's behavior were thought to be so self-evident that research hardly seemed necessary. It is already clear, however, that we are not nearly as knowledgeable about the reasons why people behave as they do as we once thought we were. Research results indicate that many traditional ideas about motivation are too simple, or too pessimistic, or both.

Motivation, as we commonly use the term, is our speculation about someone else's purpose, and we usually expect to find that purpose in some immediate and obvious goal such as money or security or prestige. Yet the particular goals that people seem to be striving for often turn out, on analysis, to be the instruments for attaining another, more fundamental goal. Thus wealth, safety, status, and all the other kinds of goals that supposedly "cause" behavior are only paraphernalia for attaining the ultimate purpose of any individual, which is *to be himself*.

The ultimate motivation is to make the self-concept real: to live in a manner that is appropriate to one's preferred role, to be treated in a manner that corresponds to one's preferred rank, and to be rewarded in a manner that reflects one's estimate of his own abilities. Thus we are all in perpetual pursuit of whatever we regard as our deserved role, trying to make our subjective ideas about ourselves into objective truths. When our experiences seem to be confirming those ideas, we are likely to feel that life is good and the world itself is just, but when we are denied the kinds of experiences to which we feel entitled, we are likely to suspect that something is drastically wrong with the world.

If there is one universal human characteristic, it is probably that everyone tries in his own fumbling, imperfect way to follow the ad-

vice of Polonius to his son: "This above all, to thine own self be true." But there are many ways of being true, and many kinds of selves to be true to, and this variety results in such a huge number of motives and outlooks on life that it hardly seems possible that they are all the result of the same fundamental process. But they are.

Our experiences nearly always confirm our belief that our basic attitudes must be "right," partly because these attitudes were molded by the realities of our own particular environment and partly because we make sense out of our experiences by managing to fit them into our system of beliefs. In the very same way, other people's experiences also confirm the rightness of *their* basic attitudes to them. It is entirely too easy to conclude that attitudes which are contrary to one's own must be the result of stupidity or perhaps dishonesty. Opposing viewpoints are too often interpreted as challenges to be refuted rather than as the natural result of interpreting a different set of experiences with a different set of values.

Thus "ideological" conflicts persist and fester between people who may in fact be dependent on each other and have very good reasons for learning to get along. This is most easily seen on an international scale, but it also occurs closer to home. For example, many working people harbor lurking suspicions that employers must be exploiters and therefore deserve every penalty that unions or government can inflict upon them. Similarly, many managers cling to equally dark suspicions that most workers are inherently lazy and irresponsible and normally contented with their lot unless some agitator stirs them up with radical ideas. The difficult but essential point to grasp is that both points of view are arrived at honestly after an examination of what were thought to be facts in the light of what were thought to be relevant values. Yet, because their conclusions are so opposed, each side is very likely to maintain that the other point of view is merely a thin defense of an unjustified position.

To understand another man's attitudes does not require agreement with him. There is a considerable advantage in attaining such an understanding, especially if it is mutual, because it enables us to anticipate his reactions and to avoid unnecessary confrontations. More importantly, it enables us to see him as he is rather than through the sometimes lurid lenses of offended self-righteousness. Yet to understand another man's attitudes can be an unnerving experience, and perhaps this is why it is so much more popular to

assume that a man with whom we find ourselves in conflict is "motivated" by greed or hate or some other unjust desire. It is easier to ignore the fact that the other fellow almost certainly considers his attitudes justified and to assume that he is mentally or morally deficient than to make the difficult attempt to understand the way in which he arrived at his point of view. To understand an opposing viewpoint opens the possibility that one's own ideas may have to be re-examined, and for many people this is too disquieting a prospect to be risked.

There is another reason why we know so little about motivation, a reason that goes deeper than our relatively late start in research. *There is a sense in which we do not want to know more about it.* Research into a subject on which nearly everyone has certain preconceptions, as well as an emotional stake in preserving those preconceptions, is not likely to seem necessary until it begins to be carried on and demonstrates its value unmistakably. Even then the results are likely to be listened to solemnly and ignored, considered impractical to apply, or disputed. It does not really matter, for the moment, whether the particular things that social scientists have been saying about work motivation are correct, complete, or applicable; what does matter is that we recognize our own ambivalence toward any research of this kind. We need it, yet we fear it. There is nothing particularly wrong in this conflict, and it need not hamper us, provided we clearly recognize our mixed motives about studying our own and other people's motives objectively.

The most significant thing that the industrial social scientists have done is simply to make good their claim that the complex events of business life are useful fields for research. Whether their work ultimately leads to anything worthwhile—for example, to greater human satisfactions in work, to greater productivity, to lessened waste and strife—will depend as much on the ingenuity of managers of all kinds as on that of the social scientists. For research has already indicated that the more burdensome problems of industrial life, such as apathy, restricted output, strikes, demoralized older workers, anomie, and all the rest, are not inevitable. It has even suggested that the feelings of self-fulfillment in work which have traditionally been experienced by very few people can be made available to many more and that the results of such an opportunity might well be an amazing surge of creativity and efficiency—and, yes, of profits too.

Even the beginnings that research has made are a clear challenge to management to find ways of applying its implications.

That challenge lies, first of all, in accepting the difficult responsibility of understanding rather than dismissing the attitudes of people with whom one must deal, regardless of whether one agrees with their viewpoints. It lies in recognizing that managers are much more capable of changing their own habits and ideas than of changing those of the people who work for them and that accordingly they should concentrate more on improving their own effectiveness than on persuading employees to improve theirs. It lies in re-examining the necessity and usefulness of practices which have never been seriously questioned because they were presumably indispensable, especially with regard to organization, supervisory methods, and compensation. It lies in discovering practical ways of releasing the energy and creativity that now seem to be suppressed in many apparently apathetic employees. It lies in learning to prevent work from preventing people from being themselves.

These challenges are going to be difficult, but not impossible, to meet. Most men who manage and most men who are managed are decent people who respond well to being treated decently. They are not as badly adapted to working together harmoniously as we sometimes assume. They have made plenty of mistakes and will probably make many more, but we advertise these too much and discount their ability to learn from their mistakes. They sometimes work too little and argue too much, but we now know that this is not inherent in their nature and that most people have a potentiality for constructive effort that their jobs have hardly begun to tap. They are sometimes suspicious and cynical and inclined to regard their jobs as necessary evils, but their cynicism is often justified by their experiences, and their jobs are often unnecessarily dull. There is, in sum, no insurmountable obstacle to the task of harmonizing individual motivation with the efficient operation of an enterprise.

There remains the question of whether management should concern itself with making work a more satisfying experience for its employees. There are at least three good reasons why it should. First, because it may very well lead to a more profitable operation or, at the very least, to greater flexibility in adapting to changes that will enhance profitability. Second, because it is the best possible preventive for resistance to change, restriction of output, and strikes.

The third reason is perhaps the most potent one of all: The effective use of human resources is *the* central problem of management. Therefore, good managers—true to their own self-concepts—will not shrink from its challenge. So we can end our exploration of work motivation on a hopeful note, with faith in the likelihood that the best motives of working people and their managers will ultimately prevail against the worst.

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