THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION TO THE PROBLEM OF POLICY FORMULATION IN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

DISSERTATION

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By

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THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The recent rapid growth in the size of business organizations has had many effects upon the traditional ways in which management is carried on. It was quite possible at one time for a single individual to manage an organization when the membership of such an organization did not exceed a score or two of employees. However, the business organization grew larger and larger. Its personnel increased to thousands. Employees and managers of all echelons had to be co-ordinated to achieve the economic objectives of the organization.

The expansion of an organization usually permits further division of labor. Functional evolution refers to managerial division of labor, and functional devolution refers to a separation of managerial duties from operative ones.

Prior to the division of managerial duties through the process of functional evolution, the man in charge knew enough about the operations of the various divisions which
he headed to make the necessary decisions as the various situations required. However, the division of authority and responsibility for a certain organization among a number of individuals through the operation of the process of functional evolution has presented new problems of co-ordination between the various new managers. These problems involve both coordination of thought and coordination of action. Such coordination is facilitated by various techniques of communication. One of the most important techniques in the scheme of modern-day business organization is the device of the committee. It is particularly useful for the co-ordination of thought.

A. Purpose of the Project

The general purpose of this work is to study the communication process in the setting of a business committee. It is hoped that as a result of this study it may be possible to evaluate critically the effectiveness of the committee as a technique of communication among business executives. It is also hoped that it may be possible to recommend some changes in practices so that the efficiency and effectiveness of the technique will be improved.

More specifically, the project will attempt to determine the limitations of the committee as a technique of communication within the management group, and evaluate
the circumstances under which it is most advisable to utilize it.

This study will examine the committee in its capacity to formulate policy. This is based on the assumption that communication in the formulation of policy has somewhat different problems than other phases of committee work.

In some infrequent cases, a committee may be assigned the function of fact-finding and analysis of data. In general, however, the committee is not considered particularly suitable for collection of facts and analysis of data. This must be done for the committee by a secretariat. Since only committees of very large business organizations, such as the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey), for instance, can afford special committee secretariats, most companies use existing technical staff departments for this purpose.

In the case of educational committees the decision as to the actual policy has been made before the committee meets. The purpose of the educational committee is to inform subordinates of their superiors' viewpoints, ideas, plans, policies, and methods.

The committee which will be considered in this work is one which has staff authority to formulate policy that will be put into operation. The board of directors of a corporation is an example of such a committee. What is being studied here is the communication process in a committee
leading to the formulation of a policy.

The reason the operation of the committee is being studied from the standpoint of the communication process is that the effectiveness of a committee depends upon the human communicative interaction of the members of the committee. A decision made in the setting of a committee will bear the influence of the personalities of the various members of the group as modified by the presence of the rest of the members.

Another specific purpose of the study is to investigate what other disciplines of science, such as general semantics, psychology, sociology, social psychology and others can add to the understanding of the effective operation of a business committee. This study will try to find out how the results of experimental work in other areas can best be applied to assure maximum results from committees.

The project will attempt also to cover the process of group decision making. Even though the emphasis will be placed on the communication aspects of group decision making, some attention will also be given to the logical implications of the problem. It is obvious that the formulation of policy involves a selection of one course of action from a number of alternatives. Such selection, when done by a group of people, obviously presents interesting questions.
B. Scope and Delimitations of the Subject

Since the purpose of the project determines to a large extent the scope of the study, this section is necessarily going to repeat much that has been mentioned above. At the risk of being repetitious, it seems desirable to make the scope and delimitations of the study clear.

First, this project will be primarily concerned with business committees. This study will concentrate on communication in the setting of a committee in economic organizations, although the conclusions reached may perhaps also be applied to governmental, military, or religious organizations. All material available to further the understanding of communications in business committees will be utilized. However, any recommendations made in the course of this study will be deemed to be the most advantageous for the economic type of business committee.

Second, only intramanagement communications will be examined. The study will emphasize only intramanagement communication. Only committees which are composed of members of the management group will be considered. It will not include communication through committees, the members of which represent customers, suppliers, the public, and other such groups. Committees between management and these groups are in common use and serve many useful purposes. However, their structure and objectives are such
that their patterns of communication are different from
those of committees of economic organizations whose chief
objective is to formulate different kinds of policies.

Third, only administrative management will be
covered in this project. The analysis that will follow
would apply primarily to administrative management. While
it cannot be denied that some of the principles upon which
effective communications within administrative management
depends will also apply to operative management, this work
will concentrate on problems of communication within com-
mittees, the members of which belong to top management. The
reason for the differences in the communication problems of
the two groups, administrative and operative managements,
may be attributed to the different problems that these
groups have to handle, as well as the different backgrounds
that members of these groups bring to the organization.

Fourth, this project is limited only to communication
in the formulation of policy. The process of communication
in committees will be analyzed only in reference to the
function of formulation of policy. Committees perform
other functions than that of policy formulation. They may
concentrate on planning or on interpretation of previous
policies. The latter falls under the general heading of
judicial committees. Both types of committees are very
important in all organizations, and it is rather doubtful
whether a large organization can avoid having legislative
committees devoted to planning and judicial organizations devoted to interpretation. However, because the communication problems of policy formulating committees differ slightly from those of other committees, it is best to treat them independently. We shall study here those aspects of communication problems that are involved in the formulation of policy.

Fifth, only oral face-to-face communication will be studied. The kind of communication that will be examined will be that involved in an oral face-to-face committee matrix. Oral face-to-face meetings are common to committees. They are not, however, absolutely essential to the operation of a committee. In fact, under some conditions it is found necessary to function as a committee without delay while the various members of the committee are separated from each other geographically. A recent such instance involved Mr. Cyrus Eaton, a Cleveland financier, who found himself in a situation in which it was essential to get approval of the board of directors of one of the companies with which he is associated to lend money to a group of individuals interested in buying a Cincinnati newspaper. The situation was such that no delay in making the decision could be allowed. A multi-line long distance telephone hookup was arranged between all the members of the board, and a positive decision reached. The communication problems
involved in such a situation are somewhat different from those involved in a face-to-face meeting. We usually communicate not only with our voices but also with our facial expressions, and other gestures. We shall investigate the oral face-to-face process of communication. It is possible, however, that in the future communication as described above will become common, and that it would be worthwhile to study the process under such non-face-to-face conditions. It is also sometimes found that communication between members of a committee is carried on by correspondence. This medium is adequate for situations which do not involve urgency. This is a common way for communication between various members of a committee when they are geographically widely separated, but impractical usually in rapidly changing situations.

Sixth, available material from other social sciences will be used. In determining the process of communication in a committee, whatever material is available in other disciplines of science that pertains to the problems of oral face-to-face communication in small groups will be used. It is felt that since committee meetings of executives in administrative management are very expensive in terms of the time such meetings consume from a group of people, everything that can be used to make the committee more effective and efficient should be so applied. Some of the disciplines which would be so surveyed are psychology, social
psychology, and sociology. Useful knowledge found in such sciences will be applied to communication in committees in economic organizations. Finally, it should be added that while the writer would like to apply as much material as possible from the social sciences mentioned, he is not a social scientist by profession, and his analysis of the material taken from the above disciplines will be treated from the point of view of a management student rather than a professional psychologist, sociologist or social psychologist.

Seventh, only bona fide committees with staff authority to formulate policy will be explored. The communication problem of committees studied here would be those of a committee which was created for the purpose of studying certain problems and given enough authority to arrive at a decision which in the committee's collective opinion is superior to any alternative decisions. Those committees which are constituted with the purpose in mind of acquainting subordinates with decisions which the chairman or any other member has already agreed to, will not be covered; only the participation which is honestly sought by superiors to contribute to the adopted policy will be considered. The other kind of committee, the purpose of which is to educate and indoctrinate subordinates with plans and policies of superiors, will not be discussed here inasmuch as their purpose is not identical with nor very similar to that
of this work. We are here interested in the communication process resulting in the adoption of the best policy according to the collective intelligence and background of the members of the committee and not in techniques of transmitting information of any sort from superiors to subordinates in the business organization hierarchy.

Eighth, only legislative and integrative committees will be covered in this project. The committees to be studied here are those which are sometimes called legislative and integrative. Investigational and analytical committees, as well as educational and judicial ones, will be omitted. This point has already been dealt with above in discussing the purpose of the project and will not be dealt with here in further detail. The only thing which may be worthwhile to reiterate is that while legislative and integrative committees may lead to a decision of a policy nature, the other classes of committees do not.

C. Methods To Be Used

This study is based for the most part upon library research. The field of communication has recently become the subject of major interest to many disciplines and the literature that is available in this area is very rich. In the field of business organization, the problem has been receiving more and more attention. Most of the work
that is being done is in the field of management-employee communication. Less work is done in the field of communication within the management group, although interest in this area has also increased. To the best knowledge of the author, there is no existing study which treats the subject of communication in the business policy formulating committee, as it is here attempted.

It is hoped that in the course of the present study the problem of communication in committees can be studied and analyzed critically in light of that experimental and theoretical work which has already been done and is available in the literature. The results of various experiments will be evaluated, and recommendations that may effect improvements in present practices of committees will be made.

As has already been mentioned, the literature of other social sciences besides business organization will be surveyed, and theories of communication of these other disciplines will be applied to our analysis of the business committees.

It is also hoped to contact any organizations which are interested in problems related to the one dealt with in this work, and so attempt to supplement the information which is available in the library with any material which has not as yet been made public. Some of these organizations
and individuals which are engaged in pertinent research are associated with universities, industrial organizations or military research projects.

The work will include analyzing theories of communication within small groups of people with a view to apply the results of such analysis to an improvement in the effectiveness of the committee technique.

Drawings will be used if and when their employment will clarify the presentation of the material. On the whole, it is expected that style used would be descriptive and analytical.

D. Definitions of Terms.

Definitions of terms that will be used in this work will be made as the new terms are introduced into the discussion. This, it is hoped, will make it convenient for the reader in the sense that he will not have to refer to other pages to find out the exact meaning of a certain term.

Another remark of a general character in the matter of defining terms is that in order to avoid the introduction of new terms for meanings for which there are terms available, the terminology which has been used in the various textbooks in management and personnel courses will be adopted whenever possible. New terms will be employed if the writer cannot find terms which convey exactly the mean-
ings which he has in mind.

Following are some of the key terms which will probably recur throughout this work:

1. Communication. - There are many definitions of communication. The one which seems best to serve our purposes is the one offered by Carl I. Hovland. According to him communication is "the process by which an individual - the communicator - transmits stimuli (usually verbal symbols) to modify the behavior of other individuals - communicatees."¹ This definition implies (1) the communicator - the individual who starts the process; (2) the communique - or the content of the communication; (3) the communicant - the individual who receives the communique; and (4) the consequence - the modification in the behavior of the communicant.

In the sense in which the term communication will be used here, the communicator and the communicant must be human. This is in agreement with Raymond Peters and Helen Baker.²


Many writers in the field of communication believe that communication is essentially the same as the social order. Without communication we cannot have any kind of organization. No committee of any sort could exist without a communication process. That is the reason why the committee is studied here from the standpoint of the communication process. There could not be any other way to analyze and evaluate the operation of the committee.\footnote{This point of view is entertained by Jurgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson in their Communication (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1951). See also Charles H. Cooley "The Significance of Communication," in Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz, Editors, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 45.}

Herbert A. Simon's conception of communication emphasizes the relationship between communication and decision making. He says that "communication may be formally defined as any process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of the organization to another. It is obvious that without communication there can be no organization, for there is no possibility then of the group influencing the behavior of the individual."\footnote{Herbert H. Simon, \textit{Administrative Behavior} (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 154.} Simon's definition as it stands would fit quite well the situation of a committee in that it emphasizes the "decisional
premises," the communique, and the necessity of communication to the existence of an organization. This definition could be used in the analysis of communication in committees, particularly where formulation of policy is involved and where a decision is essential.5

2. Committee. - "A committee is a group of individuals who meet for the purpose of effecting an integration of ideas concerning a solution for some problem."6

3. Legislative committee. - "The legislative type of committee is one whose chief purpose is to assist the superior executive in the development of plans and policies."7 The work of such a committee may usually involve also some collection of information, and analysis of such data.

4. Integrative committee. - An integrative committee is one which attempts to achieve "a meeting of the minds and an integration of ideas concerning the requirements for joint action in a particular situation."8

5. Judicial committee. - A judicial committee is one whose chief purpose is the interpretation of an estab-


7Ibid., p. 470.

8Ibid., p. 472.
lished plan or policy with a view to determining the propriety of a post or proposed action with respect to it. "

6. Policy. — Policy is a statement or implication of a principle linking objective to function. It is set up by management as a guide to action.

7. Business policy. — Business policy is "a principle or group of related principles, with their consequent rules of action, that condition and govern the successful achievement of certain business objectives toward which they are directed." 10

8. Policy formulation. — "Policy formulation is that phase of policy making that has to do with the selection of the principles and rules of action that are to govern a particular type of activity." It involves both an analysis of the objectives and requirements for their achievement and also "an analysis of the functions that are necessary for the accomplishment of objectives, and the related physical and personal factors." 11

9. Administrative management. — Administrative or top management refers to that phase of management which

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9 Loc. cit.
10 Ibid., p. 173.
11 Ibid., p. 191.
deals with groups rather than projects and which attempts to accomplish organizational objectives over a long time period. Operative management, on the other hand, is concerned with projects and short time periods.

E. Order of Analysis

The present chapter has described the purpose of the project, the scope and delimitations of the subject, the method that is intended to be followed, and the basic terms which will be used.

The project will be divided into three major parts. Part One will deal with the communication process in general, Part Two will concentrate on the description of policy formulation, and Part Three will deal specifically with the communication process in committees leading to the formulation of policy.

Part One is devoted to the analysis of the communication process in general, which also affect communication in committees. It is hoped that this part will provide the background necessary to the understanding of the process of communication in committees. The First Part is divided into three chapters.

The first chapter of Part One (Chapter II) is devoted to a summary of the fundamentals of communication in general. It begins by introducing briefly the subject of communication, and continues with brief discussions of
the subject of communication from the standpoint of philosophy, psychology, and general semantics. The chapter closes with a section which summarizes and concludes the contributions of these various disciplines to the understanding of communication in general.

The second chapter of Part One (Chapter III) is devoted to a discussion of communication from the standpoint of management. It is concerned with communication problems as seen by executives engaged in business management. It also indicates the place of business committees in the solution of such problems. The chapter is divided into a number of sections: why the recent interest in industrial communication, communication and the co-ordination of thought, communication and human relations in business, formal and informal communication, and summary and conclusions of the entire chapter.

The third chapter of Part One (Chapter IV) is devoted to the discussion of communication as the basic social process of a business committee. It deals with the social-psychological aspects of the communication process in committees. The chapter is divided into a number of sections which deal with the role of the communicator, the role of the communicant, and barriers to communication and how to overcome them. This chapter, again will be summarized and concluded in the same fashion as above.
Part Two is devoted to the analysis of policy and policy formulation to the extent that their understanding is essential to the comprehension of the process of communication in committees in the formulation of policy. This part is divided into two chapters.

The first chapter of Part Two (Chapter V) deals with the analysis of the nature and characteristics of business policy. This chapter will provide a general background for the later understanding of policy formulation in the setting of a committee. It deals with such subjects as the nature and significance of policy, the objectives of business policy, requirements of sound policy, classes of business policy, and phases of business policy-making.

The second chapter of Part Two (Chapter VI) is devoted strictly to the phase of policy formulation. It covers the following sections: policy formulation as related to the objectives, deciding whether the committee should formulate the policy under consideration, analysis of functions necessary to reach the objective, selection of the principles and rules of action to link functions with objectives, and summary and conclusions.

Part Three will be devoted to the analysis of the business committee as a technique in formulation of policy. It is hoped in this part to evaluate whatever material is available that deals specifically with the subject of communication in committees. Part Three is divided into three
The first chapter of Part Three (Chapter VII) will deal with the general organization of the business committee as it is found in business and industry. It will discuss such subjects as the nature and significance of committees, classes and functions of committees, the structure and effectiveness of committees, advantages and disadvantages of committees. The final section will summarize and conclude the entire chapter. This will be a general description and evaluation of committees as they are known in business and industry.

The second and third chapters of Part Three (Chapters VIII and IX) will review experimental studies that have been done in allied social studies such as psychology, social psychology, and sociology. The experiments that will be reviewed in these chapters will be those the results of which have pertinent bearing upon the understanding of the process of communication in the formulation of policy in the setting of business committees. All of the reports reviewed in these two chapters will be of controlled experiments. These chapters will also provide a critical analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of the committee as a technique of communication in the formulation of policy. It will analyze and evaluate each experiment, estimate the applicability of the conclusions reached from such experiments to the effective use of the committee, and recommend
changes in present practices of business committees in light of these conclusions.

Chapter VIII will cover the following general topics: a comparison of group thinking in committees with individual thinking; extent of permanency of effects of participation in group discussion upon members' viewpoints; and uniformities in the behavior of committees. Chapter IX will deal with the following general topics: the relationship between cohesiveness, uniformity, and homogeneity of small groups and the communication process; effects of communication patterns on group performance; the contribution of the discussion leader to the quality of group thinking; and role-playing and self-evaluation as devices of improving communication in committees. Both chapters will have final sections which summarize and conclude each of them.

In the final chapter (Chapter X), the whole project will be summarized and concluded, and some suggestions for achieving improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of committee operations will be outlined. Some problems in the general area of communication in policy formulative committees which seem to need additional systematic and scientific investigation will also be listed.
PART ONE

ABOUT THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS
CHAPTER II
THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION

A. Introduction

The nature of language and communication have been the subject of discussion and controversy for many generations. People knew that social order and organization could be attributed largely to the possibility of communication. The concept of communication is inherent in that of organization. For how can individuals co-operate to achieve a certain objective without having some sort of a meeting of minds? Gestures of all sorts are used to communicate meaning between individuals and groups. The most effective and efficient kind of gesture is that of oral language.

Communication is as important in a business organization as in any other one. All kinds of organizations operate very much alike. Whatever differences exist are due to the objectives of an organization. The business organization, in which we are interested here, has as its primary service objectives the provision of economic values which the customers desire. It is obvious that patterns of communication in an economic organization will be somewhat different from those in other organizations. The objectives of an economic organization will
no doubt condition the nature of communication in such an organization.

Communication in committees is perhaps slightly different from communication in business organizations in general. This is so, particularly in the kind of committees that are discussed here, because of the backgrounds of the participating members, the subject matter discussed, and the significance of the group decision.

Another important aspect of communication in committees is that for all practical purposes committee work is nothing but interpersonal communication. There is no other phase of management where effective communication is so essential. Here is a case where the managerial duties of the members taking part in the work of a committee are entirely dependent upon the exchange of ideas through the means of communication. The successful execution of the minor service objectives of a committee are achieved in no other manner than communication. It may be worthwhile to point out that while communication within the committee setting is oral, some phases of committee work involve written communication. The committee may receive written reports, proposals for policies, plans, and other statements from its secretariat. It may also state the conclusions reached in the committee in writing.
The present chapter aims at providing a general background for understanding the work of committees. The material presented here is drawn primarily from philosophy, psychology, and general semantics. It will be pointed out how this material relates to communication in committees.

The chapter will point out the communication difficulties that scientists encounter in their respective disciplines. These difficulties will be emphasized and their relationship to communication in committees will be shown. Various views and hypotheses will be presented, but no attempt will be made to choose the one best for our purposes unless the consensus of opinion in reference to a certain problem is close to unanimous. Inasmuch as the science of communication is only recent, such unanimity of opinion in regard to any problem is hardly ever found.

Broadly speaking, the views that are presented in this chapter are biased in favor of the philosophical school known as logical positivism. In psychology, the views that have been preferred are those close to the behavioristic school. Logical positivism and behaviorism have been preferred because they seem to the writer to be most compatible with the experimental-scientific approach of the study of communication.
Broadly speaking, communication is equivalent to language, and therefore it was found convenient to analyze the material presented here in accordance with the accepted breakdown of language among semiosists, or language scientists. Since language is divided, for purposes of analysis, into three parts, syntactics, pragmatics, and semantics - the analysis in this chapter has adopted this order.

Syntactics has been the subject of interest primarily to philosophers. The next section, Section B, will deal with language from the philosopher's point of view. It will cover three major topics: language, signs and symbols, and the meaning of meaning.

Pragmatics has interested psychologists primarily. The section after next, Section C, will deal with the relations between signs and symbols and human beings.

The problem of the relationship between signs and the objects for which they stand has been dealt with in Section D. This problem is primarily of interest to general semanticists.

B. A Brief Discussion of Communication from the Standpoint of Philosophy

Just as it is important for every man who is engaged in management to possess a sound philosophy of management, so it is important for the understanding of
any problem to have a philosophy which provides a basis for effective thinking in regard to any such problem. A sound philosophy could be the most practical tool that an executive may have.

A philosophy has been defined as a "system of thought based on some logical relationships between concepts and principles that explains certain phenomena and supplies a basis for rational solutions of related problems."¹ A philosophy of human relations in committees is essentially a philosophy of communications in small groups. A philosophy of communications may be defined as a system of thought that explains basic communication problems and supplies the basis for an intelligent approach to their solution.

Broadly speaking, every branch of philosophy has some bearing upon the understanding of communication, even such broad areas of philosophical inquiry as knowledge, value, consciousness, mind, ideas, and other such fields. No attempt will be made to deal with such problems. These problems have perplexed philosophers' minds for generations.

The purpose of this Section is to point out a number of topics which relate directly to the problem of communication. No attempt will be made to survey the

¹Davis, op. cit., p. 6
literature of philosophy and present a consensus of opinion about the philosophy of communication. Such a survey is impractical inasmuch as there are a great number of views about each of the points that will be mentioned. Each school of philosophy has its own definitions, methods of analysis, and basic points of view. We shall just list the subjects which seem to be closest to the field of communication, and describe briefly how these topics relate to the field of communication. It is hoped that this section will point out the logical difficulties that are involved in communication and in the objective analysis of the communication process. The topics that will be touched upon in this section are language, signs and symbols, and meaning.

Language. - Almost all the communication that takes place in our daily life takes place through the use of language. Various sciences consider languages from different angles. As Morris points out, "the formalist is inclined to consider any axiomatic system as a language, regardless of whether there are any things which it denotes, or whether the system is actually used by any group of interpreters; the empiricist is inclined to stress the necessity of the relation of signs to objects which they denote and whose properties they truly state; the pragmatist is inclined to regard a language as a type
of communication activity, social in origin and nature, by which members of a social group are able to meet more satisfactorily their individual and common needs."²

Langer's concept of language is very close to symbolism. She writes that "in language we have the free, accomplished use of symbolism, the record of articulate conceptual thinking; without language there seems to be nothing like explicit thought whatever... Animals, on the other hand, are one and all without speech."³

A very interesting fact about language is that language is being used by every group of human beings. No human tribe has ever been found which did not have some kind of a well organized language.⁴ On the other hand, even those animals which are closest to men biologically do not possess any form of means of communication which may be called language. This is concluded on the basis of experimental work done with animals by Furness, Yerkes

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Language is transferred from one generation to another. Each generation learns from the former one the vocabulary and syntax of the language being used by that society. There are many theories which attempt to explain how this transmission takes place. Some say that it is a process of imitation and others have other explanations as to how it takes place. The theory that language is essentially a process of imitation is expounded by Mead. One's individual language, according to this theory, is a result of hearing others communicating. What are imitated are the gestures which are essentially language. Another student of language, Wundt, explains it in terms of the "parallelism between what goes on in the body as represented by processes of the central nervous system and what goes on in those experiences


6 Langer, op. cit., p. 88.

7 See Horatio Hale's "The Origin of Languages and the Antiquity of Speaking Man," Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, XXXV, 1887, 279-323.

which the individual recognizes as his own. He had to find what was common to these two fields—what in the psychical experience could be referred to in physical terms. This theory would explain language as in physiological terms. Speaking is merely another physiological action.

Another approach to the theory of language is the one presented by Morris. According to him, language has three dimensions: (1) Semantic; (2) pragmatic; and (3) syntactic. Some students of language define it as equal to the summation of the three dimensions. In a recent book Morris defines the three branches of language as follows: "pragmatics is that portion of semiotic which deals with the origin, uses, and effects of signs within the behavior in which they occur; semantics deals with the signification of signs in all modes of signifying; syntactics deals with combinations of signs without regard for their specific significations or their relation to the behavior in which they occur." Section C of this chapter will discuss the pragmatics dimension; Section D

9Ibid., p. 42.


will deal with the semantical dimension.

Let us look briefly at the syntactical dimension of language. By syntactics is meant the study of the "relation of signs to one another in abstraction from the relation of signs to objects or to interpreters." This branch of semiosis, or the science of language, is particularly applicable to the use of mathematics and symbolic logic. The most important of the contemporary scientists that have dealt with language from this standpoint is Rudolf Carnap. Logical Syntax deals with the logico-grammatical structure of language. Syntactical rules deal with two linguistic considerations: (1) those formation rules which determine permissible independent combinations of signs - sentences; and (2) transformation rules that may determine the sentences obtainable from other sentences.

What have been the results of the syntactical analysis of language? Let us answer this question in Morris's words:

It has been possible accurately to characterize primitive, analytic, contradictory, and synthetic sentences as well as demonstration and derivation. Without deserting the formal point of view, it has proved possible to distinguish logical and descriptive signs, to define synonymous signs and equipollent sentences, to characterize the content of a sentence, to deal with the logical paradoxes, to classify certain types of expressions, and to clarify the modal expressions of necessity, possibility, and impossibility.15

The results of syntactical analysis have been more useful than those of the other branches of the science of language "since it is somewhat easier, especially in the case of the written signs, to study the relations of signs to one another as determined by rule than it is to characterize the existent situations under which certain signs are employed or what goes on in the interpreter when a sign is functioning."16

The above comments about language in general are aimed at providing the reader with a limited general background which it is hoped will be helpful in understanding better the process of language in the setting of a conference.

Signs and symbols. - Signs and symbols are important concepts in the successful analysis of communication. When members of a certain business committee exchange words, they are actually dealing with signs and symbols.

15 Morris, op. cit., p. 15.
16 Ibid., p. 16.
Some discussion of their nature and characteristics may be valuable.

The first thing that we should do is distinguish between a sign and a symbol. "A sign indicates - past, present, or future - of a thing, event, or condition. A fall of the barometer or a ring round the moon is a sign that it is raining. All the examples here adduced are natural signs. A natural sign is a part of a greater event or of a complex condition, and to an experienced observer it signifies the rest of the situation of which it is a notable feature. The logical relation between a sign and its object is a very simple one: they are associated, somehow, to form a pair; that is to say, they stand in a one-to-one correlation."17

The radio announces that coal mines are on "strike". The word "strike" is the sign for the situation of abandoned coal mines. For the management of a power plant, the relation between the sign "strike" and the situation "abandoned coal mines" may be called the subject. The subject, according to this technical meaning is a "possibility of work stoppage" as a result of the shortage of coal. The subject may be called interpretant. Subject, or interpretant, eliminates the possibility of interchange--

ability between sign and object. Without an interpretant, it would be difficult to distinguish between the stoppage of work in the power plant as being the sign of a coal strike and the coal strike as a sign of work stoppage in the power plant. Langer explains that signification takes place when one phenomenon is perceptible and the other is of interest.18

Symbols, on the other hand, are only "vehicles for the conception of objects." While a sign may evoke action as if the object were present, a symbol does not. Symbols mean conceptions and not things. While a sign announces an object, a symbol leads to conceiving the object. This distinction may explain the essential differences in their use and influence. The sign brings forth action; the symbol is an instrument of thought. This is approximately Langer's viewpoint. Morris says that this difference between signs and symbols is not very significant, though he adopts it himself. He says that philosophers of language and communication who make such a distinction usually cite it as the difference between human beings and lower animals. He stresses that a symbol is less reliable than a sign because the former "is producible by the organism and hence may appear, when the organism has a

certain need, in situations in which what is signified is not present." Morris, a behaviorist in his philosophy, also stresses the importance of the presence of "conditions of motivation and environment." Whether a term would have the influence of "announcing" an object in the case of signs or of "conceiving" an object in the case of symbols will depend upon external conditions as well. In the example cited above the coal strike may have two interpretations. It may signify a possibility of stoppage in the operation of the power plant because of the coal shortage; second, it may bring forth the "concept" of a strike to the committee members because of the possibility that the workers would demand compensation for being involuntarily unemployed. Which of the two interpretations would prevail in the minds of the members of the committee will depend on "external" conditions such as the provisions of the management-union contract, the character of the union, and other similar circumstances.19

Morris distinguishes between three modes of signifying: Designative, appraisive, and prescriptive. Whether one mode or another is used depends upon "the nature of environment in which the organism operates, the import or relevance of this environment for the needs of the organism, and the way in which the organism must act upon the environment in order to satisfy its needs."20 Thus, words

19Morris, Signs, Language and Behavior, pp. 49-52.
20Morris, op. cit., p. 62.
of a member of a committee may designate certain morale conditions of the labor force, appraise the morale situation in relation to the quality of production, and prescribe some changes in policy that may improve morale.

Another problem in the study of signs is the degree to which they correspond to reality. In essence the "truth" of a statement made by a member of a committee is measured by the degree that the signs that he used correspond to reality. This is basically the view taken by the philosophical school known as pragmatism. This is judged on the basis of past experiences of the other members of the committee, but not exclusively so. As Russell sums it up,

What we called the epistemological theory of truth, if taken seriously, confines "truth" to propositions asserting what I now perceive or remember. Since no one is willing to adopt so narrow a theory, we are driven to the logical events that no one experiences and of propositions that are true although there can never be any evidence in their favor. Facts are wider than experiences. A "verifiable" proposition is one having a certain kind of correspondence with an experience; a "true" proposition is one having exactly the same kind of correspondence with a fact. Since an experience is a fact, verifiable propositions are true; but there is no reason to suppose that all true propositions are verifiable. If, however, we assert positively that there are true propositions that are not verifiable, we abandon pure empiricism. Pure empiricism, finally, is believed by no one, and if we are to retain belief that we regard as valid, we must allow principles of inference which we neither demonstrate nor derive from
Russell, thus, broadens the definition of a fact to include besides truths known by actual experience or observation, also truths established by authoritative inference that are not verifiable. Many of the facts presented in a committee discussion will be of the broader sense. It is clear that all the members of a committee could not know all the "facts" by actual experience or observation. They will have to accept as "facts" truths that have been established by other members, committee secretaries, or by other authoritative inference.

The easiest kind of truth to detect in communication is when "the events are the evidence for the truth of the sentence." Words do not possess any intention. "Object words," as Russell calls them, are signs which correspond to the actual objects. A language made only of "object words" cannot include such words as "true" or "false." When such words are used, they are part of a new language, of a higher level than that in which "object words" are used, and make statements about the "object

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21Bertrand Russell, An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1940), pp. 382-383. This book of Russell's has an excellent analysis of signs and their relation to facts. The point of view from which this book has been written is that of a mathematical logician.

22Ibid., p. 57.
words" and not about the actual objects. "Not" in itself does not have any meaning. However, when used in a sentence it makes a statement about the other words in the sentence. 23

Another element in the theory of signs which is important to the understanding of communication is that a proposition is analogous to a picture. Just as a picture is made up of many details to give one whole structure of affairs - so is a proposition; it is made of a number of words, but when taken as a whole gives one complete picture. 24

The meaning of meaning: - One of the key concepts in a theory of communication and language is meaning. It is clear that what is communicated between members of a committee when they discuss a new policy is meaning. Meaning is the instrument through which ideas transfer between the various individuals engaged in a discussion. What is this meaning?

This question has perplexed many philosophers, psychologists, linguists, and other scientists. The literature of these disciplines is full of books and articles named "The Meaning of Meaning." Some understanding of

23 Ibid., Chap. IV on the "Object Language," and Chap. V on "Logical Words."

24 Langer, op. cit., p. 55
this concept will definitely be a valuable contribution to the better appreciation of communication.

Mead says that meaning arises and lies within the field of the relation between the gesture of a given human organism and the subsequent behavior of this organism by that gesture. If that gesture does so indicate to another organism the subsequent (or resultant) behavior of the given organism, then it has meaning. A gesture by one organism, the resultant of the social act in which the gesture is an early phase, and the response of another organism to the gesture, are the relata in a triple or threefold relationship of gesture to first organism, of gesture to second organism, and of gesture to subsequent phases of the given social act; and this threefold relationship constitutes the matrix within which meaning arises, or which develops into the field of meaning.25

Mead holds that consciousness on the part of either one of the two parties is not essential for the existence of meaning in their relationship. The adjustive response of the stimulated organism gives to the gesture of the first organism meaning. Meaning is not a state of consciousness, as some metaphysicians believe. It does not exist outside of the field of experience in the realm of mentality.26

John Dewey also holds that meaning arises through the process of communication. He says in essence that meaning comes into being as a result of the social contact between members. According to him, meaning is not the


26Ibid., pp. 77-78.
same as "ideas" or "words." These views are accepted by most behaviorists.

A brief mention of some of the better-known views about meaning may broaden our ideas about the subject. Santayana and the philosophers closest to him believe that meaning is the "connotation" of a word. This is closely related to another explanation which claims that meaning is equal to the "essence" of the sign used. Johnson puts it thus: "A knowledge of the usage of language alone is sufficient to know what a phrase means." Another definition says that "meaning is an activity projected into an object." Others mean by the word meaning "an event intended, or a volition." This view is favored by Lady Welby. She wrote: "The one crucial question in all expression is its special property, first of sense, that in which it is used, then of meaning as the intention of the user, and most far-reaching and momentous of all, of implication, of ultimate significance." In short, the meaning of a sentence according to this view "is what the speaker intends to be understood from it by the listener."

27 John Dewey, Experience and Nature (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1925), Chap. V.


Russell says: "To mean is to intend, and in the use of words, there is usually an intention which is more or less social."^\textsuperscript{30} Meaning is sometimes equal to "significance." In this sense, "meaning of anything is said to have been grasped when it has been understood as related to other things or as having its place in some system as a whole."^\textsuperscript{31}

William James believed that meaning referred to the practical consequences of a thing in our future experience. In his words: "The meaning of any proposition can always be brought down to some particular consequence in our future practical experience whether passive or active."^\textsuperscript{32} Another view of "means" is that it is equivalent to "involves" or "logically implies."^\textsuperscript{33}

By "meaning" people may refer to that which is actually related to a sign by an arbitrarily chosen relation. The members of a committee may decide on a name for a certain plan or project. The name in such a case is

^\textsuperscript{30}Russell, op. cit., p. 63.


^\textsuperscript{33}Ogden and Richards, op. cit., p. 198.
related to the plan in accordance with a freely-agreed-upon choice. Meaning may also refer to that to which the user of a symbol actually refers, or that to which he "ought" to refer. It may refer to that to which the user of a symbol believes himself to be referring. On the other hand, meaning may refer to that to which the interpreter of a symbol refers, believes himself to be referring, or believes the user to be referring.34

Susanne Langer distinguishes between the logical and psychological aspects of meaning:

Psychologically, any item that is to have meaning must be employed as a sign or a symbol; that is to say, it must be a sign or a symbol to someone. Logically, it must be capable of conveying a meaning; it must be the sort of item that can be thus employed. . . . Both aspects, the logical and the psychological, are always present, and their interplay produces the great variety of meaning-relations over which philosophers have puzzled and fought for the last fifty years.35

Looking at meaning from the logical aspect, she says that meaning is not a quality but a relationship or a function of a term. It is related to the object that is "meant" and the subject that uses the term. This implies the point of view of Mead, discussed above.

Britton analyzes meaning from the standpoint of its effect upon the listener. He says that a "reference of a

34 Ogden and Richards, op. cit., p. 187, 205-208.
A sign is that state of bodily adaptation which enables the body adapted to pick out a certain definite class of objects... the class of all possible objects which in all relevant and observable respects are like those actual objects which we have agreed to describe as "good labor relations, for instance. In other words, we use signs which have been agreed upon before, to cause a predetermined adaptation from the listener.\(^{36}\) 

Meaning in this sense he contrasts with another sense of the term in which the effect is more pronounced. The effect of a sign may be to evoke in the hearer "expectation." Meaning in the first case is that conveyed by a report given in a committee by one of the members which states the progress made in negotiating a contract with the union. If no unusual developments are announced, the information conveyed has only a "reference" effect. However, if the negotiations have failed, the emergence of a prospect of a strike evokes "expectations," and we use the words in the second sense. The term Britton uses for the latter sense of meaning is "significance." The difference between these two notions of meaning, according to Britton, lies in the strength of the effect of the communique on the

communicants. If the message modifies not only immediate behavior, but has a stronger and more enduring effect—meaning in the "significance" sense is being conveyed. Thus, failure of negotiations between labor and management has a stronger effect upon the listeners than a report that negotiations are progressing satisfactorily. It arouses expectations of a possible strike, and thus tends to modify behavior for a longer period of time, and in a more pronounced manner. It does not "mean" necessarily that a strike will take place; the difference between these two notions of meaning merely refers to the strength of the effect of the stimuli.

The reason so much attention has been given to the understanding of meaning is that it is thought that an acquaintance with the various concepts of the term may eliminate some misunderstanding. Since meaning is the central concept in communication, if all members of a committee knew at all times what is "meant" by each other, communication would become more effective and efficient.
C. A Brief Discussion of Communication from the Standpoint of Psychology

It has been mentioned above that language and communication have three dimensions: the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic dimensions. The pragmatic aspect of language deals with the relationship between signs and their users, or their interpreters. Essentially, this dimension of communication deals with the psychological, as well as the biological and sociological factors. We shall concentrate in this section on this psychological dimension because of its obvious relevance to the problem of communication. Communication does not take place in a vacuum; people are always involved in its process, and there is a close relationship between effective communication in a committee and the psychological makeup of its members.

The over-all framework within which communication takes place in a committee is one in which one organism is an interpreter of a sign, standing for an absent object, to other members that respond to the signs. A study of psychological aspects of communication states the conditions in the interpreters under which sign-words perform their functions in a language. Let us examine this in more detail.

A behavioristic view: G. H. Mead: - Mead gives an excellent account of the psychology of communication as seen by a psychologist. Some of his views have been
brought up above in connection with other topics. His views would be described here in more detail.

He considers communication from the standpoint of a gesture. "The gesture is that phase of the individual act to which adjustment takes place on the part of other individuals in the social process of behavior." The gesture, particularly if it is a voice, influences the behavior of not only the hearer but also the speaker. When a member of a committee is expressing his views concerning a certain problem, the presence of the other members influences his behavior in general. He is constantly taking account of the reaction of the other members. There is a two-way communication that goes on continuously. The facial expressions of the other members control and modify the views of the speaker in such a manner that in effect what he says may be considered to be to a limited extent the combined opinion of the entire committee.

A similar view is expressed by Jurgen Rueisch, when he speaks about "the perception of the perception." He says that

a social situation is established as soon as an exchange of communication takes place; and such exchange begins with the moment in which the actions of the other individual are perceived as responses—that is as evoked by the sender's

message and therefore as comments upon that message, giving the sender an opportunity of judging what the message meant to the receiver. The perception of the perception, as we might call this phenomenon, is the sign that a silent agreement has been reached by the participation, to the effect that mutual influence is to be expected. The criteria of mutual awareness of perception are in all cases communications about communication.38

In all these views, the process of mutual influence and interaction is emphasized. Views expressed by an individual in the presence of others are in essence the opinions of the entire group.

Mead speaks about imitation as a factor in language. He says that even though imitation cannot be considered the primary factor in psychology in general, it is very likely that imitation plays a significant role in speech. We imitate those to whom we listen. This is important in the setting of the committee because through the process of imitation, the members of a committee tend to establish a uniform language which facilitates communication.39

Mead points out the importance of oral communication. Only in the case of oral communication can the speaker participate in hearing what he says, and be influenced to the same extent that his fellow members of the committee.


are. This may lead us to believe that communication in committees contributes to the "integration of ideas."

This integration of ideas takes place in the following form:

Where the response of the other person is called out and becomes a stimulus to control his action, then he has the meaning of the other person's act in his own experience that is the general mechanism of what we term "thought," for in order that thought may exist there must be symbols, vocal gestures generally, which arouse in the individual himself the response which he is calling out in the other, and such that from the point of view of that response he is able to direct his later conduct. It involves not only communication in the sense in which birds and animals communicate with each other but also an arousal in the individual himself of the response which he is calling out in the other individual, a taking of the role of the other, a tendency to act as the other person acts. 40

Translating this into the setting of a committee, social control is causing self-criticism in the speaker. This serves to integrate the individual and his thoughts with reference to the thoughts and experience of the other members of the committee. The individual is thus gradually assuming the attitudes and views of the other committeeemen. The process of co-ordination of thought thus takes place. It is essentially a process of personal involvement and participation on the part of the individual in the social process. 41

40 Ibid., p. 73.

41 Ibid., p. 255-258.
An experimental-scientific approach. - Experimental psychologists have been interested in conducting controlled tests of assumed hypotheses. They attempt to find experimentally as much information as they can about such language and communication aspects as perception of speech, efficiency of the communication process, individual differences, the role of learning in communication, verbal habits, and other such problems.

Perception of speech has been a subject of considerable interest. Some of the problems that have been studied recently were the limits of hearing, interferences of one tone with the discrimination of others, articulation, intelligibility and information, interruptions, speed of talking, effects of the size of vocabulary, and others.42

Some experimental and analytical work has been done on the problems of noise, and redundancy. Noise refers to sounds which come across a certain communication channel, but which do not transfer any information at all. Redundancy refers to the inefficiency in transmission of information in the sense that more signs are used in the

transmission than is necessary in a perfect language. A perfect language, in this context, would be one in which a certain amount of information is transmitted with the minimum number of signs, and with no errors. Errors in ordinary speech are reduced by increasing redundancy. Thus, when a member of a committee repeats a certain statement, he reduces the chances of error, but at the same time increases redundancy. 43

Individual differences have also been studied experimentally. Specific individual differences that have been studied are vocabulary size, verbal diversification (usually speakers with large vocabularies have more diversified style), sentence length, verb-adjective ratios, and others. It is clear that vocabulary size, verbal diversification, and the other statistical studies that have been done apply to communication in small groups as well as in other situations. Effective and efficient communication in a committee depends upon all the factors mentioned above.

Thinking is considered by some psychologists to be related to language, and others believe that it is


entirely unrelated to language. The preponderance of
evidence tends to prove that language is directly related
to linguistic signs but that it does not account for the
total picture. Thinking is not more precise than the
language with which the thinking process is carried on.
If it is true that language and thinking are very closely
related, then we may infer that in the course of a discus-
sion in a committee, when a member is speaking, he may
either report verbally what he has reasoned out earlier
through the use of unverbalized symbols, or he may be
doing his thinking as he is speaking. The significance
of this point may shed some light upon the advisability of
interruptions in the course of a member's conversation.
If a member is just "thinking aloud," then the interjection
of questions, qualifications, limitation, and other such
remarks may prove helpful in orienting the speaker. On
the other hand, if the theory that is subscribed to holds
that thinking is not related to speaking, then any inter-
ruptions are certainly to be viewed less favorably. 45

Some experimental work has been done to determine
the atmosphere effect. This term refers to the effect of

45 The view that thinking and speaking are almost
identical is presented by J. B. Watson, Psychology from
the Standpoint of a Behaviorist (Philadelphia: Lippincott,
1924). On the other hand, M. Wertheimer's Productive
Thinking (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945), deals with
thinking as if it were entirely unrelated to language.
some words with certain connotations to the direction that the thinking process follows. Woodworth and Sells found that the words "all," "no," and "some" in a topic of a conversation has definitely affected the course that the conversation has taken. "All," "no," "some," and other such words are "logical" words and what can be concluded from their work is that most people do not think logically. 46

Role plays an important part in communication. When a member of a committee that represents the manufacturing division is talking, his occupational, hierarchical, and other roles should be considered in order to understand him accurately. As some author put it:

Through communication with others roles are mutually assigned, and by means of mutual explanation agreement is frequently reached as to the nature of the situation. Used in connection with communication, the term "role" refers to nothing but the code which is used to interpret the flow of messages. Awareness of a person's role in a social situation enables others to gauge correctly the meaning of his statements and actions. Once the roles of the self and of all other participants have been established, the code for interpreting the conversation is given. 47


Rules of communication are established, and the members participating in the group discussion must adhere to these restrictive regulations. Penalties are provided for through the use of social sanctions for violators.

The flow of messages is thus seen to be governed by "directives." In general, the effect of such rules is to reduce the participation of members and so also the efficiency of communication in the committee. The character of the rules is such that channels of communication are designated, the sequence of the messages regulated, and other phases are also controlled. This theory of self-government, on the part of the members of a committee has been called the "theory of games." It has been described by Von Neumann and Morgenstern.48

Value is said to be associated with communication. Ruesch and Bateson say that a value is the "combination of a particular stimulus with a particular response." They use the concept of "combination" rather than conceive of the response as a "result" of stimuli to avoid getting entangled in the problem of "causation." The term "result" implies a cause and effect relationship. The author prefers the term "combination," since it does not imply

causation, which the term "result" does. It seems to the writer safer to conceive of value as the combination of a particular stimulus with a particular response, rather than imply a causation relationship, which is difficult philosophically to defend. Value is a device by which we make choices and differentiate between alternatives. It is somewhat similar to the concept "preference." They say that "preference" always refers to an organism's reaction to two or more possibilities which have been perceived. These possibilities refer on the one hand to a series of anticipated reactions of the organism. In order to facilitate a decision in the face of these multiple choices, the organism subdivides the perceived stimuli and the anticipated processes, and the individual finally comes out with a statement of preference. Such a statement of preference we shall term value. This theory may help us in understanding why certain members of a committee react differently from others. Their "values," or "preferences" vary.

D. A Brief Discussion of Communication from the Standpoint of General Semantics

We have dealt above with two dimensions of language. Let us now examine the third one. Semantics studies the relationship of signs to the objects to which they refer. This problem has been of interest to philosophers for gen-

49Ruesch and Bateson, op. cit., p. 45.
erations, particularly in connection with their analysis of "truth." However, in spite of this long history, little has been done in terms of controlled experimentation. Only since the growth and development of the behavioristic school has there been any attempt to attack semantics from the scientific point of view, as opposed to the metaphysical one.

The delay in the development of the science of semantics can also be attributed to the necessity of solving some syntactical problems prior to serious consideration of semantic ones. The problem of the relationship between signs is important to the problem of the relationship between signs and the objects which they denote. It is impossible to analyze the sign-object relation without bringing in the problem of syntax. If there are grammatical rules that prescribe the relationship between signs, how do we know whether these rules do not impose a restriction upon the language which will make it impossible for the signs to correspond to reality?

Semantical rules designate rules "which determine under which conditions a sign is applicable to an object or situation; such rules correlate signs and situations denotable by the signs. A sign denotes whatever conforms to the conditions laid down in the semantical rule, while the rule itself states the conditions of designation and
so determines the designatum." Semantical rules are
necessary to any language; without them communication
between individuals is impossible. In practice, semanti­
cal rules are not formulated but are a product of habit,
so that only certain kinds of signs are applied to
certain situations. 51

Since in the course of a discussion in a committee,
signs referring to objects are not used in isolation, but
rather are combined in sentences, it is important to note
what do sentences denote. Sentences, says Morris, are
nothing but more complex signs. Sentences are complex
signs of situations. When situations become frequent, and
a need is felt to designate a situation with a simple sign,
one word is agreed upon by all concerned to replace the
sentence. Thus, when a committee discusses distribution
policies related to a monopolistic-competitive market, the
introduction of the term "monopolistic-competition" must
have replaced a whole sentence or paragraph which was
used previously to refer to the condition of fewness of
sellers.

If a decision reached by a committee is the best
that could be reached, it must rest upon facts. Not all
the members of a committee will usually be familiar with

51 Loc. cit.
the facts, and it will be up to a certain individual to present the facts. He actually will not present facts but instead will use words which stand for facts. Here is where semantical difficulties may be encountered.

What, then, is a fact? A fact is the internal effect which a certain external stimulus has upon our central nervous system. We cannot "know" what is outside ourselves. We only know the effect that some object outside our central nervous system has on this system. The term "stimulus" refers to the external element to which we respond. This response is a "fact" to us. "Truth" refers to the extent of agreement of our response to a certain stimulus to the response of other "normally constituted persons" to the same stimulus, says Karl Pearson.

Johnson says in connection with facts that "if you would recognize a fact when you see one and make the most of it, there are, then, four things about any fact that you must be clear about. It is necessarily incomplete, it changes, it is a personal affair, and its usefulness depends on the degree to which others agree with you concerning it." This refers to the element of agreement in the response to a certain external stimulus as it relates to truth.

A fact is **incomplete** because our perceptions are far from perfect. What a member presents to the committee as a fact may in reality be an incomplete fact. He may not have heard the whole story, or seen the whole view. This factor of the incompleteness of our facts should be kept in mind under all circumstances. It applies equally well to all communication situations.

**Facts change.** This refers to the time element in "truth." Everything in our universe is changing. What today seems to be so, will be different tomorrow. The morale situation at the time of a survey may change by the time that a committee is considering what should be done with the results of such a survey. This change in situations should be kept in mind at all times, although for practical purposes we must reason on the basis of data collected before the time when it is being considered. We must either make allowances for the time lapse and its effect upon the data, or ignore the element of change when the rate of change is slow. Here we run into the problem of assuming that the rate of change will remain zero.53

**Facts are a personal affair.** They are personal affairs because they are the results of observation, and

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observations can only take place by individuals. Facts are interpreted in the light of our previous personal experiences, which vary from one individual to another because of differences in physical environments, roles, statuses, and other such factors. This is sometimes called private information. In the setting of a committee, we are only interested with communicable information, or public information. We all know that some of the effects of external factors remain unverbalized. It is likely, for instance, that in reporting to the committee information for a policy decision, only a portion of the effect in us could be expressed and verbalized to others. Thus, while we could base our judgment upon the total effect upon our nervous system, the other members could base theirs only upon those facts which we succeeded in communicating to them.\(^{54}\)

Facts are useful to the extent that others agree with the observer. Reliance upon "facts" depends upon the concurrence of views of a number of people. The more people report a fact the more reliable is the evidence for its truth. Professor Davis refers to this as the Logical Principle of Conveying Evidence. Johnson mentions two exceptions to this generalization: (1) Some observers are

\(^{54}\)Ibid., pp. 95-97.
more reliable than others; (2) some events simply cannot be verified directly by more than one person. Some members, who are experts in a certain field, would certainly be more reliable witnesses concerning facts bearing directly upon their profession.

The process of abstracting is an integral part of all language and communication. According to Bloomfield, every human being possesses a wide range of predispositions to becoming acquainted with the object or situation, and every object or situation has a wide range of stimuli. While the language describing a situation is discrete and specific, the stimulation and response are continuous. This is why language must abstract, and must fail to include "all the features of the situation." He says that we must "leave unmentioned certain simple features which are present in every object."³⁶

This feature of all linguistically expressed situations, their abstraction from the actual situation, should be kept in mind at all times. This is not usually done, with frequent detrimental results. As Lee puts it: "But men have forgotten and continue to forget. The list of

³⁵Ibid., pp. 97-98.

those who have taken the adequacy of language coverage for granted is a long one."\textsuperscript{57} Hayakawa explains abstraction as the process by which we choose those features of a certain object which resemble other objects of the same "size, functions, and habits. In a way it is a process of classifying."\textsuperscript{58} When a product is described in a session of a committee, it is obvious that what is presented through the medium of language is only an abstraction. Even the simplest products cannot be presented in complete detail, and have an identical influence upon our central nervous system as the actual object would have. This is certainly a disadvantage. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that those characteristics of a product that are discussed are those which are most pertinent in conditioning the product to satisfy the desires and needs of customers. Thus, the inability to produce all the characteristic attributes is a disadvantage, which is somewhat compensated by our ability to choose for discussion those aspects of the product that are most pertinent to satisfying the customers' needs and desires.

We have considered above the limitations of high

\textsuperscript{57} Irving J. Lee, \textit{Language Habits in Human Affairs} (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), p. 60.

abstraction. The higher the abstraction, the fewer the
details of the actual situation that can be considered.
As we have already implied above, in order for language
to be effective and meaningful, it is essential that the
abstraction take into account all the details which are
pertinent to the evaluation of the problem under consider-
eration. This does not mean, however, that it is neces-
sary for language to be of a low level of abstraction. In
fact, if the level is so close to the actual situation,
no meaning of a high order can be communicated. To com-
municate complex and intricate ideas it is essential to
make broad generalizations and assumptions. These are of
necessity far removed from the actual situation. "Dead
level abstracting" is referred to when the speaker is
unable to elevate his language to a higher level and so
communicate more involved ideas. The significance of the
recognition by the committee members of what is implied
in communication at various levels of abstraction and what
are the advantages and limitations of the different levels,
is quite clear and needs no further elaboration. 59

Johnson summarizes the disadvantage of dead-end
abstraction as follows: "The semantic significance of the
language behavior represented above lies in the fact that

59 Ibid., pp. 177-180.
it indicates and reinforces a general blocking of the abstracting process. It is language that gets nowhere. It leads to only very limited conclusions; as a matter of fact, it rather appears that no conclusions at all are reached. 'Facts' are enumerated, but they are not well related to one another." Johnson also calls "dead level abstracting" very high levels of abstracting, those which are commonly characterized by the name "wishful thinking."

The optimum process of abstracting is one which proceeds both upward and downward so that the language used is close enough to reality and at the same time allows abstract discussion of a high level.

Another semantical difficulty which is common to many of us is our two-valued orientation. We tend to evaluate every phenomenon as good or bad, right or wrong. Our language is not very well adapted to more exact evaluation. In reality, every situation has elements of both good and bad, right or wrong, and the employment of a multi-valued orientation is essential for the effective presentation of reality.

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60Johnson, op. cit., p. 272.


Projection should be recognized as another factor causing semantical problems. A member of a committee may be convinced that he is reporting to the other committee members what the facts were, while in reality he is merely projecting his views and prejudices into an external world. Projection is a factor in evaluating facts. As has already been mentioned above, when we report seeing anything, we should keep in mind the subjectivity of the sight. What we saw is merely the interpretation of the objective world by our central nervous system.

Another semantic danger is the one to which Johnson refers as Ventriloquizing. This situation is sometimes met in committees when a member has a great deal of prestige and uses it to influence his colleagues in matters in which he is no expert at all.

The structure of language does not correspond to the structure of reality.

It does not, in at least three respects, says Johnson. First, while the structure of reality shows a practically infinite degree of differentiation, that of language is far more discrete. Even a rich language like English, which has a vocabulary of hundreds of thousands of words, does not have enough signs for each fact. There is, therefore, a lack of correspondence between the structure of language and reality. Second, the structure
of language tends to be static while that of nature is variable and dynamic. Facts are constantly changing while words tend to refer to the old version of the facts, not the changed ones. Third, language does not correspond to reality because of its structure. This is inaccurate because we refer to qualities as if they belong to the external world. In reality they say nothing of the sort. We say that our product is "fine," "good," and use other such terms. The product is just a product. We think that it is "fine" and "good." These qualities are in our own nervous system, not in the product. To some extent this difficulty is corrected through the aid of research. Marketing research, for instance, attempts to determine what the potential customer considers "fine" and "good" attributes of a product. To the managers that discuss this product, these attributes which are considered desirable by the customers, as determined by marketing research, constitute "reality." They work with the definitions established by the customers.

The above brief discussion of semantics was aimed at pointing out the importance of some awareness of semantical problems in discussion in general and in communication in business committees in particular.

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63 Johnson, op. cit., pp. 112-127.
This chapter has been concerned with providing the reader with a general background for understanding the process of communication in business committees. It dealt with the problem of language, used in its most general sense.

The science of language, or semiosis, is conveniently divided into three major branches: syntactics, pragmatics, and semantics. Syntactics is that branch of language which deals with the relationships that exist between signs. Pragmatics deals with the relationship between signs and interpreters. Semantics deals with the relationship between signs and the objects for which they stand.

Every discussion on any subject should examine the philosophical foundations of that field before going into a technical analysis. Philosophers in general and logicians in particular have been interested in the problem of syntactics. In our discussion of communication as seen by philosophers, three main subjects were discussed: language, signs and symbols, and meaning. Other areas in philosophy also relate to the field of communication.

Theories of knowledge, value, consciousness, mind, ideas, and others are all relevant to some degree. These topics have been of interest to philosophers for many generations, and there are many volumes that attempt to cover them.
understanding of language, signs and symbols, and meaning, however, are most essential to the understanding of communication, and that is why we have concentrated on these.

Language is the instrument through which meaning is transmitted. It utilizes signs and symbols to do so. Signs and symbols are the gestures that are made by the person who wants to transfer meaning. When these gestures are recognized by others, and affect their behavior, communication is complete. The extent of completeness of the communication process is limited by the background, status, role, and other such barriers to communication.

A sign stands in a relation of one to one with the object which it represents. Symbols, on the other hand, stand for conceptions and not things. A sign announces an object; a symbol leads to conceiving the object. The sign brings forth action; the symbol is an instrument of thought. There are three modes of signifying: designative, appraisive, and prescriptive. Associated with the problem of signs is the concept of "truth." By "truth" is implied the degree to which the signs used correspond to the objects which they represent. Words such as "true", "false," "some," "somewhere," and others such as these are signs which make a statement about other signs; they do not stand for objects.

Meaning is a key concept in a theory of communica-
tion. It is the instrument through which ideas transfer between various persons. The meaning of meaning is a very controversial subject, and many philosophers have advanced theories regarding this concept. The one which appeals most to the writer is that which the behaviorists expound. According to this theory, "meaning arises and lies within the field of the relation between the gesture of a given human organism and the subsequent behavior of another organism by that gesture." Meaning lies in the relationship between the gesture of one organism and the response of another.

The psychologist is interested in the pragmatic dimension of language. He is concerned with the relation between signs and their interpreters. Mead, a behaviorist, believes that language is just a matter of gesture-using. Speech, to him, is only one kind of gesture. When discussing communication, psychologists emphasize the interaction between individuals that takes place. They point out the fact that the entire personality is involved in communication. Imitation is another factor which enters into communication. Only through imitation do we learn to use the same signs as others, and so are able to communicate. Recently, more and more psychologists have become interested in treating oral language experimentally. They have paid attention to factors which are represented
by the following terms, used in their technical sense: thinking, atmosphere effect, role, value, and others.

General semantics is concerned with that field of language which studies the relationship between signs and the objects for which they stand. This is of primary interest to every communicator. Semantical rules determine the conditions under which a sign is applicable to an object or situation. In reality, these rules are determined by practice. The key problem in semantics is "what are the facts?" It is important to remember that we do not know external objects. We only know the internal effect of an object on our central nervous system. Facts change constantly. They are personal affairs. They are useful only to the extent that others agree with the observer. Projection is a common source of semantical error. We attribute to external objects characteristics that are associated in our minds with the class to which the object belongs. Another semantical difficulty is commonly called abstracting. This term refers to the linguistic characteristic of conceiving only certain features of an object or situation. When being stimulated by a sign or a symbol, we do not think of all its characteristics (its chemical composition, shape, color, and others). This is a disadvantage of abstracting. The advantage is that it allows more articulation in higher
forms of thinking which involve imagination and other kinds of sign and symbol manipulation. It is also advantageous because it enables us to consider only the most pertinent factors in a situation as it relates to our problem.

The understanding of this basic analysis of the communication process is important to the understanding of communication in committees. Communication in the setting of a committee is nothing but the use of language in a small group.
CHAPTER III

COMMUNICATION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF MANAGEMENT

A. Why the Recent Interest in Industrial Communication

Serious interest in communication on the part of management is only recent. The main reason for this fact is that communication problems have become noticeable primarily as a result of expansion of business organizations. As Pfiffner puts it: "One of the principal causes of absence of such communication is the sheer size and vastness of modern hierarchies. . . Conventional organization channels become so long that communications either do not go through at all, or are watered down before reaching the other end."\(^1\) Pfiffner is here concerned with the functions and objectives of communication. Apparently he is not aware of the relation between the characteristics of the communication on the one hand and its objectives and functions on the other. As Professor Davis points out: "A one page directive may be all that is necessary to establish the mission of an organization. A multi-page standard instruction may be necessary to establish the correct procedure for executing a project." Pfiffner is not concerned here with that phase

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of communication which has to do with the establishment of a mission, which is the major interest of the present project.

Another writer, Raymond W. Peters, puts it as follows: "As an organization grows and becomes more complex, its workers are separated from its top management, both physically and socially. As the gap between them widens, as changes occur in manufacturing processes and in personnel assignments, emotional tensions develop in individuals at all levels, which tend to prevent mutual understanding. Management looks to good communication as a key to these human relations problems."²

The increase in size of organizations has resulted in a tendency to decentralize. Communication becomes more significant in a decentralized organization. Control of a decentralized organization, for instance, can be carried on effectively only if the communication system is well organized.

Size, however, is by no means the only reason for this upsurge of interest in communication. The humanitarian spirit of the age has had its effect upon the new generation managers. The new emphasis on good human relations in industry has turned management's eyes to communication as one of the tools which may aid in achieving it. As one management consultant writes: "Following the depression, human values

became increasingly important in business policy and planning. The human factors in business communication also emerged.  

Another reason for the recent interest in communication is the rapid increase in unionization in the thirties. Unionization has opened a way for worker to express dissatisfaction with management, and the latter has sought ways to answer such complaints. This also turned management's attention to communication. A desire to maintain a full labor force during the Second World War in face of a tight labor market has also had the same effect.  

The development of specialization has also contributed to the necessity of some provision for communication. Specialization usually results in a more complex organization structure and with more distinct lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability. These distinct lines make cross-contacts more difficult which in turn interferes with the smooth flow of information. Co-ordination of thought and action between line and staff becomes more difficult. The amount of knowledge one must master in a narrow field in order to carry out properly his responsibilities is so

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Transmitting Information through Management and Union Channels (Princeton: Industrial Relations Section, Princeton University, 1949), pp. 11-12.
immense that he cannot possibly follow closely developments in other areas. But since it is significant for all executives to have an over-all picture of the situation, communication is being emphasized to achieve this goal.²

Another reason for this recent growing interest in communication is the realization that a decision that has been reached with the participation of a number of individuals who will have to carry out the decision will be executed more efficiently and effectively than one which is made by individuals in higher managerial levels and only then promulgated to lower executives. Dimock writes in this connection: "Over against these considerations, however, is the important fact that people down the line appreciate being consulted, take more interest in their work, and achieve a higher state of morale if they are permitted to participate in planning and in decision making... The best policy seems to be that face-to-face relationships should be employed as much as possible...⁶

We thus see that it is almost impossible to discuss communication without bringing in the factor of participation. The Principle of Participation refers to the feeling of "belonging" and "worthwhileness" that usually accompanies

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participation in making a decision which is aimed at accomplishing the mission of the organization. Participation should be encouraged if carried on in an orderly manner. The responsible executive should usually set limits to the extent of participation. The "choice of alternative courses of action must be limited by the responsible executive to those that will provide acceptable solutions of the problem. The limitations should be dictated by the law of the situation." This is sometimes referred to as the Principle of Limited Choice. It will be shown later more clearly how the principle of participation affects the communication problem. It is perhaps sufficient to point out that a committee which is assigned the task of policy formulation utilizes both communication and participation. Communication is the instrument through which the committee carries on its work. Participation improves the morale of the group, and assures more efficient and effective group decisions and execution.

Communication between members of an organization has proved to create such a human atmosphere which has tended to improve the morale in the organization. This has also been a factor in promoting close communication between members of an organization. In Dimock's words: "The virtue of all this is borne out in the policy of many large or-

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"Davis, op. cit., pp. 623-624."
ganizations which place all functional heads on the same floor in the same office building in order that there may be no excuse for failure to hold frequent personal conferences. The sheer informality of relationship does much to produce a friendly tone in the organization, and to give all in it the feeling that they are working together toward a common end. 8

B. Communication and the Co-ordination of Thought

The meaning of co-ordination of thought

Co-ordination of thought is one of the most important factors in any organization. It has to do primarily with reaching a meeting of minds concerning plans and policies. In co-ordinating thoughts of executives, the factors that are usually considered are what is there to be done, the manner in which it should be done, the place where activities should be done, the people who should be responsible for the activities, the conditions of time and resources that will be involved, and the reason for such activities. 9

These elements are usually factors in the formulation of plans; but they do enter into the formulation of policy. A statement of policy is usually either included or

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8 Loc. cit.

9 Davis, op. cit., p. 391.
implied in a statement of a plan.* Plans should provide economic and effective bases for action. Policies are statements of principles and rules of action that govern the achievement of objectives. The relationship between the two is clear.¹⁰

Co-ordination of thought attempts to integrate the ideas of two or more persons. This co-ordination or integration of ideas takes place through the process of communication. This is the reason why it is being considered here. It seems certain that without some provision for co-ordination of thought no organization can exist. The degree of smoothness and perfection in the operation of an organization depends upon the extent to which the activities of the various divisions of a business organization are co-ordinated. This co-ordination depends upon the degree to which the process of communication is functioning effectively.

The quantity of information required for co-ordination of thought

An ideal model of an organization would be one in which every executive in any division is fully familiar with the ideas, thoughts, plans, and intentions of every other executive in the organization. As Tead puts it, the organization will function best when "the states of mind of

¹⁰Ibid., p. 175.
numerous individuals who are more effective if beyond pre-
occlusion with their own restricted tasks they can have
some cogent view of the whole enterprise in action. This is so because having a picture of the whole enterprise
points out to the individual how his task relates to the
objectives of the enterprise. It facilitates his orienta-
tion in general. In emergency situations, for which he
does not have instructions, he can adjust his actions so
that besides helping himself in his immediate task it also
aids his fellow executives. When an executive has a choice
of alternatives of action, a knowledge of the entire enter-
prise will facilitate the choice of that alternative which
will complement decisions made by other executives. Finally,
the experience of the last War has indicated that morale
generally improves when either employees or executives be-
come familiar with the operations of the entire enterprise,
and the role that their narrow task plays in the accomplish-
ment of the final goal of the organization. The imperfec-
tions of intraorganizational communication make this model
a practical impossibility. Another reason for imperfection
in the operation of organizations is the fact that even if
means were devised which made it possible to transfer in-
formation from one executive to another as circumstances

11Ordway Tead, The Art of Administration (New York: Mc-
warranted, it is doubtful whether any executive could utilize effectively more than a limited amount of information in the management of his division. There is an optimum amount of information which any executive should receive from other managers. If more information is transmitted than the executive-communicant can utilize, it may clutter his mind and interfere with his work. What is involved is knowledge of the kinds of subject matter that are relevant to a specific group. Ideally, we must provide for a smooth flow of relevant information to individuals and groups from other individuals and groups.

The optimum amount of information which co-ordination of thought and ideas requires will depend upon specific circumstances. Some factors which will determine the amount and kind of information are: (1) the general personality and mental capabilities of the individuals involved; (2) the hierarchical status of the members; (3) the relationship between the products that the divisions produce; (4) the geographic dispersion of the respective activities; (5) the sizes of the organizations; (6) the means of communication that are being employed; and (7) the extent to which the executives involved are indoctrinated with the same values and philosophy of management.

It may be worthwhile to elaborate briefly on this last point. Communication in a committee will be effective only if a common system of values prevails among the various
members. The members should have similar social values, business values, and goals in general. The members of a committee must have similar value systems, so that they may have the ethical criteria by which to judge the propriety of the various alternatives to business action which require a decision. Serious friction and stress among the committee-men may be the result of discrepancies between the value systems of the participants. Frequent contact among members usually creates a common philosophy and system of values. This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter VIII, when the evaluation of a common frame of reference will be considered. In general, a common philosophy and value system will foster the development of mutual confidence among the members. Mutual confidence is extremely important for effective committee operation. They also facilitate choice of courses of action to avoid a possible loss of public confidence. They also "facilitate the prompt, amicable adjustment of differences between individuals or groups within the industry or concern. . . and. . . they facilitate the preservation of the conditions that are necessary for equality of opportunity in business based on individual abilities and qualifications."12

12Davis, op. cit., p. 122.
Shared knowledge and teamwork

What is the process which takes place when the ideas of a number of individuals are being co-ordinated? In an average business organization, we find people working together to achieve its economic objectives. All participants should have the same goal. Each one must have sufficient information about what the others intend to do so that he himself can make the correct decision. Simon calls this "teamwork."

When a group of executives get together to discuss a new policy, besides the advantage of having the collective judgment of the group, each participant is provided with the opportunity of becoming acquainted with what his colleagues would do under a certain set of circumstances. Such a discussion serves to educate the members taking part in the meeting, of the planned behavior of the others. This in essence is what takes place in the process of coordination of thought, when co-operation among executives is relied upon to achieve the economic ends of the organization. To quote Simon: "In a co-operative pattern both participants prefer the same set of consequences; hence, if each anticipates the other correctly, they will both act so as to secure these consequences. . . . a co-operative pattern may be unstable if each participant is unable to predict what the other is going to do. In these cases,
co-ordination of the behaviors of the two participants is necessary in order that they may realize the possibility that they both prefer. Co-ordination is thus seen necessary to provide the various decision makers of an organization with knowledge of what other members of the organization will do, so that an executive has enough information upon which to base his own decisions. No executive can be left to select his own strategy, for the best strategy involves knowledge of the strategies employed by others.

Committees and co-ordination of thought

Committees are a common means for co-ordinating thought. Although the various members come to a meeting with different dispositions, throughout the discussion they are exposed to almost identical physical and communicative stimuli and there is maximum probability that the future behavior of each member will be influenced similarly. The process of interpersonal interaction is strongest under conditions of committee contact.

Committees usually report to a higher line executive. Professor Davis suggests the following order as typical for committee work: (a) Investigation by a staff group of all

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14 Ibid., p. 72-73.
the facts and factors affecting a certain problem; (b) development of a tentative report by the staff group; (c) co-ordination of the report with the interested parties by mail; (d) committee meeting to develop a meeting of minds on points of disagreement; and (e) report to higher line authority.

Holden, Fish and Smith state that co-ordinating committees perform an important function for top management. They list the following as the four purposes of co-ordinative committees: "(1) To develop opinion and viewpoint of the key executives in regard to contemplated moves and policies as a guide to top management in taking action. . . . (2) To control and co-ordinate management plans, policies, aims, and objectives, so that all departments and key executives have a clear and uniform plan of action . . . (3) To consider the need for changes in policy, systems of control, and other matters of a general nature, making appropriate recommendations to general management as necessary. (4) To provide each of the members with an understanding of the operations and problems involved in the other departments, thus broadening viewpoints and the opportunity for co-operation."  

Another writer lists as the functions of co-ordinative meetings the following: "First, to give everyone present a sense of the unity and interconnectedness of the work or the organization as a whole; second, to learn from the chief executive about new problems and developments which affect their work; third, to solicit and enlist the thought and co-operation of staff members in the solution of these problems; fourth, to provide an opportunity for department and division heads to bring up questions which the executive should know about and which possibly affect the operations of parallel divisions of the organization; and finally, to provide a forum in which friction points or areas of inadequate co-ordination are brought into the open."\(^{16}\) The last point, that which emphasizes the provision of a forum for bringing friction and areas of inadequate co-ordination into the open is particularly important. Another writer says about such co-ordinative communication that it "increases understanding, increases group unity, speeds action, aids morale, and provides supplementary information."\(^{17}\)

Tead defines co-ordination as that function which


"has to do with the administrative effort to help formulate, adopt, transmit, give effect to, interpret, and oversee the policies of the organization. Its distinctive focus is upon successful understanding and willing agreement to proposed new policy ideas and upon unified, interlocking efforts continuously to have accepted aim and policies well carried out. The focus is upon provisions for the smooth working of the organization as a whole, beyond that of each of its functional parts, and upon the fostering of personal outlooks which facilitate a unified result."\(^{18}\) It is clear that all this can only be accomplished through a smooth flow of communication among all executives involved. The results of such active and constant communication is "fertilization of ideas and united action among interdependent groups and individuals."

Tead says that management responsibilities involve "effectuation of present policies and the proposing of new ideas for policy." To achieve these two functions, coordination must be assured through the following steps: (1) facts and opinions must be collected; (2) they must be communicated by those who have them to those that do not; (3) responsibilities for all specific operating duties must be defined; (4) agreement must prevail among the members

involved; (5) which can be reached only through communication and persuasion; and (6) the decisions reached must be continuously appraised. It is clear that face-to-face communication is an extremely important factor in all forms of co-ordination. All writers on co-ordination stress this point.

Integration of ideas

There are various ways to reach a decision concerning a new policy. Mary Parker Follett mentions three: domination, compromise, and integration. Integration of ideas is a time consuming process. Time is definitely a limiting factor in achieving integration of ideas. Successful integration of ideas requires sufficient time for the committee members to express their views as completely as possible. It also requires sufficient time for a thorough analysis of these various views with the objective in mind.

19 Ordway Tead, op. cit., p. 182. This analysis is based on an earlier one elaborated upon by Mary Parker Follett. According to her analysis, there are four fundamental principles of organization:
1. Co-ordination by direct contact of the responsible people concerned.
2. Co-ordination in the early stages.
3. Co-ordination as the reciprocal relating of all the factors in a situation.
4. Co-ordination as a continuing process.

to find the elements of agreement and disagreement among the members. Time is also necessary to arrive at some new view which contains the advantages of all the expressed opinions, without compromising on any principle.

Domination represents a victory of one's idea over those of others. In compromise "each side gives up a little in order to have peace. Both these ways are unsatisfactory. In dominating, only one way gets what it wants; in compromise neither side gets what it wants. Integration means finding a third way which will include both what A wishes and what B wishes, a way in which neither side has had to sacrifice anything. And the extraordinary interesting thing about this is that the third way means progress. In domination you stay where you are. In compromise likewise you deal with no new values. By integrating, something new has emerged, the third way, something beyond the either-or." (Italics mine.)

20 Mary Parker Follett, Freedom and Co-ordination, Lectures in Business Organization (London: Management Publications Trust, Ltd., 1949), pp. 65-67. In a similar manner, Tead says: "there are four familiar alternatives in promulgating decisions of high policy. First, decisions can be reached on a more or less singlehanded or restricted basis, and then be announced by fiat as a command or order, to which those affected submit. Second, there can be decision after some consultation with the affected individuals or groups yielding passive acquiescence. Third, there can be decision, the give-and-take of more or less representative conference, leading to acceptance, or consent. And finally, there can be sufficient discussion, shared by the interested individuals or groups, designed to evolve some newly conceived combination of ideas into an agreed policy better
eliminates any possibility of utilizing group judgment and thought. It also has negative morale effects. Compromise is the most common manner in which disagreements are resolved. It has the unfortunate effect of dilution and ineffectual modification of what is best in any suggestion. Integration avoids the weaknesses of both of these alternatives. It results in a new solution which may embody the best of what the previously competing alternatives had to offer. This process of integration of ideas results in the highest degree of identification with the derived policy on the part of the participants, and thus assures the greatest interest in carrying it out. 21

(continued from preceding page) than the one initially advanced, thus resulting in integration." - The Art of Administration, pp. 182-183.

21 It may be worthwhile to point out that integration may result in the adoption of an alternative suggested by one member of the committee, and later found acceptable to the others. It must not always be a new alternative growing out of the communication process. As long as the members are convinced that the adopted alternative policy is the best, the author includes it in the "integration" class. On the other hand, in the case of compromise, some members may leave the conference with the feeling that the chosen policy is not the best one to achieve the objective. This is their present feelings as to the possible consequences of the adopted policy. This would suggest that the morale of the committeemen will not be as high in the case of compromise as it might be in the case of integration; in the sense that these terms are being used here. This analysis of committee decisions on the basis of the terms domination, compromise, and integration is by no means a standard one. Many writers include in the "compromise" classification elements of group decisions which were classified by the present author as falling in the "integration"
Participation

This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the Principle of Participation. This Principle says that "a feeling of 'worth-whileness' and 'belonging' tends to develop from participation in the making of decisions underlying the accomplishment of organizational objectives. It tends to integrate the interests and abilities of individuals with the organization's purposes."22

In many cases, companies attempt to use this principle to gain acceptance for a policy which higher-ups have already determined. The policy is formulated tentatively by top management, and committees are asked to comment on it. These comments are passed on to top management, which reconsider the proposed policy in light of the suggested modifications and additions. It is clear that such a practice does not allow for complete utilization of the principle of the integration of ideas. Inasmuch as the final decision as to what policy is adopted remains with the president,

(continued from preceding page) group. Dr. Arnold wisely points out that in terms of actual results, decisions reached in accordance with domination and compromise may be superior to those reached through integration of ideas. But this could not be determined at the time when the committee makes its decisions; only the future can tell which decision gives superior actual results. This whole problem of the comparison of actual results of domination, compromise, and integration (as defined in this project) may be the subject of a very interesting and valuable experimental study.

22Davis, op. cit., p. 200.
or someone else close to him, no integration of ideas leading to a collective decision takes place.  

Integration of ideas requires the flow of information and opinions from those closest to the issue at stake. All objections can be taken account of during the period of policy formulation. The different angles through which the various members look at the problem get into common focus. The back and forth discussion of the subject under consideration makes the understanding of all details of the problem possible by all the participants, so that they in turn can explain it to their subordinates. Finally, agreement through integration of ideas encourages willing and creative efforts to carry out the policy.

**Face-to-face contact as a factor in co-ordination**

To achieve the best policy that is possible through the process of integration of ideas, it is clear that face-to-face contact must be maintained among the executives who make up the policy formulating committee, or any other formal or informal group of executives. If the group is informal, meetings usually cannot be very frequent, except those between executives and their subordinates who consti-

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23 Tead says in this connection: "Co-ordination is best assured where representatives of functional groups which are directly affected by or are involved in carrying out new policies are parties to the decision-reaching process. (Italics in the original) - The Art of Administration, p. 183."
tute their normal span of control. There is no substitute for face-to-face communication. As Tead says: "The conclusion is inescapable: the necessary process of communication as it relates to new policy questions has to be broken down into a personal and face-to-face procedure of dealings with and in small groups. This requirement cannot be ignored if the intention is to go beyond telling or announcing to an outcome of shared and willing conviction. There is no substitute for this face-to-face confrontation in the communication of important new ideas."24 To achieve maximum success in group policies, an honest effort must be made to get the executives involved to confer frequently and freely. Each of them must be given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion everything his experience has taught him which might have some bearing upon the problem considered.

About the necessity of face-to-face relationships, it may be worthwhile to quote Professor Fritz J. Roethlisberger, who has been interested in the problem of communication in industry for the last two decades:

It is in these face-to-face relationships at work - whether they be between superior and subordinate, trainer and trainee, staff and line, or counselor and counselee - that the important communications take place. None of the formal tools of communication - suggested

24Ordway Tead, op. cit., p. 184.
systems, bulletin boards, organization charts and manuals, courses designed to give information, magazines, contests, speeches or letters can supplant or change the character of these daily interactions. The meaningful communications occur in these microscopic processes of daily intercourse. It is through these face-to-face relationships that people at work learn what is expected of them and where they really stand. If in these daily face-to-face relationships people feel insecure, dependent or frustrated, no organizational manual can tell them where they belong.25

The above quotation emphasizes clearly the "personal and human realities of communication."

Frequent face-to-face meetings provide the participating members with a common experience inasmuch as they are all exposed to the same stimuli, usually under conditions of serious attention. There is no doubt but that these common experiences will affect the modes of thinking of the participants similarly, and this in turn will facilitate self-co-ordination in the future.

C. Communication and Human Relations in Business

The purpose of this section is to point out the relationship that exists between human relations in business and the communication process in an organization. It should be clear from the outset that communication cannot take place

in a social vacuum. Communication presupposes at least two people. As we have already pointed out above, a complex human interaction accompanies any communication process. In this connection, Peters says:

In general, research in the field of communications not only uncovered a surprisingly large amount of material, both recorded and unrecorded, but led us into related fields of human relations and industrial psychology. These latter areas proved fertile in that they provided information dealing with the underlying principles and philosophies so important to a better understanding of the communication problem. No consideration of communication which by-passed these areas would be complete. 26

That it is important to study communication in conjunction with human relations in general is clear from the fact that communication is essentially a tool to improve human relations. Bakke says in this connection: "The basic objective of the communication is, or should be, to facilitate teamwork in line with the fulfillment of the purposes and functions of the organization as a whole, or that subdivision of the organization whose operations are concerned." 27


Meaning is senseless outside the context of human relations.

Pigors states that meaning gets across by (1) the use of words, (2) "interpretations made by other people of words or silence, of expressive behavior or even of inaction," and (3) by "insight into situational meaning." The latter refers to the situation which stimulated the communication. Meaning, thus, cannot exist outside the context of human relations.

**Communication is a two-way process.**

Pigors also points out that in order to aid in smooth communication between individuals, we must keep in mind that each event in our life is part of a continuing process. In interpreting any word, the entire history of the organism which communicates may furnish the necessary situational insight for the complete understanding of the meaning to be conveyed. Every idea expressed by one individual not only should be considered in light of the history of the individual, but will become in turn a factor affecting the future behavior of the same individual. The utterance of words conveying meaning "sets off a continuing process for both of them." We have already mentioned above that any sort of communication is a two-way process. This

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is particularly true in the case of order giving, but it also is true in less complex linguistic interaction. To overlook the fact that instruction, order-giving, or any other kind of communication in the setting of a business situation is a joint process is the major cause for ineffectual communication and poor human relations in general.

This view was expressed similarly by Mary Parker Follett: "It means that A influences B, and that B, made different by A's influence, influences A, which means that A's own activity enters into the stimulus which is causing his activity." Later on, she says that

I have been saying that the whole is determined not only by its constituents, but by their relation to each other. I now say that the whole is determined also by the relation of whole and parts. Production policy, sales policy, financial policy, personnel policy, influencing one another, but the general business policy is being created by the interweaving of these policies is all the time, even while it is in the making. We have come to see that reciprocal adjustment is more than mere adjustment; that it is there we get what the psychologist has called the "something," "the critical moment in evolution."

This explains the failure of autocratically minded persons to communicate with subordinates. They conceive of

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30 Ibid., pp. 195-200. See also in Mary Parker Follett's Creative Experience (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., 1924), p. 57. This is also discussed by Paul Pigors, op. cit., p. 2.
communication as a one way process. They tend to disregard the importance of acting as communicants, and are very poor listeners.

The need for free communication between all echelons of management has already been pointed out above. To be effective, such communication must be a joint process. It must be recognized that the quality of communication up the line will be determined largely by the quality of communication down the line. To be effective, provisions must be made "for verification of the immediate response at each intermediate level."

Why is two way communication essential? The answer to this lies in the fact that if top management wants to communicate downward effectively, it must know what are the attitudes and reactions of the subordinates. The knowledge of these is important for the determination of what to communicate, when, why, and to whom.

Keith Davis conceives of the communication process as of information flowing between the various groups associated with the business organization. According to him it has three phases: (1) interscalar communication (or communication between different levels of authority in the organization); (2) intrascalar communication (or communication

\[31\] Pigors, op. cit., p. 3.
between personnel on the same level); and (3) extraorganizational communication (or communication which takes place between people outside the company and members of the business organization). This project is primarily concerned with intrascalar communication, but it is very unlikely that any practical situations fit into any one classification. Most cases will have elements of both interscalar and intrascalar communication.

The need for confidence in effective communication.

Confidence and mutual trust are essential for effective communication. It is difficult enough to interpret a communique when the communicator does his best to make his meaning clear. It is easy to imagine how much more difficult it is to obtain effective communication when the communicant is suspicious of the true motives of the communicator. This is particularly significant in labor-management relations. Workers often suspect that management hides its true motives behind innocent words, and management, in turn, suspects that union official announcements are insincere. This situation is also found among executives, particularly when the atmosphere is poisoned with personal rivalries and jealousies. To ignore this

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32 Keith Davis, "Employee Communication" in John F. Mee (ed.) *op. cit.*, pp. 759-760.
factor of suspicion and distrust may bring about situations of ineffective communication. To assure smooth flow of messages, the atmosphere of suspicion must be minimized in every possible way.

To gain the trust of the communicants, they must be convinced of the sincerity of the communicators. Such sincerity can be transmitted by actions. To quote Pigors: "Between people everywhere the most direct communication is by action. This speaks louder than words, often with unmistakable meaning, and communicates directly to feelings." (Italics in original). 33

**Status and Communication**

The systems of status in an organization have significant effects upon the communication process. Barnard defines "status" of an individual in an organization as the "rights, privileges, immunities, duties, obligations, restrictions, limitations, and prohibitions which determine the expectations of others in reference to the individual. "Systems of status" in an organization refer to the habit and duty of all members of an organization to recognize and assign the appropriate status to the various executives by

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means of titles and other such insignia. Within an organization, various executives have different statuses which are determined by many factors. Some of the factors which affect the status of executives in the managerial hierarchy are "differences in abilities arising from biological characteristics and from social conditioning and experience," the difficulties of work, the importance of work, "the systematic character of co-operation arising from valuation of effort," the necessity to centralize and specialize the function of command, the formalization of differences of status "to protect the integrity of the socialized individual, and the symbolic functions of systems of status." Most executives are aware of the necessity for systems of status as a function of the system of organization communication which is basic to co-operation. Barnard says that a system of organization communication, to be effective and efficient, must provide easy means to check the authenticity, authoritativeness, and intelligibility of any message. In most cases, authenticity can be ascertained without too much difficulty. Personal knowledge of the communicator together with "the relevance of the communicat-


35Barnard, Organization and Management, p. 223.
tor together with "the relevance of the communication to the general context and to previous communications are sufficient."

The authoritativeness of communication is far more closely related to the factor of systems of status. The authoritativeness of a communication refers to the notion of the reliability of the contents of the communication as a basis of action. The authoritativeness of a communication essentially depends upon two factors: (1) whether the communicator has the general background for understanding the problem about which he communicates; and (2) whether he has the concrete knowledge of the specific case by virtue of his position. We may distinguish between two kinds of authoritativeness, functional authoritativeness and scalar (or command) authoritativeness.

Functional status gives us sufficient evidence for reliance upon the authoritativeness of a communication coming from an expert or specialist. We tend to rely upon the advice communicated to us by a physician on matters pertaining to health and safety in our plant. The physician's communication carries functional authoritativeness.

Scalar status bears on the authoritativeness of a communication in the sense that executives in higher hier-

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36 Barnard, Organization and Management, p. 224.
archical positions have access to more comprehensive information. This tends to attribute more reliance to communiciques coming from such higher hierarchical positions (or "communication centers").

Communications must be intelligible if they are to be serviceable at all. The language of messages should be determined by the status of those to whom it is addressed. The language used should convey the same meaning to both the communicator and the communicant. The status of an individual is a very valuable guide to the determination of the language to be used. 37 In this connection Pfiffner says: "Much of the failure to communicate results from inability to bridge gaps between cultural, social and intellectual levels." 38

Another communication problem associated with the matter of status differential is the human propensity, in the setting of business organizations, to distort information going up the line. When passing information to an executive with higher status, the communicator tries to pass only such information as will please his superior. Careful attention should therefore be paid to this matter.

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37 Ibid., pp. 224-228. See also in Peters, op. cit., p. 25.

on the part of high executives. They should attempt to evaluate the true situation and not rely exclusively on information passed up from below them.  

Illogical interpretation of communiques by people

Another factor which should be pointed out or related to the success with which the communication system operates is the "clash between science and tradition. There is a lag between the folk culture of the past and a rapidly moving technology." This is just another way of saying that logic and science are not the directing guides for the behavior and thinking of most people. It is essential to understand the folklore, traditions, and the culture of the people with whom we have to communicate. The work of top management trains them to think in a logical and unemotional manner. As we go down the echelons of the organization, the job usually requires less ability in logical and abstract thinking, and the people filling those positions are usually less well educated. This difference in the manner of thinking is particularly important in communication downward.  

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40Pfiffner, op. cit., p. 162.

41Fritz J. Roethlisberger, Management and Morale (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), pp. 88-109. See also Fritz J. Roethlisberger, "The Foreman: Master and
We have seen that communication is more than a mere transmission of signs and symbols. It involves human sentiments rather than pure logic. A mistake is often made in assuming that the communicant will translate the signs and symbols in a logical manner. This is based on the assumption that the organism of the communicant will be neutral. This, of course, is erroneous.

The role of sentiments in communication

Skill in communication in an organization depends upon recognition of human sentiments. Sentiments are neither true nor false. They refer to the personal and social life of the people who possess them. They are biologically, psychologically and socially determined. We all are motivated to a large extent by our sentiments. It is important to realize that sentiments tend to build themselves up into systems and patterns. These systems become institutionalized and resist change. The understanding of social groups, which are in essence individuals bound together by systems of sentiments, are very significant to business executives.42


The interaction of sentiments of many individuals in an organization makes for the social structure of the business organization. Communication with any component of this structure must be done with full awareness of the effect of the communique'upon the existing system of sentiments. The reaction to our message will depend upon the social routines of the social structure which in essence are our attitudes and feelings. The understanding of this system tells what behavior we can expect from the individual (or group) as a result of a communique from us. This social structure, which is brought about by the interaction of sentiments of the members of the group, limits the effectiveness of the communication system.43

Emotional behavior on the part of lower echelon managers and employees in the face of logical thinking and behavior on the part of top management is described by Roethlisberger as follows: "To the bottom the precise language of efficiency, instead of transmitting understanding, sometimes conveys feelings of dismay and insecurity. The bottom, in turn, instead of transmitting successfully its fears of social dislocation, conveys to the top emotional expressions of petty grievances and excessive demands."44

43 Roethlisberger, op. cit., pp. 43-45.
44 Ibid., p. 63.
D. Formal and Informal Communication

The term formal organization refers "to those patterns of interaction prescribed by the rules and regulations of the company as well as the policies which prescribe the relations that obtain or are supposed to obtain, within the human organization and between the human organization and the technical organization."

The term informal organization will refer to the "actual personal interrelations existing among the members of the organization which are not represented by, or are inadequately represented by, the formal organization." All communication which does not follow channels specified by organization charts, manuals, or standard practice instructions will, by definition, be considered in this project informal. In many cases, companies encourage cross contacts and self-co-ordination through the specific provision of a stated policy. According to our definition, such policies encourage informal communication by means of a formal policy.

The social organization of an organization exists by virtue of the interaction of the sentiments of all the


46 Ibid., p. 553-8.
members of that organization. As a result of the constant social interaction of the members, certain patterns of relations are formed. These patterns of interaction are in essence the social organization of the group. These patterns of social behavior become a habit and tend to prescribe the future behavior of the various members.

The social organization of a company is partly formal and partly informal. To the extent that it is made of a number of separable echelons which are well defined and to which all formal instructions and orders are addressed, we have a formal organization. The relations between the members of the formal group are prescribed by systems, policies, rules, regulation, and other such factors. "In short, the patterns of human interrelations, as defined by the systems, rules, policies, and regulations of the company, constitute the formal organization."\(^{47}\)

The informal organization refers to the patterns of human interaction which have little or no representation in the formal organization. While the formal organization measures the distance between these members of an organization on the organization chart, the informal organization measures them in terms of social distances. The informal organization takes into account the sentiments

\(^{47}\)Ibid., p. 558.
and values of the social organization through which groups and individuals are differentiated.

The informal social organization is an important factor in maintaining good morale. Informal social contacts make the work environment pleasant and congenial. The informal organization is sometimes facilitated by the existence of the formal organization. On the other hand, the formal organization is facilitated by the informal one. According to Barnard: "Formal organizations arise out of and are necessary to informal organization; but when formal organizations come into operation, they create and require informal organizations. It seems not easily to be recognized without long and close observation that an important and often indispensable part of a formal system of cooperation is informal."

Informal communication

Informal communication serves various purposes. First, it establishes useful communication channels. Second, it maintains the "cohesiveness in formal organizations through regulating the willingness to serve and the stability of objective authority." Third, it maintains the

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"feeling of personal integrity, of self-respect, of independent choice." ⁴⁹

Let us examine informal communication in more detail. Every executive must maintain an informal organization as a means of communication. The communication functions of the informal organization are summarized very ably by Barnard:

The functions of informal executive organizations are the communication of intangible facts, opinions, suggestions, suspicions, that cannot pass through formal channels without raising issues calling for decisions, without dissipating dignity and objective authority, and without overloading executive positions; also to minimize excessive cliques of political types arising from too great divergence of interests and views, to promote self-discipline of the group; and to make possible the development of important personal influences in the organization. ⁵⁰

The "grapevine"

We have seen how informal communication is built around the interaction of the social sentiments of groups. Information of the "gossip" kind is also a very important channel of communication. The chief disadvantages of the grapevine are that "it discourages frankness, since confidential remarks may be spread about, second, that the information transmitted by the grapevine is often inaccurate." ⁵¹ An important characteristic of "the grapevine" is

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 225.

⁵¹Simon, op. cit., p. 162.
that the information transmitted through it "is concerned primarily with the human relations of the work situation and serves the needs of the people rather than the needs of the job."52 A certain amount of this kind of transmission of information is healthy for an organization; however, when it becomes the major means of communication, it can be harmful.53

E. Summary and Conclusions

The recent increasing interest in communication in industry can be attributed to a number of reasons: (1) the tremendous expansion in the size of business organizations; (2) the tendency of business organizations to decentralize; (3) the diffusion of humanitarian principles and ideas throughout society has had its effect upon management philosophy; communication is considered one of the tools by which employees and managers can be reached and be treated as human beings; (4) the rapid increase in unionization in this country in the last two decades has caused management to seek means by which they can reach the employees; (5) the tight labor force during the Second World War has emphasized the significance of communicating with personnel

52 Gardner, op. cit., p. 49.

as a means of inducing them to remain with the various organizations; (6) further specialization of labor has increased the need for some means of informing one specialist of pertinent material which has become available to other specialists in the course of their inquiries; (7) the realization of the significance of group decision as a means of more enthusiasm in carrying out the decision (the Principle of Participation); and (8) the recognition of the relationship between good morale and satisfactory means of communication.

Communication is an essential element in co-ordination of thought as well as action. Co-ordination of thought in industry has to do with the meeting of minds concerning certain problems involving plans and policies. Co-ordination of thought in the case of either plans or policies is similar inasmuch as plans usually state the policies (broad principles and rules that guide action) upon which they are based. The role of communication in co-ordination of thought is to transmit the optimum amount of information to other members of the executive group that is necessary for their duties as decision-makers. Communication aids in achieving teamwork. Through the process of co-ordination of thought, members learn what the strategies of their colleagues will be in certain situations, and so are able to plan their own strategies to correspond to and complement those of their colleagues.
Committees are important communicative techniques of co-ordination of thought. Frequent meetings in the setting of committees provide an opportunity for a valuable common experience to all participants which tends to indoctrinate them with a common management philosophy and orient them in general as to the feelings, ideas, and philosophies of their counterparts in other departments of the organization. Communication in committees also tends to bring out into the open areas of conflict, so that they may be taken care of.

A decision reached on the basis of integration of ideas is one which represents a new way which includes all the ones suggested by the various participants in a discussion. On the other hand, decisions reached on the basis of domination or compromise may not be as desirable as the ones based upon integration of ideas. Domination refers to situations in which the views of one autocratic executive prevail; compromise refers to a situation in which a new idea that is made of fragments of the various views and suggestions is advanced.

A policy of reaching decisions only after consultation with all the individuals involved is referred to as participation. The kind of participation which gives best results is the one which honestly allows subordinates to formulate policies which will affect their work. Another practice which is referred to as "participation" is that
in which top management actually formulates policy, but which is presented to subordinates as a suggestion and the latter are manipulated into accepting it. This should be discouraged when the participants are members of top management as it leaves no place for true integration of ideas.

Face-to-face contact, when practical, is the best communicative technique as it allows two way communication to operate with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Communication is intimately related to the whole problem of human relations. It is absolutely impossible to study communication in industry without considering psychological, sociological, and social-psychological factors. Effective communication and good human relations improve the communication process. The concept of meaning cannot be conceived of outside the setting of human interaction. Communication is essentially a two way process. In the course of communication, meaning is transmitted back and forth.

Mutual confidence and trust is one of the most essential human factors necessary for effective communication. Status of the individual will also affect communication. The status of the communicator will affect his manner of communicating. The status of communicants will determine the sense they make out of a communique as well as the choice of words used by the communicator to transmit a certain meaning. Status determines (1) the authenticity, (2)
authoritativeness, and (3) the intelligibility of messages.

Sentiments play an active part in the communication process. We are never entirely logical in verbalizing reality and in interpreting signs and symbols. Sentiments affect both of these processes. Sentiments play a growing role as we go down the organization hierarchy. Logic increases in importance as a factor in communication as we go up the organization ladder.

Formal communication tends to follow the lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability. Informal communication refers to the actual personal interrelations existing among the members of the organization along lines which do not correspond to the lines of authority in the organization. The lines of informal communication describe the informal organization. The informal organization is a factor in maintaining good morale. The formal organization aids in maintaining the informal one, and the informal organization aids in maintaining the formal one.

The "grapevine" refers to the information which is of the "gossip" kind. It fulfills an important and desirable function of carrying information for which the formal organization makes no allowance. Its disadvantages are that (1) it discourages frankness since confidential material may spread around, and (2) that the information actually spread may be inaccurate.
CHAPTER IV

COMMUNICATION AS THE BASIC SOCIAL PROCESS IN A BUSINESS COMMITTEE

A. Introduction

In the last two chapters we have discussed communication briefly from the point of view of a philosopher, psychologist, and general semanticist. We have also devoted an entire chapter to the consideration of communication from the vantage point of view of management. From the latter's viewpoint, we have examined the reasons for the recent growing interest in communication in business and industry, the role of communication in the co-ordination of thought, communication and human relations, and the question of informal communication.

In the present chapter it is proposed to examine communication as the basic social process in a business committee. A committee is a group of individuals, and the discussion of communication in groups is a problem of individual-group interaction. What an individual communicates (or interprets) is a function of two factors: (1) his own personality; and (2) the influence of the present group. The study of the relationship between one's personality and one's communication effectiveness is a legitimate subject of inquiry for psychologists. The
study of the relationship between a certain group and the communication patterns that it promotes is of interest to sociologists. In the case of business committees, the effectiveness of communication depends upon both individual and group factors. The problems involved are therefore both psychological and sociological. The best analysis of communication in business committees is a social-psychological one. This is what this chapter proposes to do.\(^1\)

The subjects that will be covered in this chapter are: (1) the role of the communicator; (2) the role of the communicant; and (3) barriers to communication and how to overcome them. Finally, the material presented in the entire chapter will be summarized.

B. The Role of the Communicator

**The intent of the communicator**

The communicator must be clear in his mind what is the intention of the communication process that he is initiating. Intent should be differentiated from content.

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\(^1\) Some of the ideas appearing in the following pages have been derived from a seminar on "Communication" offered by the Department of Sociology, The Ohio State University, in the Autumn Quarter, 1952, which the writer audited, and the text used in that seminar: Eugene L. Hartley and Ruth E. Hartley, *Fundamentals of Social Psychology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1952.)
Intent refers to the desired effect upon the communicant, while content refers to the actual external characteristics of the communique.

A member of a committee is not always aware of his true intentions. He may believe that he is reporting about the progress of his department in order to inform the other committee members about new developments, while in reality he is doing so to inflate his own ego by announcing his achievements. This is sometimes done by intoning and timing his sentences in a special manner to convey his sub-conscious true intent.

The image of the communicant

It is clear that in order to communicate effectively, a communicator must know the communicant. He must have an idea how the communicant will respond to the different stimuli. A member of a committee who does not have in mind the image of his audience will not be a successful communicator. If the majority of the committee members are engineers by training, this "image" of the audience should give the speaking member a clue as to how he should address his members. The image of the communicants must aid the speaker in providing him with the necessary information as to how to attract and hold their attention, as well as how to convey to them his true intent.
Translating intent into words

Once the intent has been clearly defined, it must be verbalized. Thoughts must be translated from private form into a public one. Thinking is experienced kinesthetically, and the verbalization process imposes upon the communicator the obligation to be careful so that what he says is as close as possible to what he feels. To quote Johnson:

What a speaker has to verbalize is an organismic condition... which is a joint product of the sensory stimulation arising from reality and the state of his organism at the moment of stimulation. We have now to add that what a speaker has to communicate... is a joint product of this organismic condition... and the language structure of the speaker, together with his habits of employing it.  

The "set" of the communicant

"Set" refers to the human propensity to pay attention selectively. One member in a group will pay attention and pick up certain aspects of the message conveyed, while others will unconsciously pay attention to others. The most important factors that govern the attention of the communicant that will be discussed here are (1) his self-interest, (2) emotional needs, (3) and familiarity

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with a certain subject. It is very valuable for the communicator to recognize what determines the attention of the communicant. The effect of the "set" of a human being is to channel his attention to certain phases of the situation. In order to capture and hold the attention of the members of a committee, the speaker must know the stimuli that will affect the "set" of his audience. Since the "set" of an individual will respond to either form or content, if the content which we want to convey is uninteresting to our audience, it remains for us to choose a form which will overcome this disadvantage.

What determines the "set" of an individual? What determines what stimuli will cause certain responses? One answer is self-interest. Most people seem to be especially responsive and attentive to stimuli which affect their own personal lives. Communication on a certain problem which concerns the participants personally is far more effective than one which has only a remote connection to the lives of the listeners. In the famous experiment on rumor, Allport and Postman have noticed that in the course of the circulation of a rumor, people tended to note and emphasize those items of a rumor which were associated with some aspect of the self interest

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3Hartley and Hartley, op. cit., pp. 41-45.
of the people involved. Self-interest of an executive may reflect itself in the process of communication in a committee in many ways. He may try to expand the duties of his department to elevate himself to a higher hierarchical position. It may reflect itself in his support of an expensive executives' bonus program. Self-interest may be the true motive behind policies which intentionally obscure lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability so that no one executive may be blamed for the failure of a certain mission. Self-interest may act as a barrier in communication when certain information may reflect on the competence of some executives.

The "set" of an individual may also be determined by one's needs. Ideas, suggestions, and other kinds of stimuli which may meet the particular emotional needs of the participating committee members will gain more attention than others which do not. If their emotional needs are power over other men, any utterances which even

vaguely suggest expansion will arouse their interest.

**Familiarity** is another factor that determines "set." The committee members will respond more attentively to a subject with which they are familiar. That is also brought out in the study of Allport and Postman mentioned above. The communicant must keep in mind that his listeners would pick up items which are familiar rather than those which are important but which the members encounter for the first time. To be an effective communicator, therefore, involves recognition of those parts of the message that are not familiar to the communicants, and the necessity of emphasizing such parts to make up for the tendency of the listeners to attend to the familiar portions.

To be an effective communicator, one must recognize one's own set. Since communication is a two-way process, the communicator is constantly a communicant as well. He is continuously evaluating the reception of his message by his audience, and the limitations of the communicator's "set" determines the effectiveness of his interpretation of the response of the audience to his words.

**Imperfection in perception**

Until now we have considered the problem of capturing and holding the communicant's attention. Let us now turn to the problem of what the message means to the
It is important that the communicator realize that the communicant has a tendency to impose meaning upon his experiences. He supplies completeness and organization upon the discrete data that he experiences. There is a danger that he will distort the true content of the message in the process of organizing and completing it to be meaningful in accordance with his past experiences. It is necessary, therefore, to make every message as clear and as complete as possible so that the communicant will not have to add details which are merely fruits of imagination. Completeness, however, should not be at the expense of conciseness, brevity, and other attributes of good business communication. These other requirements of sound communication should always be kept in mind when communicating.

Previous experience determines to a large extent how new stimuli will affect the communicant. Past experiences set up expectancies which act as frames of reference, which the individual uses to interpret new experiences. New ideas presented by the communicator will be interpreted on the basis of old ones. This is related to the problem of indoctrination in management's philosophy. If the members of a committee are not indoctrinated to the same extent with a certain management philosophy, the

5See Hartley and Hartley, op. cit., pp. 45-68.
interpretation of new ideas and facts will not be the
same. In some cases it becomes essential to expose
people to an experience with the sole intention of
inducing a new frame of reference which will be more
sympathetic to the reception of the previously rejected
ideas.7

Katz points out that the "difficulty of communica-
tion between people of different experiential backgrounds
is augmented by the distinctive jargon which seems to
develop in every calling and in every walk of life." He
adds that common experience is the only real basis for
communication. Another alleviatory means suggested by him
is that of using "imagination in bridging the gap." This
is perhaps too much to ask from most people.8

Individual needs, which are products of the biolo-
gical drives, are also determinants of "set." Common
characteristics that are frequently encountered in group
discussions, and which can be attributed to such biologi-
cally determined individual needs are determination, stub-

6See H. B. Lewis, "Studies in the Principles of
Judgments and Attitudes: IV." Journal of Social Psychology,

7See R. Lippitt, "Administrator Perception and
Administrative Approval: A Communication Problem,"

8Daniel Katz, "Psychological Barriers to Communica-
bornness, defensiveness, and others. The effect of these characteristics is to orient individuals to be attentive to items which satisfy their needs.⁹

Ethnocentrism is another factor that the communicator must consider when trying to convey a message to his fellow committee members. Ethnocentrism refers to the general tendency on the part of human beings to elevate their own groups and to devaluate other groups. Thus, every member will tend to attribute more significance to his company, division, and own specialty than to other companies, divisions, and specialties. This is an important fact which any successful communicator must realize.

The mood of the individual members at any specific time provides the general context which absorbs communiqués. This is quite widely recognized. A communicator must assess the mood of his audience, and arrange his messages so that they will be receptive to the prevailing moods.

Prestige is also a factor in successful communication. Some messages will receive attention if attributed to persons held in high esteem by the audience. Thus, if a communicator presents some ideas which were first

thought of, or used, by other executives that are highly regarded by the members of a committee, chances are that the ideas will be better received. The mere mention that a certain big and respected corporation has put into operation an idea is sufficient to induce increased attention on the part of the audience.

The terms should not be too technical

Finally, the communicator must at all times have an estimate of the level of detailed knowledge that the audience has about the subject being discussed. It is futile to expect marketing, finance, and accounting personnel to be able to follow a detailed analysis of a certain design problem or any other engineering difficulties. Nothing will interfere more with effective communication than using unfamiliar technical language which is far above the heads of the participants.

C. The Role of the Communicant

Intent must be recognized

The first task of the communicant is to attempt to ascertain what is the intent of the communicator.\textsuperscript{10} Throughout the discussion, the communicant must persistently seek the true intent of the speakers. This is important since a great portion of the discussion going on in a committee does not have any informative intent;

\textsuperscript{10}See Hartley and Hartley, \emph{op. cit.}, pp. 77-81.
and when it is informative, it may not have any relevance to the problems that are being considered. The communicant must be able to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information that is being conveyed in the course of a committee meeting.

The early recognition of the intent of the communicator will aid the communicant in evaluating effectively the precise content that is being conveyed. Intent may be recognized from the situation and the relationship between the participants.

Understanding of the total situation is a very important element in the task of the communicant. After all, the communiques that are being transmitted are intended to convey some information about a certain situation. If something is already known about this same situation, the total picture of the event becomes more vivid.

The understanding of the personal relationships among the various participants may also add a great deal to the understanding of the meaning that is being conveyed. We have seen above how the communicator is constantly shaping his messages so that they may be understood by his audience. This tendency to shape messages in light of the reactions of communicants may affect the uttered communiques significantly. When one speaks to a
small group of people that make up the committee, his personal relations with the members will affect the "feedback" that he receives. The amount of "feedback" depends upon the personality of the communicator, the confidence of the group towards him, his standing in the group, the relevance of what he is saying to the problem discussed, and other such factors. To get a true picture of what the communicator is trying to say, it is important to recognize the inter-personal relations in the group, and to discover the modifications that such relations impose on the communication process.

The need for the image of the communicator

The communicant must assess the intention of the communicator to understand the communiques. An accurate image of the communicator will aid him in guessing what the latter left out, emphasized unduly, and "slanted."\(^{11}\) The role of the communicant is pointed out clearly by Gardner and Moore.\(^ {12}\) They point out the selective factor in communication. Communication down the line in an organization is directional, while communication up the line is informational. Communication up the line usually involves distortion of facts in order to give top manage-

\(^{11}\)Ibid., pp. 81-87.

ment what it wants to hear. The factor which induces supervisors to distort facts when they are communicating upwards is the "image" of their bosses. It is therefore essential for superintendents to have as accurate an "image" of the supervisor as possible in order that they may be able to evaluate the true facts. One weakness of communication upwards is the tendency of subordinates to "sweeten" all information that is transmitted to their bosses. How much sweetening, where, and how to detect it depends upon our "image" of the subordinate. 13 In summary, it is clear that the characteristics and requirements of a communication are determined by the position of the communicator as leader or follower. The position of either leader or follower determines what is communicated, and how it is communicated, both by him and to him.

We have seen how the communicator's intent and his "image" determine what he selects to communicate about a certain situation. To derive the complete and true meaning of a communique, we must watch for the selective process and try to ascertain the motives causing it. The above discussion referred to slanting of true meaning through selection of the subject matter to be communicated.

Slanting can also take place after the content has been chosen by means of choice of words. Various people use different words to convey essentially the same event. We have examined this phenomenon when discussing general semantics. It is the task of the communicant to watch for words which may have different connotations to the listeners than is intended. Sometimes words are used which have either favorable or unfavorable connotations with the intention of prejudicing listeners. The communicant must watch, therefore, for any words which were chosen by the communicator with the intention of conveying a connotation which is at variance with actual situations.

Projectivity refers to the human propensity to attribute to others motives which are our own. This is one of the most common barriers to effective communication that the communicant encounters. It is very important for the communicant to discover the motives of the communicator, but he should not do so by assuming that his own motives are as potent in the case of his colleagues. Now it is quite natural for a head of a certain division to propose a policy which presumably will make the operations of his division more efficient and effective. The proposed new

measure may or may not be equally useful to other divi-
sions. To have the facts which will aid the other partic-
cipants to decide whether the proposal should be adopted, 
the communicants must ascertain the true motives for the 
communicator's suggestion, and base their final decision 
on the basis of balancing the advantages and the disadvan-
tages of the new policy to the entire organization. It is 
clear that to project one's own motives and assume that 
they are the communicator's would only result in making a 
decision on the basis of facts which do not correspond to 
reality. The avoidance of projection depends, in the 
final analysis, upon one's ability to evaluate accurately 
one's own tendencies toward distortion. However, the 
fact that the communicant cannot employ any impartial test 
to evaluate the extent of his understanding of a message 
should not be lost sight of. Some assurance that the 
listener receives messages that the communicator intends 
to convey can be obtained by frequent interchanging of 
comments and explanations. As Professor Irving Lorge of 
Columbia University puts it: "In rapid exchange of roles 
between speaker and hearer, the lack of communication and 
the misunderstandings may become apparent. The speaker 
may clarify or enrich the message by specific instances, 
by analogy, by illustration, or by other devices in his 
repertoire. By questions and responses, the genuine com-
munication process achieves an increase in the probability of the transmission of the message." (Italics mine).15

D. Barriers to Communication and How to Overcome Them

The entire discussion up to this point in all the previous chapters, as well as the present one, has been devoted in a broad sense to the understanding of communication. Barriers to communication and means of overcoming them were pointed out, or could be inferred.

In the present section we shall discuss obstacles to smooth communication, and how such obstacles can be alleviated.

Frames of reference

Frames of reference have been used "to denote the functionally related factors (both present and past) which operate at the moment to determine the particular properties of a psychological phenomenon (perception, judgment, affectivity, etc.).16 Frames of reference usually channel people's attention to some elements in a


situation rather than others. Certain meanings can become entirely inaccessible to some individuals who have fixed frames of reference. Thus, a certain suggestion regarding some changes in the labor policies of the organization can be entirely out of the range of comprehension of a member of a committee who has certain fixed ideas and ways of thinking about labor. Those employers who were convinced that all that labor wanted could be granted on a "paternalistic" basis could not possibly understand views that were advanced by personnel experts who were brought from the outside to solve labor difficulties. What such employers needed was a change in their frame of reference. Many of them succeeded in changing their frame of reference; others failed, and were replaced with people more in tune with the spirit of the age.

Self interest

Self interest also acts as a barrier for efficient and effective communication. We have already mentioned above our tendency to respond more quickly to stimuli which further our sense of well-being. The operation of this factor of self interest may be broken down, for convenience, into two major elements. First, on the basis of past experiences, we all build up certain expectancies that determine how we shall respond. These expectancies are acquired through the process of gradual learning. The
second element is that associated with individual needs. Both of these elements of self interest are serious barriers to communication. Their effect is to "derail" the attention of the communicants from the focal point of the message to secondary points which have importance to the individual in the sense that those points either meet his individual needs or fulfil his expectancies. The best way in which this barrier to communication can be alleviated is by being aware of its presence and its dangers.

Choice of content
The communicator's choice of content is another very important barrier to effective communication. This point is emphasized by Gardner and Moore. Communication down the line is concerned with demands and orders. Communication up the line is concerned with reports of all sorts. In general, only that kind of communication which tends to reflect favorably upon the communicator is transmitted willingly. This barrier can be remedied by developing certain human relations which will eliminate suspicion among members and make superiors more accessible to subordinates, so that the status differential will fade away through informal personal contacts.

Differences in values and goals as barriers

Communication barriers operate as a result of different values and goals among people. It should be clear that if the objectives of individuals are not similar, agreement among them will tend to be difficult. Goals are closely related to values. Both guide us in our thinking and reasoning. Goals influence our thinking in formulating the end result that we want. Values are more concerned with the means of achieving the end-results. This division is admittedly insignificant and vague.

Communication among people with sets of values that are in complete disharmony is almost impossible. The more similar the values among individuals the easier is the communication process. A program of indoctrination in any philosophy usually attempts to create more uniform sets of values and goals.

A certain amount of common indoctrination of all the members of the committee is essential. In the process of formulating a policy, the committee must agree on the objectives, as well as the means to reach the objectives. It will be impossible for the members to work together unless they possess a common philosophy. A philosophy is nothing but a body of doctrine. It refers to the system of values, beliefs, and goals. The results of an indoctrination process are such that the indoctrinated indivi-
dual is conditioned to respond to certain stimuli in a
certain way. A common body of doctrine is necessary for
the members of a committee to communicate with each other
effectively. It is also important for the purpose of
self-co-ordination. Unless all members know what will be
the actions and strategies of their colleagues, they can-
not choose actions which will complement those of other
executives. Without a basic common system of values,
complete understanding among committee members is impossible.
Indoctrination is closely related to the factor of morale.
If the members of a committee have a common body of
doctrine, they will tend to work towards similar goals
and employ like means. It should be pointed out that if
indoctrination is carried too far, it may result in a
closed mind on the part of the members. They may be con-
ditioned to act in a certain manner which is not the best
way. This is a disadvantage of too rigid a system of
values.\(^{19}\) It should also be pointed out that the process
of indoctrination is operating automatically if the com-
mitee meets often enough. This is discussed in more
detail in Chapter VIII.

Group memberships are the most important single
factor which determines one's set of values and goals.

\(^{19}\) Davis, op. cit., pp. 587-592.
Sex, age, social class, occupation, and ethnic extraction are some of such group memberships. These groups determine the experiences which any individual belonging to any of these groups will encounter. Thus, experiences are in the final analysis the single most important factor which determine one's system of values.

People with similar experiences tend to have similar values and goals, and communication among them is relatively easy. On the other hand, people who come from different cultural backgrounds may have difficulties in communicating with each other.\textsuperscript{20}

Where we have cases in which management is a very heterogeneous group, we may expect communication difficulties.\textsuperscript{21} That is why in many cases, there is a tendency


\textsuperscript{21}Heterogeneous grouping of people may create serious communication difficulties, as well as considerable interpersonal friction. In a sense it is antithetical to sound application of the Principle of Functional Similarity and its military corollary, the Principle of Homogeneous Assignment. Professor Davis defines the Principle of Functional Similarity as follows: "Functions should be grouped in organizational elements, large or small, in accordance with their functional similarities." He defines similar functions "as those that have like objectives and work characteristics; that in consequence give rise to similar problems involving similar factors, forces and effects; that require similar background, training, (continued on next page)
to restrict certain positions to people who have certain education requirements and other such limitations. Such policies tend to bring together people with similar backgrounds, so that they may communicate with each other more easily. Another means to alleviate communication barriers of this kind is to provide those people who will have to work together and communicate with each other frequently with similar experiences. This is sometimes done in business organizations by transferring young executives from one department to another so that each new executive may gain some experience in all the departments, with the executives of which he will have to communicate. He thus may learn to understand what are the motives, frames of reference, and expectancies of people that manage the various departments.

21 (continued from preceding page)

experience, intelligence and personality in the personnel assigned for their performance." (Italics mine). - The Fundamentals of Top Management, p. 223. The military principle of Homogeneous Assignment has been defined similarly: "Homogeneous Assignment - like duties in an organization are grouped. Every duty and responsibility in an organization is assigned to some individual." - Curriculum, Senior Officers' Military Management Course, p. 9, U.S.A.F. Special Staff School, Air University, Craig Air Force Base, as revised November 24, 1949; quoted from Davis, Op. cit., p. 562. Heterogeneous grouping of people is thus seen to be antithetical to sound application of the principles cited above. The Principles of Functional Similarity and Homogeneous Assignment require that personnel assigned to handle similar functions, which give rise to like problems, have approximately the same background, training, experience, intelligence and personality. Heterogeneous grouping of people violates this requirement.
The more varied experiences an executive has, the less rigid will be his frame of reference. Extreme certainty in one's own set of values tends to break down when the individual is exposed to experiences that foster other frames of reference.

**Group identification and communication**

Gardner points out that the social identification of any manager or foreman with the group that is below him usually creates barriers for communication with one's bosses. On the other hand, identification with the group of one's bosses creates barriers in communication downward. Strong identification with committee members, which usually belong to equal hierarchical echelons will probably tend to create some communication difficulties with one's subordinates and equals who do not belong to the committee. This negative tendency may be lightened by being aware of the difficulty and attempting consciously to be identified with both groups, subordinates as well as superiors.22

E. Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter we have considered communication as the basic social process in a committee. Communication in committees is probably most adequately studied from a social-psychological viewpoint.

Before proceeding with a more complete summary of...

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the present chapter, it may be worthwhile to list all the factors which enter into successful communication. These factors are: (1) the intent of the communicator must be clear; (2) the "image" of the communicant must be known; (3) translating intent into words; (4) the "set" of the communicant must be recognized (set is determined by self-interest, emotional needs, and familiarity); (5) the communicator's recognition of his own "set"; (6) imperfection in perception (tendency toward completeness and organization, effect of previous experience, individual needs, ethnocentrism, mood, and prestige of communicator); (7) the technical level of the terminology used; (8) the recognition of the intent of the communicator by the communicant; (9) the communicant's understanding of the total situation; (10) understanding of the personal relationships among the participants; (11) the communicant's knowledge of the image of the communicator; (12) the tendency to project to others motives which are our own; (13) understanding of the concept "frame of reference" and how it affects communication; (14) choice of content; (15) differences in values and goals as barriers to communication; (16) group identification; and (17) extent of indoctrination.

The task of the communicator starts with ascertaining the true intent of the message to be communicated.
This refers to the desired change in the behavior of the communicant as a result of the stimuli, while the content of the message refers to the external characteristics of the message. The communicator must have an "image" of the communicant, as a means of predicting the latter's behavior as resulting from the communique. The communicator must translate inner private feelings that are experienced kinesthetically into public signs. The communicator must know the "set" of his audience, or in other words, the particular elements in a situation to which the communicant may respond to the neglect of other elements. The "set" of communicants is determined by their individual self-interests, needs, and familiarity with certain elements in a situation. Imperfections in perception cause the communicant to complete and organize what he perceives, so that he may conceive some meaning out of the stimuli. The communicant's ethnocentrism must also be taken into account by the communicator. The mood of individual members of the group also determines the reception of the message. The level of technical language used should be determined on the basis of the technical competence of the audience.

The task of the communicant is first to ascertain the intent of the communicator. This may be done by paying attention to the total context of the situation.
The interpersonal relations in the group is part of this total situation to be known. He must have an image of the communicator to be able to understand him well. He should try to detect any "slanting" which the communicator may attempt, intentionally or unintentionally. He should likewise try to detect situations in which the communicator tends to project the communicator's intentional world into the outer world.

Barriers to communication are many. Some have already been discussed in previous chapters. Frames of reference are barriers to effective communication in that they prescribe the elements of a situation which will attract one's attention. Self-interest acts as a barrier to communication also in channeling one's attention to elements in a situation which further one's well-being. The tendency to choose content which will please the listener also acts as a barrier to effective communication. Differences in sets of values and goals also make communication difficult. Indoctrination may remedy this difficulty to some extent. Belonging to some groups tends to make communication with members of other groups difficult.

Awareness of all these barriers and some indoctrination in a common philosophy will tend to alleviate these barriers to communication.
PART TWO

ABOUT FORMULATION OF POLICY
CHAPTER V

THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESS POLICY

This project is concerned with the problems of communication among members of a committee which leads to the formulation of policy. It therefore seems in order to discuss briefly the nature and characteristics of business policies. This chapter will serve as a short introduction to the next one which will deal with the phase of policy formulation.

The order of analysis of the topics of this chapter will be as follows: first, the nature and significance of policy; second, the objectives of business policy; third, requirements of sound policy; fourth, classes of business policy; and finally, phases of policy-making.

A. The Nature and Significance of Policy

We have defined policy as a statement or implication of a principle linking objective to function. Business policy refers to the "principle or group of related principles, with their consequent rules of action, that condition and govern the successful achievement of certain business objectives toward which they are directed."¹ We see that the concept "principle" is a key one to the under-

standing of the nature of policy. A principle refers to a statement of "fundamental truth; a primary or basic law, doctrine or the like." A principle in a policy performs the function of serving as the fundamental and basic truth which connects cause and effect in any particular situation.

A policy usually also indicates the rules of application of the principle to be used. The rules differ from the principles in that they are not so broad and prescribe specific action for specific situations. A policy is thus seen to contain two major elements, a principle and a rule of action. Mooney and Reiley say about the difference between principles and rules that "it is the failure of so many to discriminate between a rule and a principle, and to realize that the one derives its authority from the other, that so often gives the rule itself an exaggerated importance. The average man, though he often cannot or will not lay hold on a principle, can always understand a rule, and it is this fact alone that makes rules of the most explicit kind so necessary for his direction and guidance."  

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Various writers have different definitions for business policy, but there is a common denominator to all of them. It may be worthwhile to mention some definitions. Helen Baker says that "policies have been defined as including not only the broad guiding rules of the organization, but also specific plans, decisions and agreements by means of which the guiding rules are given concrete expression." James McKinsey defines policy as "a plan of action based on certain assumed conditions." He adds that the efficacy of a policy depends upon "whether the original assumptions with reference to conditions are correct and whether all conditions which are significant are given proper consideration," and "whether these conditions are interpreted properly by those responsible for establishing the policy and whether they exercise sound judgment in arriving at a conclusion." Paul Holden defines policies "as those precepts by which all administrative and operative decisions are determined so that the progress and development of the enterprise will be properly directed.


toward definite goals." At another place Holden, Fish and Smith define policies as "the guiding principles established by the company to govern actions, usually under repetitive conditions." Still another notion of policy is that it "establishes the company's intent and attitude." Newman defines it as a "general plan of action that guides members of the enterprise in the conduct of its operation." He adds that the distinctive feature of a policy is that "the same decision is used to guide action over and over again." From all these definitions we may conclude that the common elements mentioned explicitly or implicitly are a principle, a rule, a guide to action, a decision used over and over again, and other such concepts.

The broadness of business policies depends upon the

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broadness of the objectives of the specific organization. Policies designed to achieve general objectives are broader than those aimed at accomplishing major objectives which in turn are broader than policies guiding the fulfillment of minor objectives. A top administrative policy emphasizes primarily broad principles, while minor and individual policies emphasize that element in a policy which deals with the specific rules of action. The principles involved even in individual policies should not, however, be omitted. Similarly, as broad and general as top administrative policies may be, they should contain broad basic rules that may facilitate their application.10 Spriegel and Schultz say that general company policies give "definiteness and general direction to the activities of the company as a whole. These policies establish the basic principles which guide the management in the conduct of the business now, and in the future. To make these general policies effective there is needed a group of operating policies to designate the operating methods of the enterprise."11

Whether a certain policy in a certain company is general, major or minor depends upon the prevailing circum-

10 Davis, op. cit., p. 175.

stances at the time. The same policy may be general, major, or minor, at different times.\textsuperscript{12}

Since policies are the basis of all thought and action in an organization, their importance is obvious. A good system of policies should provide a consistent and relevant set of guides for thinking and action in any situation that may arise.

It may be worthwhile to point out the difference between plans and policies. Plans and policies are related but different notions. Plans are broader than policies. While a policy must serve as a guide for thought and action, a plan provides the basis for specific action. A plan may include a statement of the applicable policies, or a reference to the source where the policy may be found. Broadly speaking, the function of policy is to indicate \textit{why} certain actions should be taken, while that of the procedure element of a plan indicates \textit{how} it should be carried out.\textsuperscript{*}

B. The Objectives of Business Policy

Business policies perform an indispensable function in the operation of organizations. It would have been

\textsuperscript{12}For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see Helen Baker, \textit{Management Procedures in the Determination of Industrial Relations Policies} (Princeton: Industrial Relations Section, Princeton University, 1949), p. 10.

\textsuperscript{*}Davis, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 44-45, 223.
entirely impossible to run modern scale giant business organizations without the use of well formulated and well known policies.

Professor Davis lists eight major functions that policies perform. First, policies "tend to prevent deviations from planned courses of action." When policies are sound and when they are known to all concerned, it is easier to avoid deviation from a planned course of action. Second, policies improve the consistency with which plans are carried out. Actions will tend to become more consistent when carried out at different times or when carried out concurrently at different places when a single company policy is known to the acting people. Third, a policy promotes intelligent co-operation in that it explains the "why" of an action. The motives for an action performed on the basis of a certain well known policy will be understood by all members without any difficulties. Fourth, it facilitates co-ordination. Known policies aid in executive self-co-ordination with respect to time and order of performance. Fifth, it promotes "an intelligent exercise of initiative." An understanding of the applicable policies and what is involved in such application will no doubt encourage executives to exercise initiative, at times, when their superiors are absent, because a body of policy provides the general framework within which the superior
executive would have operated. Sixth, "it provides a guide for determining equitable personnel relations." A policy acts as a standard which may aid in judging the qualitative and the quantitative effectiveness of personnel work, and thus provides an impersonal yardstick for judgment of the work of people which tends to affect morale favorably. Seventh, a policy may also be used as a yardstick for determining the quality of work of executives. Finally, it is the basis for any planning that may be undertaken in the future.

The general objectives of policies are to provide certain frameworks for making decisions that may be used for different situations. These are decisions which can be used over and over again. It is a guide for the members of the organization in their daily work. Policies become the laws of conduct in organizations, "and as such they are a device for permitting authority to be delegated within the organization. Their primary purpose is to sanction in advance the action to be taken in repetitive situations. This makes it unnecessary to refer each case as it occurs to higher authority for decision; it can be handled at the point of occurrence without delay."

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13 Davis, op. cit., p. 175-179.

14 Holden, Fish and Smith, op. cit., p. 79.
Policies are used to secure uniformity of action and a certain amount of co-ordination. 15

The objective of policies is not to set up rules which prescribe the exact manner in which an operation is to be carried out. It is aimed at providing a general direction for top management to follow. It grants authority and imposes responsibility on members of the organization to act when certain combinations of circumstances arise. Paul and Faith Pigors describe the relation between policies and executives by quoting figuratively the former as saying to the latter: "We look upon the future as something that we are going to shape together. This purpose (what is stated in the central part of the policy) is to be our general course. In carrying out our shared responsibilities, and in exercising your delegated authorities, as you pursue this course, specific decisions are up to you because you are the only person who is in direct contact with all the relevant factors and circumstances." 16


C. Requirements of Sound Policies

Policies must be formed with due regard to the objectives of the organization. It is their major purpose to aid in accomplishing the objectives of the organization. These may be the service, personal, or collateral social objectives.

Policies must facilitate "the determination of effective, economical relations between functions, physical factors and personnel on the one hand and business objectives on the other."17 In other words, policies must provide the organization with the principles and rules of action which link the available resources to the objectives.

Policies should conform to the ethical standards accepted by the business community. As Holden puts it: "Policies should recognize economic principles, be in conformity with Federal and other laws and be compatible with the public interest."18

Policies must be stated in clear, simple, definite, and understandable terms. Policies are meaningless if they

17 Davis, op. cit., p. 179.

are not understood by the people who are to use them. If they are not clear they may cause effects worse than if they did not exist at all. In the latter case, self-co-ordination will be sought. However, in the presence of unclear policies, they may be relied upon without reference to self-co-ordination. Holden writes that "the statement of any policy should be definite, positive, clear and understandable to everyone in the organization."19

Policies should be stable and flexible. The stability of policies refers to the extent to which policies change as a response only to basic changes in business objectives. Instability of policies causes low morale. In general, the higher the level at which policies are being formulated, the more stable they tend to be.

James O. McKinsey points out that policies should be adjusted in case of: (1) changes in the type and nature of product; (2) changes in manufacturing methods; (3) changes in methods of distribution; and (4) fortuitous conditions. He also mentions cycle changes as a reason for changes in policy; however, the consensus of opinion of more recent writers in management is that policies should provide for cyclical changes and that there should not be two sets of

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19 Loc. cit.; see also Ralph C. Davis, op. cit., pp. 181-182.
policies, one for depressions and another one for times of prosperity. The policies should be flexible enough to take account of variations in volume of business.20 Holden writes that "policies regardless of how fundamental should not be inflexible: they should, however, possess a high degree of permanency. . . Stability of policies is essential and constantly changing policies is fatal to business success."21

Policies "should have the breadth that will make them sufficiently comprehensive." This concept of comprehensiveness of policies refers to the extent to which policies cover many varieties of situations that may arise. Professor Davis writes that "a completely comprehensive body of policy is one that covers all possible necessary action by the organization, whenever and wherever it may be required... An attempt to develop a body of policy that is completely comprehensive would result in the origination of policies for situations that might never arise... Furthermore, too many policy statements are likely to be confusing rather than helpful to the average person."22 Paul Holden concurs with this view: "There


21 Alford and Bangs, Editors, op. cit., p. 1383.

22 Davis, op. cit., pp. 185-186.
should be as many policies as necessary to cover conditions that can be anticipated, but not too many policies to become confusing or meaningless. 23

Finally, policies should be complementary and supplementary to each other." Professor Davis writes in this connection that complementary policies may be defined "as policies of co-ordinate organization elements whose effective application depends on one another. The concept of complementary policies refers to policy relationships between organizational elements, usually as they enter into the execution of specific business projects.

Supplementary policies may be defined as policies that add to and extend the more fundamental policies from which they are derived. The concept of supplementary policies refers to policy relationships between organizational echelons." 24

D. Classes of Business Policy

The most comprehensive classification of business policies has been prepared by Professor Davis. His classification will be followed here. 25

Business policies may be classified in accordance

23 Alford and Bangs, Editors, op. cit., p. 1383.
24 Davis, op. cit., p. 186.
25 Davis, op. cit., pp. 188-190.
with: (1) organizational objectives and echelons; (2) organic functions and organizational divisions; (3) types of organizational service; and (4) direction of policy influence.

There are three kinds of policies when classified according to organizational objectives and echelons: (1) general policies; (2) major policies; and (3) minor policies. General policies are those policies which "are intended to serve as guides to the thought and action of the entire organization." Major policies are guides to thought and action for major divisions of the organization. Minor policies are statements of principles and rules of action intended to guide the activities of departments, branches, and other subdivisions.26

There are three kinds of policies if classified according to organic functions and organizational divisions:

26 Holden, Fish and Smith designate these three classes of policies by the names, basic policies, general policies, and departmental policies. They say that "basic policies are those which establish the long-range objectives and chart the destinies of the company." The final authorization or adoption of basic policies rests with the board of directors. General policies are ones which may be regarded as of short range or everyday operating significance, but which affect some or all divisions of the company. Authorization of such policies usually lies in the general-management group, and may also be formulated there. The head of a department adopts policies for the guidance and conduct of his own immediate field of operation. Such departmental policies must not conflict with either basic or general policies or with the activities of other departments." - Top Management Organization and Control, pp. 80-81.
(1) manufacturing policies, (2) sales policies, and (3) financial policies. This division of policies corresponds to the organic business functions; the organic business functions are those without the contributions of which an organization will not be able to continue its existence.

Policies may also be classified according to the types of organizational service: (1) managerial service policies, and (2) operative service policies. Managerial service policies may in turn be divided either horizontally or vertically. When divided horizontally, we may have either (1) line service policies or (2) staff service policies. When divided vertically we may have either (1) administrative—

27 This classification applies only to a manufacturing organization. Marketing organizations, for example, have different organic functions. The classes that have been mentioned are those of the primary division of the business—manufacturing. McKinsey has five classes of policies when classified on the same basis: "(a) sales policies; (b) purchasing policies; (c) production policies; (d) financial policies; and (e) personnel policies." Adjusting Policies to Meet Changing Conditions, p. 11. Newman employs a similar classification, probably more suitable for a marketing business:

1. Sales policies
   a. Products to be sold
   b. Selection of customers
   c. Pricing of products
   d. Sales appeals and sales promotion

2. Procurement policies

3. Personnel policies
   a. Selection and training
   b. Compensation and arrangement of work
   c. Employee services and industrial relations

4. Financial policies
   a. Uses of capital
   b. Sources of capital
tive management policies, or (2) operative management policies. Managerial service policies guide the activities of management; operative service policies guide the activities of the workers.

Finally, policies may be divided in accordance with the direction of policy influence. Internal policies refer to those policies which guide the internal affairs of the organization, and external policies refer to those policies which are concerned with public relations, suppliers' relations, customers' relations, stockholders' relations, governmental relations, and other such external bodies.

E. Phases of Policy-Making

Before a policy becomes a useful management tool in guiding the activities of individuals, policy must be formulated, promulgated, those who may have to use the policy must be educated as to its aims and application, the policy must be accepted, applied, interpreted when it is not clear, and compliance with it must be assured through some method of control. This breakdown seems to be a very logical one. Professor Davis has therefore distinguished seven phases of policy-making: (1) policy formulation; (2) policy promulgation; (3) policy education; (4) policy acceptance; (5) policy application; (6) policy interpretation; and (7) policy control.
Policy formulation will be the subject of the next chapter, and will therefore not be dealt with here in much detail. It refers to that "phase of policy-making that has to do with selection of the principles and rules of action that are to govern a particular type of activity." Some factors which enter into policy formulation are the objectives, the functions necessary to reach the objectives, consideration of tangible and intangible factors affecting the accomplishment of the objectives, who should formulate policy, who should issue the policy, and other related factors.

Policy promulgation refers to the process of communication of the formulated policy to all individuals who may have to use the policy. Any amendments or interpretations to old policies should be promulgated just as promptly as newly formulated policies. The most effective manner to promulgate policies is through the medium of writing. Bulletins, general instructions, memoranda, and special policy manuals are being used by various companies.

Policy education refers to the desirability and necessity to educate those individuals who may have to

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28 Davis, op. cit., p. 191.
29 Loc. cit.
30 Holden, Fish and Smith, op. cit., pp. 81-12.
apply the policy as to its true meaning, intent, and best application. Only when a policy is understood equally well by all people concerned is co-operation and self-co-ordination possible to the fullest extent. Petersen and Plowman say in this connection that "the most common method of obtaining enforcement of policy is to authorize the staff to undertake a campaign of education. Such a campaign usually brings good results. If the policy is easy to understand and fair to the average member, its adoption by most of the members and even by some of the non-members is not difficult to accomplish."

Policy acceptance refers to the conviction on the part of those who have to use the policy that the policy is wise and applicable and that they are therefore willing to use the policy when the conditions warrant its use. It is doubtful whether good results may be obtained from the use of a policy if the people involved are not really convinced that it is wise, effective, or useful. Acceptance may be induced through participation in the formulation of the policy, a continued program of education, and some indoctrination. Policy application refers to the actual daily use of the formulated policy in making specific

decisions. Successful results of any specific operations depend upon the manner in which a policy has been applied. A sound policy may give unsound results if applied improperly.

Policy interpretation refers to "the function of clarifying the meaning and significance of a policy as it relates to a particular situation." It is what Mooney and Reiley call the "judicious" phase of management. It is necessary to clarify and ascertain the true intent and meaning of business policies. The more comprehensive a policy is, the less interpretation it requires; the more general it becomes, the more it requires interpretations. The interpretations in turn are added to the original policy statement and together they form a new statement. The interpretations of policy in business have the same effect and value that court decisions have in an organized society.

Finally, policy control is concerned with determining the effectiveness of current policies and the degree of conformity with them. It is concerned with the enforcement of reasonable compliance.\(^{32}\) For this phase of policy-making to be effective, reports about the application of policies must be pouring in. These reports are compared with what precedents proved to be effective applica-

\(^{32}\)Davis, op. cit., p. 198.
tion. It is the responsibility of the superior managers to evaluate the application of policies, and introduce whatever changes seem necessary to assure better application in the future. Holden, Fish, and Smith report that "none of the companies studied seems to have hit upon any inclusive scheme by which policy interpretation and compliance can be checked." 33

F. Summary and Conclusions

This chapter gives a brief discussion of business policies. It treats briefly the topics of nature and significance of policy, objectives of business policies, requirements of sound policies, classes of business policy, and phases of policy making.

A business policy refers to "the principle or group of related principles, with their consequent rules of action, that condition and govern the successful achievement of certain business objectives toward which they are directed." The elements which must be included in a policy are a principle, a rule, a guide to action, and a decision which can be used over and over again. The broadness of a policy depends upon the managerial echelon which it is designed to serve. The higher the echelon, the broader the policy. Policies differ from plans in

33 Holden, Fish and Smith, op. cit., p. 82.
that the latter refer to solutions of specific problems and do not provide the company with "standing" policies. Plans are "exhausted" while policies are not.

The objectives of business policies are as follows:
(1) to "prevent deviations from planned courses of action;"
(2) to promote consistency in the operations of the organization; (3) to encourage co-operation, and (4) co-ordination; (5) to encourage initiative, (6) foster better personnel relations, and (7) provide a yardstick for determining the quality of executive action; and (8) to guide thinking in future planning.

The requirements of sound policies are as follows:
(1) they should be related to the objectives; (2) "make possible the determination of effective, economical relations between functions, physical factors, and personnel on the one hand and business objectives on the other;"
(3) they must conform to the prevailing ethical standards; (4) they should be stated clearly, simply, definitely, and understandably; (5) they should be stable and flexible; (6) they should be sufficiently comprehensive; (7) they should be complementary and supplementary to one another.

Business policies may be classified in four different ways. According to (1) organizational objectives and echelons; (2) organic functions and organizational divisions; (3) types of organizational service; and (4) direction of policy influence. When divided according to
organizational objectives and echelons, they may be general, major, or minor policies. When divided according to organic functions and organizational divisions, they may be manufacturing, sales, and financial policies. When divided according to types of organizational service they may be managerial service policies (line or staff, administrative or operative management), or operative service policies. When divided according to the direction of policy influence they may be internal or external policies.

There are seven phases of policy-making: policy formulation, policy promulgation, policy education, policy acceptance, policy application, policy interpretation, and policy control.
CHAPTER VI
THE PHASE OF POLICY FORMULATION

A. Introduction

The objective of this chapter

The objective of this chapter is to present a brief discussion of the process of policy formulation in committees, with special reference to its rational and intellectual aspects. While this project as a whole is concerned primarily with the communicative elements of policy formulation in committees, it is felt that the inclusion of a description of its logical elements is justified.

Essentially, this chapter is concerned with the "what" of communication in committees. It is concerned with what is being communicated in the process of formulation of policy. The rest of the project places more emphasis upon the "how" of communication in business committees.

Policy formation in committees

It may be worthwhile to point out that the kind of thinking that is involved in policy formation and decision making in small groups does not usually follow the exact pattern of rational thinking in individuals. The various
steps of the scientific method which John Dewey attributes to rational individual thinkers are not followed in the case of group thinking. Experiments have shown that there is a great deal of overlapping in group thinking, and that various steps of the scientific method are being used concurrently. Patterns of group thinking have, however, been established experimentally. They will be discussed in Chapter VIII.1

This chapter will be concerned primarily with a description of rational procedure for policy decisions in committees. It is based on the assumption that the committee is a formal organization with explicit responsibility and authority to formulate policies. While it is probably true that to a large extent so-called policy formulation is a process of making explicit in words a pattern of behavior that has developed spontaneously or autonomously — this is not what is being considered here. The process of policy formulation described here is one in which the new policy will attempt to create a new pattern of behavior.

Order of analysis

The following is the order in which the topics of this chapter will be discussed: (1) policy formulation as related to the objectives; (2) deciding whether the committee should formulate the policy under consideration; (3) the analysis of functions necessary to reach the objective; and (4) the selection of the principles and rules of action to link functions with objectives.

B. Policy Formulation as Related to the Objectives

Policy has been defined above as a principle, or a number of principles, with their related rules of action which guide activities towards successful accomplishment of certain objectives. Thus, it seems logical that the first stage in the development of policy is clarification of objectives.

A policy is formulated to direct action so that a certain state of affairs should come about, or one which already exists be preserved. This desired state of affairs must be clear to the members of a committee who are to develop a policy.

Unity of objectives

It is essential that all members of a committee considering a policy have the same objective in mind. It
would be almost impossible to arrive at any solution if the ideas which the various members have concerning the nature of the problem differ from each other. It is therefore important that the committee spend all the necessary time to arrive at a consensus of opinion as to the goal to be achieved by the formulated policy. The chairman of the committee should not allow the consideration of proposed solutions before he has assurance that all participants are trying to accomplish the same objectives with the policy that is being discussed. If he is careful, he may notice that while the members are using the same words for the various aspects of the objective, they really have different things in mind. 

The clarification of the goals which the policy is to accomplish also serves as an indoctrination device. It influences the views of the participants, and prepares them to make decisions in the future which will reflect these common goals. 

Evaluation of any proposed policies is, broadly speaking, committee "problem-solving."

It is typical for a committee to be presented with

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2See Section D, Chapter II: "A Brief Discussion of Communication from the Standpoint of General Semantics" for a more detailed analysis of this problem.

a solution that is proposed by a technical staff department. In such a case, it is the function of the committee to evaluate the proposed solution in the light of established objectives and policies. Whether the task of the committee is to evaluate a solution that is proposed by a technical staff department or one which is suggested by one of its own members - the communication process is similar.\(^4\) So long as the committee must arrive at a decision - it is faced with a problematic situation, which is resolved only when the decision is made.

Communication among members of a committee, whether to evaluate a solution proposed by a technical staff department or by one of its own members, is what the psychologists designate by the general name of "group problem-solving." Group problem solving, whether of the kind dealing with the evaluation of proposed solutions of a technical staff department or of ones offered by members of a committee themselves, go through the same three major phases of communication in small groups. These phases are: (1) orientation ("deciding what the situation is like"); (2) evaluation ("deciding what attitudes should be taken toward the situation"); and (3) control ("decid-

This problem is discussed in more detail in Chapter VIII, particularly in Section D.

Checking the problem against reality

The line executive, to whom the committee (a staff organization) reports, may state the goals which the policy to be formulated is to accomplish. He leaves it to the committee to formulate the best possible policy and recommend it to him. Such a practice is so common that it warrants more detailed consideration.

The line executive who faces a problem which

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6 It may be worthwhile to point out that our statement that evaluation of solution-proposals of technical staff departments and of committee members themselves are similar, applies only to bona fide committees with staff authority to formulate policy. There are no doubt many instances in which a committee approves recommendations made by a technical staff organization automatically and without serious analysis of the proposal. The consideration of this problem, as set forth in Section B, Chapter I, however, is not within the scope of the present project. Some such action is probably justified, particularly when the staff section is very competent and the committee's schedule is very crowded with other more important issues. In general, however, a committee is responsible for a policy which it approves, and should evaluate any proposal with all possible care and thoroughness.
recurs often enough, and which is important enough to justify its assignment to a committee for policy formulation, states the problem as he sees it. One of the first steps that the members of the committee have to take is to evaluate the problem in terms of reality. Is the problem as stated by the line executive really the problem? Whether or not the committee can answer this question depends upon the extent to which the members are acquainted with the circumstances which are related to the problem. In other words, whether the problem is general enough to have faced them in their daily work. If the members have personal experience with the problem, and they detect a discrepancy between what they conceive of as the goal and what the executive who assigned them the problem says, it would seem logical to draw the executive's attention to the difference in views. The true nature of the problem, and the objective to be gained must be ascertained first. It is the most important element in successful policy formulation.

The breadth of the assignment

Merton and Lerner say that in their experience, line executives responsible for a policy seldom formulate problems submitted to a committee for solution with sufficient precision for the staff organization to work out an appropriate investigation. They add that "charac-
teristically, the problem is so stated as to result in the possibility of the researcher being seriously misled as to the 'basic' aspects of the problem which gives rise to a contemplated research. This initial clarification of the practical problem, therefore, is the first crucial step. They add that such statements by line executives have a tendency to (1) overspecify the problem or (2) to overgeneralize the problem. An example of overspecification would be a case in which a committee is requested to decide which of the alternative wage incentive plans would be best to improve morale. The prime objective is to improve morale. The problem as stated includes a specification of means as well as ends. The problem may have been stated perhaps as follows: "How does a wage incentive program compare with other morale improvement techniques?" This is not necessarily the most appropriate way to state the problem. It does, however, serve as an example of one possibility of overcoming "overspecification" in a proposed problem.

As an example of overgeneralization of the problem, we may cite an instance in which the line executive states his problems as follows: "Our company has poor morale;
how should it be improved?" Here the committee is given freedom to investigate an unlimited number of alternatives. This certainly does not facilitate the work of a committee. To summarize, we say that the problem presented to a committee should state the general objective of the proposed policy and the general direction of the alternatives to be considered. It should not be too specific and narrow as to the alternatives to be compared and should not be too general so as to allow the committee to wander in all directions in search of an appropriate policy.\(^8\)

**Consideration of the "constants of the problem"**

Another factor which enters into the consideration of the objectives to be achieved by the policy that is being formulated is that of the "constants of the problem." The line executive may be faced with the problem of falling sales of a certain product. He may specify that the committee is not to consider the possibility of changing the product. The product is thus taken as a constant. Early in the consideration of the objectives of the policy, all such "constants" must be made clear to all the members. Those "constants" which the committee must find out are either ethical or technical. In the

case cited above, the "constant" is technical. There may, however, be ethical value-constants. Thus, the line executive may specify that the new policy should not disturb any equilibrium in existing race relations among the employees. It may specify, for instance, that no quota should be established as to the number of Negroes that may be employed in the plant. All other alternatives of possible policies may be left open for consideration. Such proposed "constants," either ethical or technical, should be accepted by the committee as a basis of policy formulation. They should be rejected, however, if they violate the ethical standards of the members. It is doubtful whether a committee can formulate a good policy when it is based on values which are not acceptable by them personally.

It should be added that this ethical "constant" that is guiding the group is different from that which guides an individual. Muzafer Sherif has shown through experiments how a group develops its own norm and frame of reference, which is basically a system of ethical

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9 For a more detailed discussion of "values," see Section C, Chapter II, "A Brief Discussion of Communication from the Standpoint of Psychology."

He found that each group tends to reach a common system of ethical standards, which is peculiar to the group, and bears only slight relation to the ethical criteria which guide each individual when considered separately.

The experiments conducted by the Festinger group also tend to indicate that there exist pressures within the group to arrive at a common standard. Festinger says that one major source to communicate in a group at all is "the pressure toward uniformity which may exist within the group." In Section A, Chapter IX it will be shown that one of several things may happen when the ethical standards of one individual deviate from that of the rest of the group. For a while, this deviant will attract more communiques from his fellow committeemen. However, if he persists to deviate from the group in his judgments, the force to communicate to him will decrease to the extent that the members begin to perceive him as not being a member of the "psychological" group (the referent group, the group with the same ethical standards). Finally, he will cease to be a member of the "psychological" group entirely, and messages will not be addressed to him at all.

His experiments and their significance are discussed below in Section C of Chapter VIII.
His opinion will not carry any weight with the group. The extent to which the members of the group see a possibility of changing the views (or also ethical standards) of the deviating member will also determine to what extent he will continue to "count" as a member of the committee. If the members will not see much chance to change the deviator's views, communication to him will stop.

Compromise sometimes is unavoidable

Even with the most sincere desire to arrive at a common goal, it is sometimes likely that the members of a committee will have conflicting views as to what the policy should accomplish. In other words, a situation may arise where integration of ideas will be impossible and some kind of compromise will have to be reached as to the goal that the policy should achieve. In any case, a committee cannot operate effectively in formulating a policy with the various members seeking competing

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If such a situation arises, where various individuals or the departments which they represent seem to seek conflicting goals—the most adequate way to resolve such a situation is to attempt to determine as well as possible what end will benefit most the entire organization rather than the individuals and departments involved. This apparently is easier said than done. It is doubtful whether many policies are formulated from the standpoint of the organization as a whole. Most of them seem unfortunately to be a result of a compromise reached after some sort of bargaining. Even when reached after such a compromise, the policy may still prove to be very beneficial to the organization.

C. Deciding Whether the Committee Should Formulate the Policy Under Consideration

Now that the committee has clarified and defined the problem for which a policy is being considered, it must decide whether it should proceed with its plans of

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14 Shils and Banfield write in this connection: "The process by which this problem is solved— the process by which the conflicting ends are somehow combined, or amalgamated, or selected from among so as to yield a master ordering—will be called the process of aggregation." E. A. Shils and E. C. Banfield, Individual Ends and the Structure of Social Choice, the University of Chicago, unpublished mimeographed manuscript, p. 1. They suggest that such aggregation may be achieved through three types of substitution: flexibility, postponability, and renounceability. Ibid., p. 5.
The answer to this question depends upon three considerations: (1) Does the problem require a new policy at all? (2) Should this specific committee formulate the policy? and (3) Does the committee have sufficient information to formulate an intelligent policy?

Deciding whether the problem requires a new policy

It is only logical to precede the detailed analysis of the problem under consideration with a decision as to whether it actually requires the formulation of a new policy. The problem may have as its major determinants factors which are beyond the control of any policy. Thus, the consideration of procurement policies of materials which are not available because of war or other emergency may prove a waste of the committee's time. The specific materials may remain unavailable no matter what the policy will be. This example illustrates a case in which a reconsideration of the objective may be necessary. Instead of considering the objective of "How to procure sufficient tin," the objective may be restated to read: "What substitutes of tin can we use?"

Perhaps the objective sought is already covered by one or more policies, and the problem is one of enforcing the existing policies rather than formulating a new one. That should be one of the first points to be considered. If the information presented to the committee
suggests that the difficulty lies in execution of present policies rather than in formulating new ones, the committee may make recommendations as to the course of better enforcement of the existing policies. The consideration of this problem is beyond the scope set for the present project. It should be pointed out, however, that if the disregard of the policy is due to its inadequacy, its repeal should be promptly carried out.

Another case for delaying the formulation of policy is when available evidence indicates that if formulated it will be premature. When the situation changes very rapidly so that it is difficult to determine what will be the prevailing conditions in the future, it may be advisable to delay making any definite decision until such time as future conditions become more predictable.

Policies that are not very pertinent when presented

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15 Chester I. Barnard says in this connection: "There is no principle of executive conduct better established in good organizations than that orders will not be issued that cannot or will not be obeyed. Executives and most persons of experience who have thought about it know that to do so destroys authority, discipline, and morale." See The Functions of the Executive, p. 167. The same point is made by Donald C. Stone, "Notes on the Governmental Executive: His Role and His Methods," in New Horizons in Public Administration (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1945), p. 50. See also Marshall E. Dimock, The Executive in Action (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1945), pp. 236-240.

to the committee, may also be delayed until a time when
they will be more urgent. Members of a committee will
be more motivated if they can clearly see where the
policy which they are considering can be applied. On the
other hand, such a delay may prove costly in cases in
which an emergency occurs and there is no policy to guide
the concerned executives.17

Deciding whether this specific committee should formulate
the policy

Another factor that the committee must consider
before starting a detailed discussion of the proposed
policy is whether it is the right forum to formulate the
specific policy under consideration. In large corpora-
tions, such as Standard Oil Company (New Jersey), for
instance, there may be a large number of committees
specializing in the various aspects of the corporation's
activities. If after the problem has been defined care-
fully, it is found to fall within the realm of another
committee, this fact should be brought to the attention of
the line executive who has authority to issue the policy,
with the recommendation to assign the problem to the

17Barneid summarizes this whole problem as follows:
"The fine art of executive decision consists in not
deciding questions that are not now pertinent, in not
deciding prematurely, in not making decisions that cannot
be made effective, and in not making decisions that others
should make." (Italics in the original). The Functions
of the Executive, p. 194.
Sometimes it is found after the problem has been defined that its discussion in a committee may cause more harm than benefit. Some problems are of such nature that it is advisable to have the superior executive decide the policy, rather than submit it to a committee. These are problems, the discussion of which may increase personal friction between members, among whom some tension already exists. For example, in the case of gaps, overlaps, splits, and areas of free action, certain functions may not be assigned in accordance with sound principles of delegation. There may be some serious tension among the various members of a committee. Some of them may try to assume responsibility for certain added functions. A policy problem may come up before a committee which may touch on this point. It may be that discussing the problem openly will clear up the friction; on the other hand, it may worsen it. It may be wiser to leave the assignment of functions to a superior line executive. There probably is no single pattern which may be pre-

18 Some of the principles of delegation are the Principle of Fixation of Responsibility and Authority, the Principle of the Coincidence of Authority and Responsibility, The Principle of Residual Responsibility and Authority, and the Principle of Factoral Selection. For a detailed discussion of these principles, see in Davis, op. cit., pp. 300-301.
scribed to all such cases. Each one will have to be decided on its own peculiar merits.

The determination of very broad policies which in a sense prescribe the objectives of the corporation are also considered by some authors to be not suitable for ordinary committees, except those reporting directly to the board of directors.19

Policies which must be formulated without any delay are also not suitable for committee decision. Such decisions must be made on the spot by the executive or supervisor in charge, and only then submitted to a committee for a more sophisticated consideration and formal decision and formulation.20

Deciding whether the committee has sufficient information to proceed with policy-formulation

The committee should not attempt to formulate a policy when it feels that more relevant information could be assembled for an intelligent decision. A committee is not suitable for the function of fact-finding. In large business organizations there usually is a secretary, or secretariat, that is assigned to the committee for the purpose of collecting information. In the case of most


20 This was discussed above in Chapter V.
business organizations, however, the committee must use existing staff departments and their facilities for fact finding and analysis. Of course, if the problem under consideration is familiar to some of the committee members, they may add to the information presented by the secretariat from their own experience. But by and large, the committee must rely upon the data found by the existing staff department assigned to help it. If it finds that it needs additional information, it may request the secretariat or any other agency to collect whatever additional data it needs.

D. The Analysis of Functions Necessary to Reach the Objective

When the objectives of the proposed policy have been defined, and when the committee decides that there is no reason why it should not proceed with its formulation, the committee must then select the principles and rules of action that the policy is to incorporate.

To select the proper principles and rules of action, a thorough analysis must be made of the functions necessary to reach the objective. There is a hierarchy of functions leading to the objective. The accomplishment of the objective may be done through breaking it down into successive steps, each one leading logically to the accomplishment of a "sub-objective" of a higher hierarchy.
ical position until the ultimate objective is accomplished. This may be considered a vertical functional breakdown. The final objective may also sometimes be achieved through a horizontal breakdown. This is so when the final objective may be accomplished in various ways, which are independent of each other. In the latter case the problem is that of selecting the best policy to cover one of the alternative functions leading to the accomplishment of the objective, or to adopt a number of complementary policies that would achieve the same objective.

The first case is far more complicated. It has already been pointed out how the accomplishment of the objective may be conveniently broken down for analytical purposes into a hierarchy of functions and means. The committee lists all the functions necessary to reach the objective and at the same time attempts to determine the means which are essential for their fulfillment. Theoretically, the hierarchy of functions parallels the organization hierarchy, and is an integrated, complete, and connected chain. In practice this hardly ever happens.

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Simon says in this connection that "often the connections between organization activities and ultimate objectives is obscure, or these ultimate objectives are incompletely formulated, or there are internal conflicts and contradictions among the ultimate objectives, or among the means selected to attain them. This is probably due to the fact that the concept "means" is related to that of organization procedure. To accomplish the objectives of an organization, every problem must ultimately be related to the organization structure. The accomplishment of the objective involves utilizing "means," which in turn relates to organization procedure. Finally, procedure cuts across organizational lines, and to be most effective, must be considered in conjunction with accountability. Optimum results cannot be obtained without establishing clear accountability of all functions.

This analysis of the functions necessary to reach the objective is very useful in that it allows the members of the committee to gain insight into the nature of the problem under consideration. It allows the members to give careful consideration to all factors, both tangible and intangible, that enter into the accomplishment of the objective. It also points out possible means to

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22Simon, op. cit., p. 64.
achieve the objective. It has, however, some serious disadvantages. One of them is that the analysis is not conducive to a detailed and thorough investigation of all the relevant alternative means. To arrive at the most rational policy, a method of comparison of alternative means must be followed. Another disadvantage of the function and means hierarchy analysis is that in practice it is very difficult to differentiate between means and ends, "for the alternative means are not usually valuably neutral." The means may have other consequences than those affecting the functions, which should also be considered, but which cannot be taken account of in this functions and means scheme. These objections suggest that this analysis should be used only with great care.

E. The Selection of the Principles and Rules of Action to Link Functions with Objectives

When the objectives of the proposed policy have been made clear to the members of the committee, and when the functions and means hierarchy analysis has been considered in some detail, it is the task of the committee to formulate the appropriate policy. It should guide the activities of all concerned in carrying out the functions

23Ibid., p. 65.
involved in the accomplishment of the objectives.\textsuperscript{24}

The function of the committee becomes now one of attempting to select the most proper policy to link the functions with the objectives. The key element in successful formulation is rational choice of the best possible policy.\textsuperscript{25}

Alternative courses of behavior usually result in different consequences. The selection of policy involves essentially the adoption of one alternative, the consequences of which will accomplish this linkage of functions with the objective.

The determination of the desirable consequences

The committee starts its analysis by determining what consequences will bring about the desirable linkage. This essentially involves deductive reasoning. The committee must examine the alternative hypotheses, and reason deductively in choosing the one which best fits the requirements of the situation. If the decision is to be as rational as possible, it may be found useful to determine: "(1) those consequences which are to be sought or avoided - the positive and negative values to be weighed

\textsuperscript{24} For a detailed account of the "Requirements of Sound Policy," see above in Section C, Chapter V.

\textsuperscript{25} See Henry W. Bruck, Some Useful Concepts for the Analysis of Decision-making, Memorandum No. 1, May 29, 1952, Organizational Behavior Project, Princeton University, unpublished manuscript.
in judging the desirability of the outcome; (2) those consequences toward which the decision-makers are relatively indifferent as to whether such consequences occur or not; and (3) the alternative consequences they have to give up by carrying out this plan instead of some other—what economists call the 'opportunity costs' of the plan."26 It should be added that the category into which any particular consequences fall is determined by the system of values that the individual making the decision possesses. It is therefore subjective, and in the setting of a committee will depend upon the group frame of reference or norm.27

The relation between future consequences and present behavior

The committee is now faced with the problem of deciding which one of a number of alternative decisions will bring about the desirable consequences. The problem is essentially that of ascertaining which consequences follow which of the alternative courses of action. That is logically what the members of the committee have now


27For additional details on the subject of "group frame of reference" or norms, see in Section C, Chapter VIII.
to determine. When this relation is found, it remains for the committee to list the consequences in the order in which they are preferred. The consequences that seem to be most promising are chosen. The present behavior which is known to result in the preferred consequences is ascertained. This "behavior," when stated formally, is in essence the principle or group of related principles with their consequent rule of action which constitute a policy.

Limits to rationality in policy formulation

Simon points out that in reality, decisions are not made on such a rational basis as has been pointed out above. He mentions three ways in which actual decision-making falls short of the rational order pictured above.


29 See Burton Sapin, A Conceptual Framework for Foreign Policy Decision Making Analysis, Memorandum No. 4, May 29, 1952, Organizational Behavior Project, Princeton University, unpublished manuscript.


31 Simon, Administrative Behavior, p. 81.
(1) Rationality requires a complete knowledge and anticipation of the consequences that will follow on each choice. In fact, knowledge of consequences is always fragmentary.

(2) Since these consequences lie in the future, imagination must supply the lack of experienced feeling in attaching value to them. But values can be only imperfectly anticipated.

(3) Rationality requires a choice among all possible alternative behaviors. In actual behavior, only a very few of all these possible alternatives ever come to mind.

F. Summary and Conclusions

This chapter is devoted to the description of the rational processes involved in the formulation of policy in committees. It is concerned with what is communicated rather than with the "how" of communication. Rational thinking in groups was found not to parallel that of individuals.

The clarification of the objectives is the first step in committee policy formulation. All members must have exactly the same objective in mind. The problem as presented to the committee must be checked against reality. Problems presented for the committee's consideration which are wrongly formulated should be returned to whoever submitted them. Assigned problems should not be too specific nor too general in the range of alternatives that may be considered as potential solutions. The members of the committee should find out what ethical and technical elements in the problem must be taken as "con-
Where there are discrepancies in the members' views of the essence of the problem, integration of ideas should be preferred, but compromise sometimes is unavoidable.

The next step after consensus has been reached concerning the nature of the problem is to decide whether the committee should proceed to formulate the requested policy. Some of the questions which will determine whether a new policy is necessary at the present time are:

- Is a new policy essential? (or: can it possibly accomplish any good?)
- Is there any other policy which already covers the problem? Would it not be premature to formulate the policy now?
- Is the policy pertinent to the prevailing conditions?
- Should this specific committee handle the problem, or should another committee do so?
- Is the policy of such nature as to indicate that it would be more effective to have the line executive formulate it?
- Is there sufficient time to wait until the committee meets?
- And finally, Does the committee have sufficient information to make an intelligent decision?

It is useful to make an analysis of the functions necessary to reach the objective. This is done through either a horizontal or a vertical breakdown of functions. The vertical breakdown, the more significant one, allows the conception of "functions and means hierarchy." In
an ideal model, it corresponds closely to the organization hierarchy. This analysis is helpful in clarifying to the committee members how the objective can be accomplished step by step. The major disadvantages of this analysis are: (1) It does not allow a detailed investigation of all the relevant alternative means, and (2) In practice it is very difficult to differentiate between means and ends.

The selection of the principles and rules of action to link the functions with the objective follows rationally the following steps: (1) how various consequences of present behaviors (policies) succeed in linking functions to the objective is determined; (2) the consequences are then listed in the order in which they succeed in such linkage; (3) and then the alternative policy which is responsible for the preferred consequences must be determined. This model of rational choice of policies is only remotely approached in practice because: (1) knowledge of future consequences of present policies is fragmentary; (2) future consequences must be imagined through the use of attached values which cannot be anticipated accurately; and (3) it is impossible in practice to compare all possible alternatives.
PART THREE

THE COMMITTEE AS A TECHNIQUE
IN POLICY FORMULATION
CHAPTER VII

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE

This project is essentially concerned with the communication aspects of policy formulation in small groups. It is not primarily interested in the organizational aspects of committees. It seems, however, advisable to devote a number of pages to a brief description of the organization of the committee. This will give us the structural and physical background necessary to the understanding of communication within the setting of committees.

The topics with which this chapter will deal are the nature and significance of committees, classes and functions of committees, the structure and effectiveness of committees, and the advantages and disadvantages of committees.

A. Nature and Significance of Committees;

A committee has been defined above as "a group of individuals who meet for the purpose of effecting an integration of ideas concerning a solution for some problem."

Other writers in the field of business management define a committee similarly. Newman says that "a committee consists of a group of people specifically designated

David, op. cit., p. 269. See also above on page 16.
to perform some administrative act. It functions only as a group and requires the free interchange of ideas among its members. ² Petersen and Plowman use a broader definition. They say that a committee "is a group of two or more persons qualified to consider or decide some problem."³ According to this definition, even a telephone conversation will be included under the name "committee". A conversation between two individuals will also be included in this definition. For our purposes, we shall consider only face-to-face meetings of at least three members.

The committee is a staff organization with one exception: the board of directors. The board of directors is the only committee organization which is considered part of the line organization. As a staff organization, the committee does not have authority over line executives. It may have authority only over other small organizations which report to the entire committee, or to any one of its officers, such as special sub-committees, fact finding agents, and other similar organizations or individuals. In the absence of the board of directors, the executive committee may assume line authority if the board of directors chooses to grant it such authority.

The task of some committees involves reaching a decision, while that of others may be merely to discuss an issue. Whatever the task of the committee, only the line executive can bestow authority on the committee's recommendations. The committee as a management technique gains in significance as one goes up the organization ladder. Since it is usually attached to top management, or to executives belonging to an echelon not far below top management, the committee's duties are mostly those of planning, facilitation of planning, and policy formulation, or interpretation.

Committees are usually created "to obtain the co-ordinated best judgment of a particular group." The true function of committees is to deliberate upon previously developed facts, to exchange viewpoints, and through collective judgment to recommend action or endorse conclusions." (Italics in the original). Committees promote group thinking, smooth over individual differences, and make the various members of the committee better acquainted with each other.

Committees may be used "when a wide divergence of information is necessary to reach a sound conclusion."

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4 Holden, Fish and Smith, op. cit., p. 50.
when the decision is of such importance that the judgment of several qualified individuals is desired. . . when successful execution of decisions depends upon full understanding of their ramifications. . . and . . . when activities of three or more divisions need to be adjusted frequently to secure co-ordination."  

Committees are the most effective tool available to management to obtain integration of ideas, co-operation, and co-ordination. The significance of committees is brought out clearly by Spriegel and Lansburgh. They say that "generally the joint advice of a group of men conversant with a subject is immeasurably superior to the ideas of one man or to any plan developed from a single individual's brain. The best method of developing a proper group spirit is to get men together. Their jealousies and their distrust of each other can be eliminated only by bringing them into close contact with one another and by steering them in a tactful manner. The spirit of helping each other for the good of the enterprise can best

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6Newman, op. cit., pp. 228-229. Holden, Fish and Smith say in this connection: "The purposes for which committees are most effective are: (1) to co-ordinate activities and points of view of the members. . . (2) to provide general management with well-considered recommendations on matters of company-wide concern as a basis for final action. . . (3) to provide the rounded judgment of a well qualified group in lieu of that of one individual, agency or department." Holden, Fish and Smith, op. cit. pp. 60-61.
be developed in a conference. 7 In no other phase of management is the recognition of the human factor as clear as it is in committee work. The spirit of cooperation, too, is fostered there more than in any other place in an organization.

B. Classes and Functions of Committees.

Inasmuch as committees are staff organizations, the functions that they may perform are primarily the functions which staff agencies may carry out. Professor Davis lists investigation, analysis, information, interpretation, recommendation, co-ordination and facilitation as the basic staff functions. 8

On the basis of these staff functions, he classifies committees to be (1) investigational and analytical; (2) educational; (3) legislative; (4) integrative; and (5) judicial.

Investigational and analytical committees are more or less fact-finding. They examine records, interview other managers, and perform other such functions. They usually have attached to them some individuals or agencies that do the actual fact-finding which is then presented.

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8 Davis, op. cit., p. 470.
to the committee for analysis. Holden, Fish and Smith say that some companies studied by them "implement their committees with a full or part-time secretary to keep minutes, gather and analyze data, follow up action, and relieve the chairman and members of detail. Where the volume of work warrants, the secretary may have several full-time assistants." 9

Educational committees serve as tools of acquainting subordinates with top management's philosophy, policies, plans, and procedures. The results usually obtained from such education are better acceptance and application of plans, policies, and procedures.

Legislative committees are those "whose chief purpose is to assist the superior executive in the development of plans and policies." 10 These are usually formulated on the basis of data collected for the committee by some sub-committee, or special assistants. The committee acts on the basis of the data collected by these special assistants, and in turn recommends its plans and policies to the superior line executive. The legislative committee is the one most usually assigned to formulate plans.

9 Holden, Fish and Smith, op. cit., p. 61. See also in Davis, op. cit., p. 470. Also, Spiegel and Lansburgh, op. cit., p. 75.

10 Davis, op. cit., p. 470.
Integrative committees are the ones used to obtain co-ordination of thought. They attempt to achieve a meeting of minds and integration of ideas.\(^\text{11}\)

Judicial committees are those which are set up to interpret plans and policies when they are not clear, or to determine whether any violations of any such plans and policies took place.\(^\text{12}\)

C. The Structure and Effectiveness of Committees.

The effectiveness of committees depends upon a


\(^{12}\)Another classification of committees may be based on the level of management which they serve. Thus we may find departmental committees, divisional committees, and others. Spriegel and Lansburgh use the following classification: (1) "The committee which has full power to act. (Seldom found save at the top management level.)" (2) The committee which has limited power but whose actions are subject to veto. (Not used extensively.) (3) The advisory committee. (4) The educational committee, the class or discussion group." See in Spriegel and Lansburgh, *op. cit.*, p. 79. Oliver Sheldon uses another classification. He has four classes: (1) Executive committees, with authority to make decisions upon matters brought before them; (2) advisory committees; (3) educational committees; and (4) co-ordinative committees. See Oliver Sheldon, *The Philosophy of Management* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1923), pp. 123-24. Anderson and Schwenning use a somewhat different classification of committees: "(1) those having more or less full power and control; (2) those having only partial or limited power; (3) those of a purely advisory or staff nature; and (4) those which take no action whatever but represent mere assemblies of certain individuals for purposes of discussion, contrast, information or instruction." E. H. Anderson and G. T. Schwenning, *The Science of Production Organization* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1938), p. 149.
number of structural factors which will be considered in this section. These factors are: committee size, committee structure, committee procedure, leadership of committees, selection of committee members, and viewpoints and tenure of the members.

The size of a committee should not be too large nor too small. Excessively large committees become very inefficient and time consuming. Professor Davis says in this connection: "Large committees tend to be unwieldy, time consuming bodies whose inefficiencies more than cancel their advantages. The most effective size calls for the fewest number of members whose combined knowledge, experience, and ability are sufficient to produce a satisfactory solution of the problem."¹³

The committee structure should be simple and as inexpensive as is possible. It should have a chairman, and a secretary (or a secretariat). Usually, if the work of the secretary is very heavy, some technical staff

¹³Davis, op. cit., p. 475. Petersen and Plowman say in this connection: "Since the board of directors is a committee, it is subject to the principle of diminishing efficiency as the number of members increases. The most efficient group probably consists of five, seven, or nine directors." - Business Organization and Management, p. 308. Cornell writes about the size of committees: "Committees should have a sufficient number of members to provide thorough discussion, but they should not be so large as to be unwieldy. In the average case three to seven members will be found to work to best advantage, the exact number depending upon the individual case." - Organization and Management, p. 32.
department will be assigned to aid him. The chairman of a committee is usually a superior line executive who has the authority to carry out the recommendations of the committee by virtue of his line status. This practice has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. The one most significant advantage is that the superior line executive with line authority is present when the discussion about the alternative policies takes place, and learns about the attitudes and feelings of the various members under him. He could thus find out the degree of acceptance of the selected alternative by the various members. The main disadvantage of such a practice is that the superior line executive has to spend precious time while the committee debates the various alternatives.

The relationship between the committee and the rest of the organization must be specified clearly. Functions, responsibilities, authority, and accountability must be stated and defined as clearly as possible. This is true because occasionally an enterprising chairman seeks line authority for the committee.

The structure of the committee should promote well-designed procedures that will encourage its effective operation. Good committee procedure will assure members of early notices of committee meetings, inform them of the

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14 See in Holden, Fish and Smith, op. cit., pp. 61-62.
objectives of the meetings, and its agenda. The recommenda-
tions of the committee concerning any problem should 
be submitted to the affected executive. The committee, 
in turn, should receive periodical reports about how its 
recommendations are working out.

To a large extent, the effectiveness and efficiency 
of committees depend upon the kind of leadership that is 
being used. The chairman should have the ability to keep 
discussion relevant, to bring out the best thoughts of the 
members, and to summarize opinion. The chairman must see 
to it that only those points that require integration of 
ideas are discussed. Ideas about which there is a consen-
sus of opinion should not be considered.

Committee effectiveness will depend to a large 
extent upon the system used in the choice of members. Two 
factors are important in this connection: the functions or 
departments that should be represented, and individual 
judgment.15 Choice of personnel of some committees should 
depend upon departments affected; in other cases, it should 
depend upon personal characteristics of individuals. Back-
ground, experience, training, intelligence, and compati-
bility are some of the personal traits that are important 
to members of committees. Whatever the department that 
they represent, they should always hold the interests of 

15Loc. cit.
the organization as a whole above those of their own departments. Representation of the different departments is aimed at providing the committee with various points of view rather than encouraging vested interests. The length of time of individual services in a committee, as well as the tenure of the committee as a whole, also affect the efficiency and effectiveness of committees.

D. Advantages and Disadvantages of Committees.

The following are the most important advantages of committees:

1. The committee device provides a tool which facilitates the pooling of group judgment. This is important when the solution of a certain problem requires knowledge and experience of many fields. The interaction of ideas of a number of individuals gives rise to new ideas which occurred to none of the participants previously. The group tends to reduce the danger that somebody's prejudices may influence the decision. Such prejudices can always be detected more objectively by others.

2. The committee reduces the danger that a decision reached will promote the interests of individuals rather than those of the entire organization. A committee provides an excellent forum to formulate policies that are to serve first of all the whole organization, and not any vested interests.
3. Recommendations made by committees are usually well-balanced. Decisions reached in committees are more likely to consider the most pertinent tangible and intangible factors in a situation than decisions reached by individuals.

4. Committees are excellent means of application of the Principle of Participation. This promotes better acceptance and application of the joint decisions.

5. Committees serve as a means of co-ordination of thought. In addition to what has already been said about this point above, it may be worthwhile to point out that they are not suitable for co-ordination of action, perhaps with the exception of using them for the purpose of self-co-ordination. Even in this case, the committee is basically an instrument for co-ordination of thought.

6. Committees are an excellent way to indoctrinate the various executives with top management's philosophy. Nothing serves better to create a uniform system of values and goals than frequent formal or informal conversations in committees.

7. Committees serve as a tool in informing executives of the problems of their colleagues, which in turn tends to create favorable human relations within the management group.

The following are the most important disadvantages of committees:

1. Committees sometimes slow down action. If a certain decision must be made on the spot, it may some-
times be detrimental to wait until a committee may act upon the issue. A committee is simply inadequate in cases where situations demand immediate decision and action.

2. Committees tend to be expensive. The members of committees may be top executives who command high salaries. The cost of a committee meeting may be exceedingly high. Some rough idea of the cost may be obtained by multiplying the time spent in the meeting by the number of participants and again by the average salary expressed in terms of an hour.

3. The committee is a staff organization, and is not suitable for line functions. It usually recommends its decisions to a line executive who has the authority to carry out the recommendations if he so chooses.

4. The committee device is not suitable for the function of control. Effective control must be continuous and be close to the place where action takes place. The committee, however, meets only intermittently.

5. Committees may discourage members from assuming individual responsibilities for a decision. Some executives may feel safer to allow the committee to make decisions which one could easily make alone.

6. It is difficult to hold individuals participating in the deliberations of committees responsible in the same manner that individuals may be held responsible for decisions which they make alone. The decision adopted by a committee may be a suggestion made by one member and approved by the others without close consideration of all
the details involved. When the decision gives unfavorable
results, the members may shrug their shoulders, saying
that, "it wasn't our idea anyway."

7. A decision reached in the setting of a committee
may represent a compromise of the various divergent views
rather than be an integration of ideas. The decision may
be a result of a bargaining process between individuals
representing various kinds of vested interests.16

8. A committee may be dominated by a strong chair-
man, and be in practice nothing but a rubber stamp to his
views. In some cases there may be two individuals who
monopolize the entire discussion and decide for the entire
committee.

9. It may sometimes be difficult to dissolve a
committee once it is functioning even though the problem
which the committee was set up to solve has long become
inconsequential.

E. Summary and Conclusions.

Even though this chapter is primarily concerned
with the communication aspects of committees, it seems
desirable to discuss briefly some organizational aspects
of committee work.

A committee is defined as "a group of individuals
who meet for the purpose of effecting an integration of
ideas concerning a solution for some problem." It is a

16 On the other hand, this may be an advantage in the
sense that such a compromise becomes a workable instrument.
staff organization (with the exception of the board of directors which is considered to be a line organization). It may have some sub-committees or other agencies that aid the members of the committee in fact-gathering and other such activities. Whether the committee's duties involve reaching a decision or not, only a line executive can bestow authority on a committee's recommendations. Committees usually engage in planning, facilitation of planning, formulation of policy, and interpretation. These functions may be performed effectively by committees because committees facilitate integration of ideas, cooperation, and coordination.

Inasmuch as committees are staff organizations, the functions which they may perform are those usually considered to be staff functions: investigation, analysis, information, interpretation, recommendation, co-ordination, and facilitation. On the basis of this functional classification, five kinds of committees may be distinguished: investigational and analytical, educational, legislative, integrative, and judicial. Investigational and analytical committees are fact-finding. They may have some other organizations help them in their fact-gathering. Educational committees serve to acquaint subordinates with top management's philosophy, policies, plans, and procedures. Legislative committees aid superior executives in the development of plans and policies. Integrative committees
are used to obtain meetings of minds and integration of ideas. Judicial committees are used to interpret policies and plans to determine whether any violations took place.

The effectiveness of committees depends upon some structural factors: size, structure, procedure followed by the committee, selection of members, and viewpoints and tenure of the individual members. The optimum size of a committee is that which assures a minimum number of members whose combined knowledge, experience, and other personal requirements are "sufficient to produce a satisfactory solution of the problem." They have a membership of between three and nine persons. The structure of the committee should be simple and inexpensive. It should have a chairman and a secretary. The relationship between the committee and the rest of the organization should be clearly defined. The procedure followed by committees should be efficient. Members should be notified early of the time, objectives, and agenda of the meetings. The leadership of the committee determines to a large extent its success. Members should be chosen on the basis of their personal traits and the departments that they represent. Background, experience, training, intelligence, compatibility and tenure determine the value of a member's contributions to the committee's work.

The advantages of the committee are that it facil-
icates group judgment, develops plans and policies for the entire organization rather than some vested interests, encourages well-balanced decisions, aids in the application of the Principle of Participation, promotes coordination, helps in the indoctrination of the participants with top management's philosophy, and informs top management of subordinates' problems.

The disadvantages of the committee are that it is slow, expensive, not suitable for line functions, not suitable for control, discourages decisions by individuals, does not permit clear individual responsibility for joint decisions, may represent a compromise rather than an integration of ideas, (which may also be an advantage in the sense that it may allow reaching a solution when integration is impossible), may be dominated by the chairman, and may refuse to dissolve when its objectives have been accomplished.

The significance of the discussion presented in this chapter is that committee action does not necessarily result in a sound and accurate organization and communication process. The above discussion, which essentially provides a description of committee work as it is found in business and industry in the United States, indicates that communication of ideas in the formulation of policy (or planning, deciding ultimate objectives; or any other task
which may be assigned to a committee), is far from ideal. Most business committees, as we know them today, can stand a great deal of improvement which will increase their effectiveness and efficiency tremendously. Let us turn now to a consideration of some experiments that have been conducted by various social scientists for the purpose of improving the results of committee work.
CHAPTER VIII

AN EVALUATION OF EXPERIMENTAL WORK OF VARIOUS SOCIAL SCIENCES AND A DISCUSSION OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNICATION IN COMMITTEES

A. Introduction

Three kinds of managements may be distinguished: (1) conventional, (2) systematic, and (3) scientific.

Conventional management refers to practices that have been developed as a result of trial and error, or application of rule-of-thumb methods learned from experience. The weakness of this kind of management is that it can never be better than the intelligence and experience of the executives concerned. Systematic management realizes that other organizations may employ better methods than those used by the executives under consideration, and that practices of other concerns should be surveyed and adopted when found superior to those employed presently. Scientific management utilizes the scientific method in the solution of business problems. It employs certain principles, methods, and viewpoints in the solution process. It uses rational analysis and controlled experimentation as the chief tools in obtaining the best possible results. ¹

The conduct of committee work can also follow one of these three practices: conventional, systematic, and scientific. Most of the literature of management on the subject of committees and conferences could be classified as systematic. Various writers have written of their experiences with committees and experiences in various organizations. Some of it is conventional: the writers gave account of how committee and conference work was practiced in the one company with which they were familiar.

Very little, if any, of the literature on committees and conferences could be classified as scientific. Scientific management relies upon controlled experimentation and rational analysis of such experimentation. Almost no controlled experimentation has taken place in the general area of committee work. In fact, until very recently, the tools and techniques, as well as the theory that is so essential for any scientific experimentation, were undeveloped. To be sure, logical speculation about the effectiveness of committees and the best procedures for their operations were abundant. However, such logical deduction could not be proven through the use of the scientific method, and there was no way of telling whether the conclusions and recommendations could be relied upon. Some of the writings were no doubt good, and if followed carefully, could have resulted in effective committee communi-
cation. But how could an executive tell which of the writings could be relied upon? There was no reliable scientific test which could be depended upon to answer this question.

In recent years, interest in the subject of communication in committees and other small groups has been growing very rapidly. This interest has transcended the limits of any one discipline. Psychologists, sociologists, social psychologists and other social scientists were found to be most qualified to pursue such scientific controlled experimentation. They have been employed very extensively by the various military services who spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on committee and conference communication. Many large firms have also employed professional social scientists for recommendations as to how the work of their respective committees could be improved. Smaller organizations with intelligent alertness for anything new that may improve their operations, but without the funds to conduct independent research, have been following very closely the results reported by any of the research projects going on in various places in this country.

Some of the more important institutions that have been conducting research in the area of communication in committees and other small groups are the Institute of
Social Research, the University of Michigan; the Industrial Relations Section, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; the Laboratory of Social Relations, Harvard University; the Industrial Relations Section and the Organizational Behavior Project, Princeton University; the Department of Industrial Management, the University of Illinois; the Department of Industrial Management, Carnegie Institute of Technology; the University of Chicago; the University of Southern California, and many others.

The topics which will be surveyed in this chapter are as follows: (1) a comparison of group thinking in committees with individual thinking; (2) extent of permanency of effects of participation in group discussion upon members' viewpoints; and (3) uniformities in the behavior of committees.

The experiments surveyed in this chapter seem to the writer to be the most directly concerned with the topics pertinent to the discussion of communication in small committees. In the writer's opinion, they seem to represent the most pertinent experimental work done in the general field which is the subject of this project.

B. A Comparison of Group Thinking in Committees With Individual Thinking

The formulation of policy in committees involves
communication among the members leading to a group decision as to the best policy among various alternative ones. It has already been pointed out above, in Chapter VI, what are the rational aspects of policy formulation. We have employed the concept "problem-solving" in a very broad sense to designate the rational process of choosing the single best policy among a number of alternatives. This broad sense of the concept "problem-solving" is current in the literature of the various social sciences. "Problem-solving," as used in this project, refers to the process of arriving at a decision concerning an uncertain or problematic situation. When conceived so broadly, problem-solving is involved in both planning and policy formulation.

The difference between planning and policy formulation is in the nature of the solution reached through the process of problem-solving. Planning should result in a "specification of the factors, forces, effects, and relationships that enter into and are required for the solution of a business problem."\(^2\) A plan is a broader concept than a policy. Planning should supply the basis for action. Policy formulation should result in a guide for the action and thought of the organization. While

\(^2\) Davis, op. cit., p. 43.
planning may indicate how action should be carried out, policy formulation should indicate why it should take place. Policy formulation and planning are not synonymous. They attempt to achieve solutions that are different in nature and purpose. They are similar, however, in the sense that both planning and policy formulation require a decision of the single best alternative among several ones in the solution of a problematic situation. Both may therefore be considered problem-solving processes if this concept is defined to be as broad as has been done in this project.

Is group thinking in committees superior to that of individual thinking? This is a key question, the answer to which will give us a legitimate reason either to justify or condemn the institution of committees in business organizations.

Formulation of policy in committees may have other advantages than that of superior thinking.

Before attempting to consider this problem, it may be worthwhile to point out from the outset that it is conceivable that even if thinking in committees is found to be inferior to that of individual thinking, it may still be preferable to employ the committee technique to accomplish other objectives than that of the best possible policy. The advantages of participation as it affects
morale has been mentioned above, and will not be dealt with here any more. We shall confine our examination to the determination of whether the group is superior to the individual in formulating policy by comparing their relative success in solving problems. This is based on the belief that the intellectual requirements for solving problems are also operative in the case of formulating the best possible policy.

**Blocks to solution of problems by individuals**

Professor Norman R. F. Maier has been interested in this general area and has conducted a considerable amount of experimental work in the last two decades to determine these blocks.³

He found that the most important block to an individual's ability to solve problems requiring reasoning was "habitual or first ideas which tend to perpetuate themselves." The subjects in his experiments, when observed under problem-solving conditions, have persisted in working along the line of the first idea. He discovered

that when an individual attempts to solve a problem, he explores certain directions. A direction in this technical sense refers to a number of related ideas. Direction is thus seen as a selective and screening device. Our direction determines the ideas that we select for further consideration in the problem-solving reasoning process. These ideas are suggested to us by things we see, by remarks of others, and by other chance events. Direction is thus seen to be related to the notion of "frame of reference" and "set" which we have discussed in some detail above. It may be worthwhile to point out that "frame of reference" is established by previous indoctrination. Since the managerial process tends to indoctrinate executives with one particular philosophy—objective consideration of business problems is inhibited, except when the solutions to these problems happen to fall within the established and induced frame of reference for the particular executive.

If all the necessary conditions for solving a problem are given, a successful solution will depend, to a large extent, upon direction of attention to certain factors in the situation. Failure to do so may result in an incorrect solution. From the standpoint of increasing the probability of finding a correct solution, it may be

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4See Chapter IV.
preferable to have no direction at all. This may leave the mind of the problem-solver open for the correct direction. Maier says in this connection that "the direction of thinking has momentum and tends to perpetuate itself."

This suggests that one way to improve the results of problem-solving is to be aided by others in the choice of direction of thinking to be pursued. The value of any idea that occurs in the process of solving a problem depends upon the direction. No matter how brilliant an idea may be, its relevance to the problem can never exceed the relevance of the direction of which this idea is a part.

This theory was the basis for a series of experiments aiming at improving problem-solving power. Subjects were trained in the course of these experiments: (1) to realize the inadequacy of first ideas which are usually incorrect when complex problems are first encountered, (2) the whole notion of direction of thought and the nature of its selective and screening process, and (3) to be constantly aware of the danger involved in the operation of the selective process, and the necessity to keep an open mind for new, better, and more relevant ideas.

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directions.

With this brief analysis of blocks to successful problem-solving by individuals, we may proceed to make a more direct comparison between individual and group reasoning in the solution of complex problems.

**Individual versus group thinking**

We have discussed above the problem of direction as it affects problem-solving in individuals. Let us proceed now to make a more direct comparison of individuals and groups as to their effectiveness in arriving at a solution.

The problem of whether thinking in groups results in better decisions than individual thinking has been a subject of interest to many people for many years. Some of the scientists that have been interested in the problem recently are G. B. Watson, South, Barton, Gordon, Thie,

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and many others.

Watson found that groups succeeded better than individuals in building up as many words as possible from a given set of letters. He also found, however, that the combined results of a number of individuals were superior to the results of the same group working together. Since the problem was relatively easy, it is understandable why he obtained such results. It merely means that if a problem is relatively easy, we may expect a group to do better than the best single individual but worse than the combined results of all members working individually.

The implication of this experiment to the problem of policy-formulation is simply that if the problems involved in policy-formulation are relatively easy, it may be more economical in some cases to leave policy-formulation to individuals. If the principal determinants of policies are obvious, individual executives may formulate such policies independently more economically than if all such policies were to be formulated in committees. In other words, ignoring the advantages of participation and the favorable morale resulting from it, the solution of easy problems may be left to individuals. Similarly, the

secretary of a committee may correspond with members and coordinate proposals in advance with the objective in mind to obtain concurrence on some problems, and thus confine the agenda to points of disagreement. In this manner, the formulation of relatively easy and simple policies does not come up for discussion during the committee meeting. The committee may thus spend its entire time on policies which involve more complicated problems. Let us proceed to see what happens in cases of more complex problems.

A comparison of individuals and small groups in the rational solution of complex problems

The formulation of most business policies involves far more complex problems. So many interacting variables may be in operation that to make an intelligent decision is a very difficult task. One recent experimental study that was designed to compare individual and small groups in the rational solution of complex problems was conducted under the general supervision of Marjorie E. Shaw.11

Her study aimed at presenting individuals and groups with actual complex problems which required real and serious thinking to arrive at a correct solution. There was only one correct solution to each problem. The

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11Marjorie E. Shaw, "A Comparison of Individuals
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Problems," American Journal of Psychology, Vol. XLIV,
1932, pp. 491-504.
nature of the problems was such that a sudden insight into the situation which would give the correct answer was impossible. Correct solutions depended upon reasoning through a number of steps. The subjects used for the purpose of the experiment were graduate students at Columbia University. The experiment was divided into two halves given within two weeks of each other. Each half contained three problems. There were five groups of four men each and five groups of four women each. The individuals taking part in the experiment were nineteen men and nineteen women. The groups were so composed as to minimize any bias that might be inherent in the samples. Each group had an appointed chairman, and almost all the details of the conversations that took place in the groups were recorded. Individuals, too, were requested to record how they solved the problem. The groups were requested to cooperate in solving the problem.

The results of the experiment show that in the first half of the experiment only five correct solutions, out of a possible sixty-three, were presented by individuals. In the case of the groups, there were eight correct solutions out of a possible fifteen. In other words, only 7.9 per cent of solutions turned in by individual subjects were correct against 53 per cent of the solutions turned in by groups. An analysis of the
The solving process indicated that when errors were made, they occurred at a much earlier step in the course of the solution by individuals than in the case of groups. In the second half, the results were similar to those of the first half. Only 5.7 per cent of the individual subjects worked out the problems against 27 per cent of the groups.

Notes taken in the course of the communication process in the groups indicated that some members participated more than others. In some groups co-operation was relatively good while in others it was poor. The notes also revealed that in the group in which a higher percentage of correct answers was obtained, participation of the various members was more equal than in groups in which the results were less satisfactory. The records also indicate that the groups which obtained a high rate of correct results checked their results as they went along against the given conditions. In some cases this extra precaution eliminated errors which would have rendered the results incorrect.  

When all groups are considered together, three times

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12 It should be noted that in order to minimize the possibility that one group was composed of four superior individuals and that those who worked in groups "were on the whole neither inferior to nor superior to those working as separate individuals, shifts were made so that the composition of the group differed in the two halves of the experiment." Ibid., p. 494.
as many suggestions were rejected by another member of the group as by the proposers of the suggestions. Twice as many correct suggestions as incorrect were made, and five times as many incorrect as correct suggestions were rejected. From all this we may assume that the supremacy of the groups could be attributed to the rejection of incorrect suggestions or to checking of errors. Apparently in the case of individuals, incorrect ideas escape their notice.

In summary, we may conclude that in comparing the ability of individuals and co-operating groups of four individuals in solving complex problems, it appears that:

(1) Groups seem assured of a much larger proportion of correct solutions than individuals do.
(2) This seems to be due to the rejection of incorrect suggestions and the checking of errors in groups.
(3) In groups of the size here used more incorrect suggestions are rejected by another member of the group than by the individual who proposed the suggestion.
(4) All members do not co-operate or participate equally in the solution of the problems.
(5) In erroneous solutions (where it is possible to determine the exact point at which the first error was made), groups do not err so soon as the average individual does.

These conclusions based on the experiment described above indicate clearly that in the case of formulation of policy which involves the consideration of many complex and interacting factors, the committee technique is

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 504.\]
superior to individual decision, and that it should be employed when the situation warrants a more adequate and reliable solution than individual solution.

Effects of co-operation and competition upon the effectiveness of group thinking

We have given consideration above to a comparison of individual and group thinking. It seems desirable to consider another phase of this general problem of cooperative versus independent problem solving.

Does a committee atmosphere of co-operation or competition affect the communication process in the group? Morton Deutsch has studied this problem for a considerable length of time.14

The purpose of Deutsch's experiment was to study the effect of co-operation and competition upon group process. He established ten experimental groups, each composed of five undergraduate students. Two groups were paired off in such a manner as to assure equated

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He then formed five pairs. He assigned one group of each pair by random selection to the co-operative "treatment," and the other to the competitive "treatment." He produced a co-operative atmosphere by issuing instructions which were intended to impress upon each group as a whole that it would be rated in comparison with the other four groups. All the members of each group were told that they would receive the same grade, which would be determined relatively to the other four groups. In other words, in the co-operative situation, all members within any one group were granted the same grade, while grades varied among the various groups. This induced the members to co-operate among themselves and attempt to perform better than the other groups. There was no inducement for the members within any one group to compete with the other group members.

Deutsch explains the procedure as follows: "All groups met for one period of three hours, at different times of the week for six consecutive weeks. During the first week the ten groups were observed and rated as they discussed a human relations problem; the ratings of the discussion productivity were used to pair off equated groups. Five pairs were then formed. One group of each pair was then assigned by random procedure to the co-operative treatment, the other to the competitive treatment." See in his "An Experimental Study of the Effects of Co-operation and Competition Upon Group Process," Human Relations, 1949, Vol.2, p. 229. The "productivity" of each group refers to its communication effectiveness as measured by a scale prepared by the experimenters for the purpose of this study.
A competitive atmosphere was produced by issuing instructions to the members of the competitive group to the effect that each member would be graded in comparison with the other four members making up his group. The rating that each member would receive was to be different from that of the other four members, and was to be determined on the basis of their individual relative contribution to the solution of the problem to be considered. Detailed information was recorded by trained observers and some was also collected from the subjects.

The results of the experiment showed that the subjects that were induced to co-operate evidenced more of the following characteristics than did those induced to compete:

1. Co-ordination of efforts
2. Diversity in amount of contributions per member
3. Sub-division of activity
4. Achievement pressure
5. Productivity of signs in the puzzle problem
6. Attentiveness to fellow members
7. Mutual comprehension of communication
8. Orientation and orderliness
9. Productivity per unit time
10. Quality of product and of discussions
11. Friendliness during discussion
12. Favorable evaluation of the group and its products
13. Group functions
14. Perception of favorable effects upon fellow members
15. Incorporation of the attitude of the generalized others

The Indiv. comp. showed more of the following:

1. Production of signs in the human relations
(ii) Individual functions.  

What are the practical implications of these results for committee work? It seems clear that a co-operative attitude on the part of the members in the committee will result in higher committee productivity than that which will result if the atmosphere is competitive. It is difficult, however, to induce a co-operative atmosphere directly. What is needed is a long range program to improve human relations among the committee members, which in turn will bring about a co-operative spirit. When the individual members do not conceive of their own interests and goals to be identical and parallel to those of the entire group constituting the committee, "the inter-communication of ideas, the co-ordination of efforts, the friendliness and pride in one's group which are basic to group harmony appear to be disrupted." This would suggest that to derive maximum results from a committee, the informal personal relations between the members must be congenial and friendly in their daily contacts. Within the setting of the committee, the chairman must see to it that a co-operative atmosphere prevails rather than a competitive one.

Essentially the same results were obtained by Marquis, Guetzkow and Heyns. They call the competitive members who were motivated by their own achievements as "self-oriented." They indicate the same advantages for the task-oriented committees or conferences that Deutsch discovered in the co-operative groups.

C. Extent of Permanency of Effects of Participation in Group Discussions Upon Members' Viewpoints.

What is the transformation that takes place in the individual participating in a committee discussion? We say that participation induces individuals to carry out more willingly what they decide together. Let us see how the group influences the participating individuals.

We have defined the term "frame of reference" as the general structuring that the individual tends to impose on a social field. It refers to the subjective orientation of the individual which causes him "to structure" his perception of a situation in a certain way, as well as the entire context which he provides to the specific perception. Does such a "frame of reference" exist in the case of a group of members taking part in a com-

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Members of committees have a common frame of reference

Muzafar Sherif performed an experiment which among other things suggests that a group of individuals will have a common "frame of reference" which will aid the members of the group in evaluating situations in the same manner that the frame of reference of individuals aids them in evaluation of sense perception. 18

For the purposes of this experiment, Sherif utilized the autokinetic effect. The autokinetic effect refers to the illusion of motion on the part of a small light which rests stationary in a completely dark room, in which absolutely nothing else is visible. If the light is presented repeatedly to a person, he may see the light appearing in different places each time, even though in reality it remains in the same spot.

Subjects were experimented upon separately, and were then brought into a group situation. This was done to see the effect of the group on individuals after they were given the opportunity to express their own opinions.

In another set of experiments, the subjects were introduced into a group situation first, and only then experimented upon individually. This second procedure was intended to indicate whether the perceptual norm that was established in a group situation would continue to determine the subject's reaction to the same situation when he faced it alone. This last point is of extreme importance for the understanding of committee work.

The results show very clearly that when individuals "perceive movements which lack any other standard of comparison, they subjectively establish a range of extent and a point (a standard or norm) within that range which is peculiar to the individual, that may differ from the range and point (standard or norm) established by other individuals." (Italics in original). This only means that in the absence of any objective standard with which to measure any phenomenon, a purely subjective standard or norm is established, which differs from one individual to another. The subjectively established standard is used in future encounters to determine whether they are "short, long, or medium" within the range peculiar to the subject. It was also found that once a range and a point of refer-

ence within that range is established by each individual, there is a tendency to use these in subsequent experiments in other ways. All this points out clearly that we have a tendency to experience things in relation to some frame of reference.

Let us now find out what happens to an individual who is in a group situation (such as a committee meeting, for instance). Sherif found out that when placed in a group, the distances reported by the member tended to converge to a common range and norm. In other words, presence in a group situation affected the ranges and norms established individually. Furthermore, the common ranges and norms established while members were in groups tended to become their future frame of reference. This frame of reference thus established in the presence of the other group members created in the participating individuals "certain modes of readiness, certain established norms, which enter to modify" their reactions. In short, presence in the group produced a common frame of reference in all participants, which each member used when facing the same situation alone.

Sherif points out that the formation of a group frame of reference was a cumulative process. Each expressed judgment was influenced by all the previously mentioned opinions. The leader influenced the group, but
was in turn influenced by his followers.

The results of this experiment have very important implications for the understanding of the process of communication in committees. It suggests that contacts between committee members establishes a common frame of reference which is in essence a common system of beliefs, values, customs, conventions and goals. This common frame of reference is in operation not only during committee meetings, but becomes the permanent possession of each member even at times when he is doing work which does not relate to committee discussions and decisions. It is what is commonly referred to in management literature as "self-co-ordination." The common frame of reference will have a particularly strange effect in cases where "the stimulus field is not well structured." The common frame of reference of committee members will be a result of a converging process toward a common norm. It is very unlikely that any member will succeed in maintaining an independent frame of reference for any length of time. Sooner or later all deviators adopt this group frame of reference. Participation in committee meetings is thus seen to aid in establishing a uniform philosophy of management among all the member-executives.
A comparison of the permanency of committee decisions with those reached in other forums

In a series of experiments that were conducted under the general supervision of Kurt Lewin, the relative permanence of effects of different kinds of decisions were examined. The purpose of his experiments was to determine the best way to change eating habits of the population in order to shift demand from foods that were scarce during the war to other foods which were more abundantly available.

In his various writings he compares the results that he and his subordinates obtained from three methods that he examined, individual instruction, lecturing, and group decisions. The results of the experiments indicate that group discussion leading to a group decision had a much more pronounced effect and more permanent one than both lecture and individual instruction. He was quite surprised to find out that individual instruction was less effective than group decision. In one experiment 32 per cent of the participants of the group decision carried out the decision while only three per cent of those who attended lectures carried out the instructor's suggestions.

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In another experiment, almost twice as many participants in group discussion and decision as those who received individual instruction carried out the desired change. It is interesting to note that in a follow-up check some time later, it was found that a larger percentage of both discussion participants and individually instructed persons had changed their old habits and had started to comply with the decision.

Apparently, the more permanent results achieved in the case of discussion and decision of participants could be attributed to a development of a more entrenched frame of reference which was a result of more pronounced personal involvement. Involvement refers to a certain diffusion that takes place between the individual and the group. A second reason for the superior results obtained by means of discussion and group decision is the stronger motivation that is developed in the participants. Discussion induces stronger involvement, which in turn causes individuals to express their motivations. When motivations become explicit, there is a stronger personal commitment for action.

In conclusion, the results of these experiments would suggest that group decisions reached in committees will tend to give better results than any other technique. A larger proportion of the participants will carry out
the decision than either those that have been lectured to or instructed individually. It also appears that decisions reached in the setting of committees will tend to guide the activities of the participants for a longer period of time than would be the case of lectures or individual instruction. In fact, there is some evidence that group decisions become more effective with passage of time.

D. Uniformities in the Behavior of Committees

For a number of years the Laboratory of Social Relations of Harvard University has been studying any uniformities that may be found in the behavior of committees, conferences, discussion groups, work groups, and other such small systems. The groups that have been observed in the Laboratory range from two to ten members. Their studies are based on the assumption that there are certain conditions which are present to some degree in all problem solving small groups which are inherent in the "nature of the process of interaction or communication itself." A great number of cases have been studied in order that conditions associated with individual cases would be "varied enough to approximate randomness."21

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21 For a technical description of the method, see Robert F. Bales, Interaction Process Analysis, A Method for the Study of Small Groups (continued on next page)
The "standard diagnostic task group" that is being studied by Dr. Bales and his associates discusses under test conditions some human relations problems in their capacity as a staff committee. The members are requested to submit their decisions to a superior line executive. The uniformities found in the interaction of such groups are characteristic of problem-solving, newly-formed, initially leaderless, committees. The committee is thus presented with the problem of self organization: determining the leaders, the parts and roles each of them has to play, and the order of status and prestige of the committee members.

The twelve categories

The most important element in the method is a system of categories into which all remarks said in the group discussion may be classified. There are twelve such categories.\(^2\) The following are the twelve observation categories as used by Bales and his associates:

Expressive- Integrative
Social-Emotional Area: A
Positive Reactions
(1. Shows solidarity, raises other's status, gives help, reward.
(2. Shows tension release, jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction.
(3. Agrees, shows passive acceptance, understands, concurs, complies.

Instrumental- Adaptive
Task Area: B
Attempted Answers
(4. Gives suggestions, direction, implying autonomy for others.
(5. Gives opinions, evaluation analysis, expresses feeling, wish.
(6. Gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms.

Instrumental- Adaptive
Task Area: C
Questions
(7. Asks for orientation, information, repetition, confirmation.
(8. Asks for opinion, evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling.
(9. Asks for suggestions, directions, possible ways of action.

Expressive- Integrative
Social-Emotional Area: D
Negative Reactions
(10. Disagrees, shows passive rejection, formality, without help.
(11. Shows tension, asks for help, draws out of field.
(12. Shows antagonism, deflates other's status, defends or asserts self.

Bales suggests a subclassification of system problems to which each pair of categories is most relevant:

c. Problems of Control: categories 4 and 9.
e. Problems of Tension-Management: categories 2 and 11.
f. Problems of Integration: categories 1 and 12.

Problems of orientation are those which attempt to ascertain what the situation is like. Problems of evaluation refer to those which decide the attitude which should be taken towards the situation. Problems of con-
trol are those that are related to the determination of what should be done about it. Classes d, e, and f are obvious and need no additional clarification. This is approximately the logical order of phases of discussions in committees, and other similar groups: orientation, evaluation, control, decisions, integration, with tension management spread all over the discussion period.23

Profiles of the communication process in committees

A distribution of all communiques among the twelve categories listed above are referred to by Bales as profiles. Various groups have different profiles. It was found that committees and other groups that were particularly successful had a higher than average rate of suggestions followed by positive reactions and questions. "Attempted Answers," (B) which give orientation, opinion and suggestion are almost always more numerous than "Questions" (C). Similarly, "Positive Reactions," (A) are usually more numerous than "Negative Reactions" (D), which shows disagreement, tension, and antagonism. If this last statement were not so, it is difficult to see how a committee could have any beneficial results at all.

"Attempted Answers" (or Initial Acts) account for

about 57 per cent of total activity in the groups. "Positive and Negative Reactions" account for the rest. Quantitatively and qualitatively, it was found that communication in committees "is a process consisting of action followed by reaction." Looking at the Reaction side alone (about 50 per cent), we see that half of it (25 per cent of total communiques) is Positive and terminates a discussion on points introduced by initial questions. The remaining 25 per cent consists of "Negative Reactions" which usually precipitates further discussion in the form of "Attempted Answers." The remaining 13 per cent, about half (7 per cent) are "Questions" which precipitate attempted answers. 

Who-to-whom matrix

Another direction of analysis that this method facilitates is the recording of who-said-to-whom. A matrix refers to the "total number of different possible combinations of who is speaking and to whom for a given period." The patterns of matrices for various groups differ. Groups with no leaders, or with weak leaders, were found to have more equal participation than groups with a leader of a higher status. It was found that for a particular group, those members who speak most are in

return spoken to most often. Frequent initiators of communiques tended to give out more information and opinion to specific individuals than they received. On the other hand, low frequency initiators of communication were found to give out more requests for information than they received. High-ranking men tend to have more "Initial Actions" (B), while low-ranking men have more "Reactions," both positive and negative. Quantitative differences seemed to correspond closely to qualitative differences of member roles. The members that participated most were found to be also the most "productive" members of the committees.25

In regard to the size of the group, it was found that in large groups (more than five members), the leader tended to speak to the group as a whole rather than to individual members. All other members tended to speak to the leader or other specific individuals rather than to the group as a whole.26 As groups increase in size, a larger relative proportion of communication is addressed to the leader, and a smaller proportion to other members.


With increase in size, the communication pattern tends to centralize around the committee chairman. Data available indicate that with groups of three or four, the communication pattern is more evenly distributed than in larger groups.

**Phase movements**

Phase movements refer to changes in quality of activity of a committee while solving problems as related to the passage of time. The analysis of phase movement was done by dividing a meeting into three equal parts and then comparing the differences in the three patterns. The result of this kind of analysis indicates that for problem-solving groups ("full-fledged") there developed a typical phase movement through the meeting: "the process tended to move qualitatively from a relative emphasis on attempts to solve problems of orientation ("what is it") to attempts to solve problems of evaluation ("how do we feel about it") and subsequently to attempts to solve problems of control ("what shall we do about it"). Concurrent with these transitions the relative frequencies negative reactions (disagreement, tension, and antagonism), and positive reactions (agreement, tension release, and showing solidarity), tends to increase." (Italics in
The reason for this order seems to be "on the interdependence of problems" in systems of social interaction. When problems of arriving at a common useful orientation and evaluation of the situation have not been solved by the committee members, attempts to control ("what shall we do about it") will not succeed. A decision is finally made. We also have to consider another phase of the committee interaction which relates to problems of tension management. The participants must solve the social and emotional relationships which data obtained from experiments indicate to become most acute after problems of orientation and evaluation have been resolved. When a decision has been reached and the social-emotional problems successfully resolved, the data indicates joking, laughing, and other such acts which are the results of awareness that the task has been accomplished.

This kind of experimental research that is being carried on at the Laboratory of Social Relations under the direction of Dr. Robert Bales holds the key to many perplexing problems of committee work. It would seem that if a detailed and thorough correlation is made between

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the extent of the committees' success in problem-solving and the various factors mentioned in the course of this section, we may learn which specific elements are associated with effective and efficient committee work. Conclusions obtained from such correlations may indicate to us what kind of training participants in committees should receive.

E. Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to survey what seemed to the writer to be the most pertinent experimental work to the subject of communication in committees, and small groups in general.

The first problem to be considered was whether group thinking in committees is superior to individual thinking. Problem-solving in individuals follows certain directions. When the direction is the wrong one, a block for correct solution is formed. This usually is the reason for inability of individuals to solve problems effectively. Direction relates to the "frame of reference" of the problem-solver. Frame of reference is established by previous indoctrination. Since the managerial process tends to indoctrinate executives with one particular philosophy which guides thinking in a certain direction—objective consideration of business problems is inhibited.
An exception to this statement may be the case when the solution to these problems happen to fall within the established frame of reference for the particular executive.

When the problem is not very complex it was found that the group, thinking collectively, did better than any single individual, but not as well as all individuals taken together. This would seem to suggest that policies and other decisions which do not involve very complex problems may be left to individuals for solution and not be brought up for committee discussion.

When the problems were very complex, it was found that collective thinking in groups was definitely superior to individual solution. This seems to be due to the rejection of incorrect suggestions and thus removing blocks to effective problem solving. Not all participants contribute equally to the communication process in committees. It was also shown that when groups do err, the stages in which errors occur are not as early as in the case of individuals. These results indicate that when the policies to be formulated are very complex, the committee technique should be used as much as possible to assure the best and most effective policy.

It was also indicated that when the atmosphere prevailing during committee meetings is that of co-operation
among the members, the results obtained were better than if the atmosphere was such that the committee members felt that they were competing against each other in some way or another. This would suggest that the executive is responsible for the successful operation of the committee and should try to bring about such a spirit of cooperation and attempt to eliminate any feelings of competition among the members. Such a practice will contribute to better committee results.

There is experimental evidence to the view that sitting in a group such as a committee creates a common frame of reference to all the members of the group. Frame of reference refers to general structuring that the individual tends to impose on the social field. It refers to the subjective orientation (systems of values and beliefs) of the individual which causes him to structure his perception of a situation in a certain way, as well as the entire context which he provides to the specific perception. It would therefore, appear that the committee is an excellent device for top management for indoctrinating the various executives with a common management philosophy. Such common management philosophy is nothing but a common frame of reference. This common frame of reference is formed in committee meetings, but remains an every day tool of the individual in solving one's problems.
How permanent is the influence of a decision reached in a committee meeting? There is experimental evidence which indicates that a decision reached in a committee is more effective than other techniques. It seems to be more effective than listening to a lecture, or even more than that of a conference between a superior and his subordinates. Apparently the psychological effect of a group meeting is superior to that of any other technique. It was also shown experimentally that aside from a higher percentage of compliance, the time in which the decision was in effect was much longer than any other form of decision. In fact, there is evidence that with passage of time, a larger percentage of compliance with a group decision is achieved. The greater effectiveness of group decision than the other techniques could be attributed to more individual involvement and greater motivation which group decision entails. These result in a more pronounced frame of reference for all participants. All this would indicate that the use of the committee should be extended as much as possible to assure higher compliance with decisions.

Are there any uniformities in the behavior of committee members? The answer to this question is in the affirmative. A system was developed by Dr. Bales and his associates by which uniformities of behavior of many com-
committees can be studied and how specific aspects of these uniformities correlate with effective performance of committees. The groups tested were assigned a problem to be solved. The profiles of such "average" committees, and other groups was determined by dividing all communication in committees and other groups into twelve categories. The categories used are: showing solidarity, showing tension-release, agreement, giving suggestions, giving opinion, asking for suggestion, disagreement, showing tension, and showing antagonism. Most of the profiles are very similar to each other. Another thing which the technique attempts to study is the who-to-whom matrix, or the distribution of messages among the various participants. Analysis of the data indicates that leaderless groups have more equal participation. This would suggest that if we wish to spread participation as much as possible, the committee should not have autocratic leadership. Data also show that the correlation between quantitative and qualitative participation is rather high. When the group is larger than the five members, the leader seems to address the group as a whole rather than individuals. Other members tend to speak mostly to the leader. To keep the discussion informal it would seem desirable to keep the size of the committee at about five members. Committees with membership of three or four seem to have a
more even participation of members. When communication in small groups is analyzed as a function of time, it is found that the order of discussion is as follows: problems of orientation, problems of evaluation, problems of control, problems of decision-making, problems of tension-management, and problems of integration. This phase movement seemed to be rather typical of all committees. There is no doubt that this technique is a very powerful one in determining the effectiveness of any specific committee. When the data for any specific committee is compared with the data that were established for many other committees and when more specific conditions between effectiveness of communication and some specific details in the communication process of committees are worked out, we may have an effective tool of analyzing what is wrong with any committee and how to improve its effectiveness.
CHAPTER IX

AN EVALUATION OF EXPERIMENTAL WORK OF VARIOUS SOCIAL SCIENCES AND A DISCUSSION OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNICATION IN COMMITTEES (continued)

The present chapter, like the preceding one, is devoted to a discussion and an evaluation of certain experimental work done by various social scientists which contributes to the understanding of communication in committees. The following are the topics discussed in the present chapter: (1) the relationship between cohesiveness, uniformity, and homogeneity of small groups and the communication process; (2) effects of communication patterns on group performance; (3) the contribution of the discussion leader to the quality of group thinking; and (4) role-playing and self-evaluation as devices of improving communication in committees.

A. The Relationship Between Cohesiveness, Uniformity, and Homogeneity of Small Groups and the Communication Process

The Research Center of Group Dynamics of the University of Michigan has been conducting experimental research to determine the relationship between the cohesiveness, uniformity, and homogeneity of groups and the communication process in them. This research project has been conducted
under the general supervision of Dr. Leon Festinger. 1

The pressure towards uniformity among members of any committee is the most important reason for the communication process among the participants. Members of committees, or any other similar groups, are constantly pressed towards some kind of agreement about points at issue and about a certain behavior pattern for the group as a whole and the individuals taking part in it. Festinger says that this pressure is a resultant of two major components: "social reality" and "group locomotion." 2

When members can depend upon physical reality to confirm the validity of their beliefs, the pressure to communicate with others concerning this belief would be very low. On the other hand, when a member is unable for some reason to check the validity of his beliefs against physical reality, he will be induced to rely upon "social reality." Social reality refers in this context to the belief system of the proper social referent, in our case, the committee as a group. If a discrepancy exists between the beliefs of the individual member and that of the col-

1 Festinger's major associates in the conduct of this research project were Kurt Back, Stanley Schachter, John Thibaut, Harold H. Kelley, Bernard Hymovitch, Harold Gerard, and Burt Raven.

lective belief system of the group referent, pressure for communication will become strong. It is significant to point out that such pressure for communication between individual members over a discrepancy in beliefs will take place only if the individual considers himself part of the referent group. The collective belief system of a group which is not considered by him to be his referent will not have any effect upon him, and no pressure for communication will come into force.

The second pressure towards uniformity in a group such as a committee is "group locomotion." Group locomotion refers to the desirability and need for the group to move towards a certain goal. To the extent that uniformity is considered to promote group progress, and to the extent that there is identity in the interests of the individuals and the group, more uniformity among the members may be expected.

The determinants of the pressure to communicate in a committee

In line with what has been said above, the more pronounced is the perceived discrepancy in the beliefs of members of a committee (a referent group), the more pressure there will be to communicate. If there are no differences in opinion among members, uniformity exists already and there will therefore be no need for communication.
Similarly, pressure to communicate will rise the more relevant is the subject of communication to the successful progress of the committee. This is obvious. We cannot expect any pressure for communication in a committee meeting if the subject is irrelevant to the effective and efficient execution of the duties of the committee. Schachter successfully corroborated this view in an experimental study. Schachter created artificial situations in which certain topics were made relevant to certain groups and irrelevant to others. Stronger forces to communicate existed where they were relevant to the operation of the groups observed.

Cohesiveness of the members of a committee also tends to increase pressure for more communication in the group. Cohesiveness of a committee refers to "the resultant of all the forces acting on the members to remain in the group. These forces may depend on the attractiveness or unattractiveness of either the prestige of the group, members in the group, or the activities in which the group engages. If the total attraction toward the group is zero, no forces to communicate should arise. . . . As the forces,

to remain in the group increase ... the pressure to communicate will increase.° Kurt Back tested this experimentally. He created groups of high and low cohesiveness. High cohesiveness was induced by creating various sources of attractions to the group: prestige attached to belonging, liking the members, and a possibility of getting a reward. For the more cohesive groups, communication in the groups was proceeding more effectively. It was more rapid, and more influence was exerted by the members. 5 All this provides experimental evidence to the validity of the management principle of organizational homogeneity. The principle refers to the phenomenon, long recognized in management literature, that "it is easier to develop and maintain morale when there is homogeneity of objectives, ideals, backgrounds, and philosophical concepts within the group." 6

The determinants of the communicants

We have already indicated above that most communication will be directed towards those whose beliefs are most dissimilar to those of the communicator. This was indicated


6Davis, op. cit., p. 562.
clearly in the experiment conducted by Schachter. In his experiment, he had one member who persisted in holding deviating opinions from those of the rest of the group. The results indicate that five times as many communiques were directed to the deviator than to any other member. The same results were obtained in another experiment. There, it was reported, between seventy to ninety per cent of the communications were directed to the members who held extreme views.

Both these experiments (reported by Schachter on the one hand and by Festinger and Thibaut on the other hand), also support the hypothesis that communication in committees will be larger to those members that are wanted as members of the committee; it is necessary to be members of the informal group as well. Psychologically speaking, only the members who make the informal committee as well compose the referent group. The concept of "referent group" is a corollary of the notion "group compatibility." Those who are not members of the group will receive less messages. Both of these studies mentioned last substantiated this view. In the study of Festinger and Thibaut, after some

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7 Stanley Schachter, op. cit., pp. 201-204.

subjects were conceived by the group not to belong to the psychological (or referent group), communication to them stopped almost completely. The same results were reported by Schachter. In effect, what these studies indicate is that as long as the deviator members were considered members of the group and there was any chance to persuade them, communication addressed to them continued. When the members realized that the deviators could not be persuaded, they were rejected from the psychological group and communication to them diminished. 9

The determinants of changes in the communicant

When the desire for uniformity in the opinions of the members of a committee is strong, the effect of the communication process is much better. When this desire is very pronounced, there is pressure on both the communicator and the communicant to reach an agreement. In the experiment cited above, by Festinger and Thibaut, 10 the groups that were pressed hardest to reach uniformity changed fastest. The group that was put under least pressure changed slowest.

The members' desire to remain in the group is another factor which induces the communicants to change. In one investigation, it was shown conclusively that in the


10 Festinger and Thibaut, op. cit., pp. 97-98.
more cohesive groups (groups in which the resultant force
to remain in the group was strong), more pressure could be
exerted on the individual to conform to the intentions of
the communiques. Some such conformity is beneficial in
that it improves the morale of the group, and induces a
somewhat similar philosophy of management. However, if
conformity goes too far, the committee may lose its usefulness. Conformity discourages committee members from arguing
their case, and thus reduces the effectiveness of the com-
munication process. In general, conformity should be held
to an absolute minimum consistent with good committee morale
and the necessity of some indoctrination. The more
attractive the group was to the members, the more effective
was the pressure that was brought to bear on deviators.
Kurt Back also tested this hypothesis and found that subjects
in the groups in which high cohesion was induced influenced
each other more effectively than the subjects in the low co-
hesive groups. 12

Membership in other committees, or any other outside
referent groups, will increase the difficulty of changing
one's opinion if it is accepted by the system of beliefs of
the other groups. This was indicated by the housing experi-


ment carried out by Festinger, Schachter, and Back. This study also showed what has already been mentioned above, that members were pushed out of a group as the perceived discrepancy in opinion among the group and the deviator increased. This was also indicated in another experiment mentioned above.13

The effects of differences in hierarchical statuses of committee members upon the communication process

Is the communication process in a committee affected by the presence of participants from different hierarchical statuses? There is experimental evidence that it is.

Kelley instructed individuals who belonged to a two level hierarchy (created experimentally) to solve a certain problem together. The conditions of the experiment were such that it was possible to communicate both within and between levels. He also ran control groups in which hierarchical differentials were not induced. The results of the test indicated that awareness of differentials of hierarchical status restrains communication between levels. He also found that communication which may arouse hostility in the upper group is not easily expressed in the mixed group, while communication of hostility towards the lower group is

more freely expressed by the members of higher hierarchical status. 14

One reason why there are restraints to inter-
hierarchy communication is that individuals who are of dif-
ferent statuses are not as likely to form friendships to
the same extent as people of the same status. Informal
friendship is an important factor in facilitating commun-
ication between individuals. 15 Another reason is that
executives who belong to different hierarchical statuses
usually have different educational and experiential back-
grounds. They may have different goals and motives. Their
systems of values may vary, as well as their levels of
intelligence.

It was also shown that in such mixed groups, the
pattern of communication is such that more messages are
addressed from the low status members to the high status
ones than the other way around. It was indicated experi-
mentally that the members of the group who were induced
to feel that they have a higher status than the rest of
the members tended to communicate between themselves.
Apparently, the status element was a factor in the formation

14 Harold H. Kelley, "Communication in Experimentally
Created Hierarchies," Human Relations, Vol. IV, No. 4,

of a Rumor: Its Origin and Spread," Human Relations,
of a referent group.\textsuperscript{16}

B. Effects of Communication Patterns on Group Performance

Professor Alex Bavelas and a group of associates at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have been interested in determining the effects of some patterns of communication on the effectiveness of small group performance. They attempted to investigate experimentally the relationship between certain communication patterns and the behavior of small groups. Two-way written communications were used. The task of the subjects was the simple collection of information.

The experimental work follows the theoretical work done by Bavelas.\textsuperscript{17} He conceived of cells connected to each other by channels as the communication net. A com-


munication pattern refers to the way cells are connected.

The groups experimented upon were made of five members. The problem assigned to the group could be solved only by pooling the information that each of the subjects in the group had. Some of the patterns examined were as follows:

![Diagram showing Circle, Chain, Y, and Wheel patterns]

The experiments were started out by Sidney Smith and were then continued under Harold F. Leavitt.

In Leavitt's experiment, the subjects were seated around a table and partitions separated them from each other. They were instructed to send messages only through the prescribed channels so that communication could follow the channels designed by the experimenters.


The results of the experiment indicated that in the case of the wheel, messages were sent by the peripheral men to the center, and when the subject in the center collected all the data necessary for the solution of the problem he sent it to the other four members. This organization developed in the fourth or fifth trial and remained in use to the end (there were fifteen trials). In the Y pattern, subject C assumed the central position. The central member collected all the messages and assumed decision-making authority. The organization here was developed more slowly than in the case of the wheel, but once achieved, it was just as stable. In the chain, it was C who received all the information from both ends, and made the final decision. The evolution of an organization was slower than in the case of the Y pattern. The circle showed no consistent operational organization. The decisions were made by whoever happened to be in possession of all the information.

The wheel seemed to give faster results than did the other patterns. It took more messages for the circle to reach a solution than it took the others. The circle also had more errors (both final and "corrected") than did the other patterns. In the case of a wheel, the presence of a leader was recognized by all the members of the wheel-group. A leader could also be identified in the case of the Y and chain, but with less unanimity. There was no agreement about the presence of a leader in the case of the
circle. When asked about awareness of any sort of an organization, the order in which it was reproduced correctly was: wheel, Y, chain, and circle. Only one member reproduced the circle correctly. The order in which members liked their jobs was: circle, chain, Y, and wheel. It should be added, however, that the leaders of the wheel and Y patterns liked their jobs better than did the circle members. In general, participants in central positions liked their jobs better than did peripheral members. Trends of increasing satisfaction in the circle and decreasing satisfaction in the wheel were indicated as time passed. When asked whether the members recognized anything wrong with the performance of their groups, the circle members were complaining more than the members of the other groups. They seemed to want better organization. The quantity of messages that were sent and received also followed the order of circle, chain, Y, and wheel.

In short, we may conclude that "patternwise, the picture formed by the results of differences always in the order circle, chain, Y, wheel... the circle, one extreme, is active, leaderless, unorganized, erratic, and yet is enjoyed by its members. The wheel at the other extreme is less active, has a distinct leader, is well and stably organized, is less erratic, and yet is unsatisfactory to
most of its members."

In general, we may say that communication patterns do affect group performance. It seems to affect differences in accuracy, total activity, satisfaction of group members, emergence of a leader, and organization of the group. It may also affect the speed of problem-solving, self-correcting tendencies, and the durability of the group as a group. There are also indications that some patterns of communication may be more encouraging to the utilization of insights than other patterns. The circle and chain seem to encourage more creativity than did the Y and wheel groups. Centrality was found to be the most important determinant of behavioral differences among members.

These results seem to suggest that committees with strong leaders will be less active, more stable, better organized, less erratic, and with a lower morale than committees in which the committee is a very democratic organization of such a "leaderless" leader. The characteristics.

20 Ibid., p. 46.

21 Ibid., p. 50.

of such a "leaderless" committee will appear to be, on the basis of the above described experiments, active, unorganized, erratic, and with good morale. Let us turn now and examine the role of leadership in committees in more detail.

C. The Contribution of the Discussion Leader to the Quality of Group Thinking

In the various experiments described above, the role of the discussion leader as a factor in effective committee thinking has been mentioned repeatedly. However, since most committees are conducted under the general leadership of a chairman, a separate consideration of the role of committee leadership seems warranted. We shall base our discussion of this subject primarily on some experimental work done in this general area.

In one set of experiments, Professor Maier showed that a skilled and mentally resourceful leader who possessed good ideas could conduct discussions in small groups which resulted in superior solutions to problems than those obtained by groups led by less competent leaders. He also found that a skilled leader can obtain a higher degree of acceptance than can an unskilled leader. Unskilled

leaders received less favorable results, but even they scored much better results than did the leaderless group. His experiments gave serious consideration to the problem of directing conferences in such a way as to assure acceptance of solutions proposed by experts in the field under consideration. 24 This is being mentioned here even though it does not relate to our major problem of actually reaching a group solution to a problem by pulling together the brains of all the participants. In the writer's opinion, policy-formulating committees should not operate in such a manner as to allow the leader to manipulate the discussion so that his opinions are accepted and prevail. This procedure may get acceptance for the leader's views, but it is doubtful whether the decisions that he holds and gets accepted will be as good as those obtained by a genuine and true group decision. 25 Haiman indicates that the leader's ability to manipulate the discussion to his liking holds great dangers for the group's work. The leader is in a position to take advantage of the group by the use of his manipulative power, which is inherent in his leadership position. 26

24 Ibid., pp. 171-172.
25 See Section B of Chapter VIII.
The theory of conference training requires that the sum total of knowledge necessary for a solution should lie within the group. How does a conference or committee reach a solution when the members of the group do not possess all the necessary data? One possibility, of course, is to delay making the decision until additional information is gathered. If such additional information is not available, the task of the committee becomes one of making an "intelligent guess" of the factors and their respective forces on a particular issue. When making a correct decision depends upon the occurrence of some future events, the committee may have to decide first the probability of occurrence of such events and their possible effects. In cases when correct decisions depend upon knowledge of the behavior or decisions of other parties is needed, the theory of games may become a useful tool. In short, when the sum total of knowledge available to a committee is not sufficient to determine the single best solution conclusively, the committee may have to make "intelligent guesses" and utilize the theories of probability and games if the solution is to be as rational as possible.

Another set of experiments conducted by Professor
Maičr bears more directly on our problem. These experiments were designed to find out the effectiveness of leaders whose ability is not superior to those of the other participants.

The hypothesis of the experiments was that an effective leader upgrades the level of performance of a group by giving greater opportunity to present the minority views. If reality is on the side of the minority, this usually has a favorable effect on the results of the communication process. The function of a discussion leader is to allow all participants to contribute their ideas freely. It is essentially a problem of budgeting time between the members.

A total of sixty-seven groups of five or six persons each was organized. In thirty-four of these groups a discussion leader was appointed; an observer was assigned to the other thirty-three groups. The subjects were given a problem and were requested to write down the solution before the discussion took place. Then they were allowed to discuss the problem and were encouraged to arrive at a joint decision within eight minutes. They were then instructed to record their answer to the problem again.

The results of the experiment indicate that while prior to the experiment, about forty-five per cent of the subjects had the correct answer, after the discussion the percentage of correct replies for the "leader" groups jumped up to about eighty-four per cent and for the "observer" groups it increased to about seventy-two per cent. This difference between the two percentages is significant at less than the one per cent level, according to a chi-square test. In almost all instances the presence of a leader seems to induce the adoption of the correct answer. It was indicated that a strong minority with the correct answer is influential in all instances, both in the "leader" and the "observer" groups. When the minority is small, one person for instance, the "leader" groups definitely gives better results (seventy-six per cent compared to about thirty-six per cent). The data indicates in general that "a discussion leader upgrades thinking when the minority is correct at the outset, but contributes little when the majority is correct."28 The data also indicates that the better performance of the "leader" groups is not due to the intellectual superiority of the leaders. In fact, more observers than leaders gave the correct answer prior to the discussions. Similarly, it was shown that the leaders did not have an advantage over their group members.

28 Maier, op. cit., p. 285.
In conclusion, we may note that the results of the experiment indicate that: (1) discussion tends to upgrade the effectiveness of the discussion, (2) that opinions which check with reality have more influence than those which are not so, (3) that the presence of discussion leaders improves the discussion results, (4) that this improvement in the presence of a leader is due primarily to the fact "that the leader permitted minority opinions to exert a constructive influence." 29

Maier lists the following functions as the ones that a discussion leader can perform and which contribute to the quality of the group's thinking: 30

1. His ability to determine the subject for discussion.
2. His ability to cause the group to react constructively by stating the problem in constructive terms.
3. His ability to ask stimulating and exploratory questions, providing he is sufficiently skilled.
4. His ability to use minority opinions so as to upgrade the quality of a group's thinking.

29 This is done primarily by the leader's countering the effect of social pressure to conform, exerted by the majority on the minority.

Recent trends indicate that role-playing is becoming an important technique in improving the communication process in committees. Maier has employed the technique many times in his work with conferences and groups. Role-playing is sometimes called \textit{reality practice}.

Essentially, the technique consists of assigning roles to individuals, mostly roles of people with whom they have to deal frequently. A problem is then discussed, with the various individuals arguing the case from the standpoint of the roles assigned to them. In some instances, the chosen problem is a real one, taken from the company in which the training program takes place; and in other cases it is one chosen to illustrate certain principles.

The effectiveness of role-playing lies in that it fills the gap between knowing and doing. The reason for this gap is that people fail to see the relevancy between the principle we believe in and a situation. The gap also exists because of a lack of skill in human relations. Role-playing helps in developing the necessary skills to

\begin{itemize}
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understanding other peoples' feelings. It promotes the capacity for seeing somebody else's point of view. Role-playing also acts as a therapeutical device. Thus, aggression that is stored up in individuals may be released harmlessly in the course of role-playing. It also serves as an excellent tool in changing one's attitude towards oneself, towards one's job, and in developing action tendencies. In role-playing, training is carried into action. It is not like listening to a lecture. This characteristic is perhaps its most useful one.

Maier lists the following barriers to action, which role-playing attempts to overcome: perception, or the manner in which we view situations; attitudes, or the predispositions for certain perceptions; frustration, which makes people act in a non-constructive way; fear of change; lack of confidence; and the interference of old habits of action.33

Role-playing was employed consistently in the First National Training Laboratory in Group Development held in Bethel, Maine, in 1947. The results obtained from its use

were considered by the trainers to be very successful. 34

A process of self-evaluation was conducted at the end
of a number of sessions. This "feedback" was also consid-
ered to be of great aid in improving the skill of participants
in conference participation. Jenkins suggests the following
questions as useful for the conduct of a self-evaluation
meeting: (1) Is there a direction toward a goal? (2) Where
are we now located in our discussion? (3) What has been our
rate of progress? (4) Are we applying our total group
potential, the creative and analytic abilities of all our
members to our problem? (5) Are we making any improvement
in our ability to work together more efficiently? 35

E. Summary and Conclusions

What is the relationship between cohesiveness, uni-
formity and homogeneity of committees and the communication
process? It appears that the pressure on members to com-
municate with others in the committee concerning any sub-
ject would increase (1) with perceived discrepancy in
opinion among the members of the committee; (2) with the

34Kenneth D. Benne and Paul Sheats, "Functional Roles
1948, pp. 41-49. The entire issue is devoted to a descrip-
tion and analysis of the First National Training Laboratory
in Group Development. Particularly interesting is Margaret
E. Barron and Gilbert K. Krulée, "Case Study of a Basic

35David H. Jenkins, "Feedback and Group Evaluation,"
ibid., pp. 50-51.
increase of the degree of relevance of the subject discussed to the group, and (3) with increases in the cohesiveness of the group. The force to communicate about any subject to a particular member of the group will (1) increase as the discrepancy in opinion between that member and the communicator increases, (2) will decrease to the extent that the communicant is not perceived as a member of the group, and (3) will increase the more it is perceived that the communicator will change that member's opinion in the desired direction. The amount of change resulting from receiving a communication (1) will increase as the pressure towards uniformity in the group increases, (2) will increase as the strength of the resultant force to remain in the group increases for the recipient, and (3) will decrease with increases in the degree to which the opinions and attitudes involved are anchored in other group memberships or serve important need satisfying functions of the person. The tendency to change the composition of the psychological group (pushing members out of the group) increases (1) as the perceived discrepancy in opinion increases; and (2) as the cohesiveness of the group increases and as the relevance of the issue to the group increases, when non-conformity exists.

All this would suggest that in order to make the committee as productive as possible (1) only topics about which there is disagreement should be brought to its atten-
(2) only subjects which have relevance to the work of the committee should be considered by it, and (3) if the committee group is a cohesive body. It also suggests that communication in committees will be more productive: (1) when discrepancies in the views of members are made known, (2) when all the participants are considered as members of the psychological group, and (3) when all members maintain a perceptive mind for any information which may change their opinions. Such a change will be facilitated (1) by a desire by the members of the group to maintain uniformity, (2) when all members desire to remain in the group, and (3) when members do not belong to many groups with conflicting viewpoints (frames of reference). It also suggests that to keep the psychological group together, the discrepancy in opinion must not be allowed to become too overwhelming.

Does differences in hierarchical status of participants affect communication in committees? Experimental evidence indicates that they do. The higher status executives tend to communicate among themselves rather than with the entire group. Also, lower status participants address their communiques to their superiors more often than to their equals. This no doubt reduces the efficiency of the committee. If better personal relationships among the various executives belonging to different statuses could be improved—communication among such members may be facilitated. This is, however, hard to do. It may take years to carry out a
Do communication patterns affect committee performance? Communication patterns seem to affect the behavior of the committees. The differences which occur between various patterns are in accuracy of solution, total activity, satisfaction of group members, emergence of a leader and organization of the group. Centrality is the most important factor in affecting the behavior of either group or the individuals involved. Translating the results into terms of committee operation, it would appear that a leaderless committee is active, unorganized, erratic, yet enjoyed by the members. On the other hand, committees with a central leader will tend to be less active, well and stably organized, less erratic, but is not very satisfactory to the members. All this will suggest that for best results, the committee should have a leader to be stable and less erratic; however, the leader should be as democratic (as opposed to autocratic) as possible so that members will not be dissatisfied with their roles.

What is the contribution of the discussion leader to the quality of group thinking? Experimental work in this general area shows that committees with leaders obtain better results than those without leaders. In those groups in which the leader was particularly skillful, the results were much better. A skilled leader can obtain a higher
degree of acceptance than can an unskilled leader. In another set of experiments, it was found that a leader upgrades the effectiveness of a committee by allowing the minority views to be considered by the entire group. This was done by avoiding social pressure by the majority from influencing the correct minority. In general, the leader could upgrade the committee's work by determining the subject for discussion, by stating the problem in constructive terms, by asking stimulating and exploratory questions, and by allowing the minority members to present their views.

The techniques of role-playing and self-evaluation seem to be very effective tools in training members to be useful committee members. Role-playing teaches members to see the viewpoints of others, and self-evaluation offers an excellent opportunity for self-criticism which helps in later improvements of committee performance. These techniques should be adopted whenever practicable. Role-playing is most effective when the participants have actually held the role. If, however, the members have never held the role, this technique will not be very effective.
CHAPTER X

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present chapter is the last one of this project. Its purpose is to conclude the entire work. It will be divided into three sections: (1) a brief profile of the entire project; (2) what does the present study suggest as possible improvement in the operation of business committees; (3) what gaps still remain in the existing fund of knowledge concerning communication in committees which warrant further investigation.

A. A Brief Profile of the Entire Project

As we proceeded through the project, we have summarized and concluded each chapter separately, and it seems unnecessary to repeat these summaries. The object of the present section is to give a very brief profile of the entire project.

The objective of this work was to study the problem of communication in committees within the administrative group in the formulation of policy. It was found logical to divide the project into three major parts: (1) about the communication process; (2) about formulation of policy; and (3) the committee as a technique in policy formulation.

It is clear that communication in committees has
elements which are unique to institutions composed of small groups of individuals. However, there is no doubt whatsoever that communication in committees has many common elements with communication in other forums.

Part One, "About the Communication Process," was devoted to the discussion of those elements of communication in committees which are pertinent to other situations as well, but the discussion of which is indispensable to the understanding of the process of communication in committees. This relationship was pointed out throughout the discussion.

Part Two, "About Formulation of Policy," is concerned with the problem of formulation of policy. Since our project is concerned with the problem of communication in the formulation of policy, it seems necessary to investigate briefly the whole subject of policy so that we may obtain an idea about what is being communicated.

Part Three, "The Committee as a Technique in Policy Formulation," is concerned exclusively with the problem of communication in committees. It deals with those aspects of communication which are characteristic only of small groups.
B. Some Possibilities of Improvements of Communication in Business Committees that are Suggested by the Present Project

The available literature on business committees is not very abundant. Whatever literature is available concentrates for the most part on problems of organization. It is written by people with considerable experience in the conduct of business committees and conferences, but for the most part with little thorough understanding of the communication aspects of committees. To be sure, the available literature is useful for practical purposes, in the absence of more refined and sophisticated analysis. It is clear, however, that no true understanding of committee work is possible without an investigation of its communication aspects. Communication is the heart of committee work.

Let us proceed to see how communication in committees can be improved in light of the material covered in the present study.

First, **all committee participants** should acquire a sound philosophy of communication. What is needed is a feeling for the whole subject of communication. It is impossible to avoid dealing with theoretical aspects of communication. In the author's opinion it is extremely significant that each member have a sound philosophy of communication. Such knowledge of the philosophical aspects of communication will provide each member of a committee with
a sound way of thinking about the subject. Members will find it very useful indeed to have a general idea about the theory of language. A basic knowledge about such subjects as the nature of language, the limitations of language, some errors in assumptions about the use of language, and others must be the starting point in any systematic attempt to improve one's communicative ability. Since signs and symbols are the means which are used in any communication

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1 The soundness of any philosophy is judged by the success of the results of its application, and by the completeness and comprehensiveness of understanding that it affords. Thus, a sound philosophy of communication is one, the application of which results in the most effective and efficient communication process. A sound philosophy of communication must also allow a complete and comprehensive understanding of the communication process as a whole. Since individuals will vary in their evaluation of the extent of success of the communication process, and since they will disagree upon what constitutes completeness and comprehensiveness of the various theories of communication, it is clear that philosophies are entirely subjective. The writer favors the logical-positivistic approach to the understanding of communication and language since in his judgment it meets those requirements of a sound philosophy of communication which have been mentioned above. Others may favor other approaches.

If the committee meets frequently, the members will probably evolve a certain workable common philosophy of communication. It may, however, be worthwhile to have a short formal training program which will serve as a medium for indoctrinating the various committee members. That, of course, could be done only after there is agreement among the members about one certain system of doctrine concerning communication. It may be added that such a formal training program would particularly be worthwhile in the case of large corporations which make wide use of committees in their daily operation.
activity, they too must be understood. Their nature, uses, limitations, and the assumptions made in their use must all be clear. In the writer's opinion, attention to these fundamentals of communication can be of tremendous aid in improving communication in committees. A concept of meaning is also important. Meaning is conveyed through the use of signs and symbols. Meaning is the heart of communication. Some basic knowledge of meaning, what it entails, its relation to "truth," and other concepts is essential in providing a sound philosophy of communication. The function of a sound philosophy of communication is to provide a basis for thinking on communication matters. Just as a sound philosophy of management is supposed to provide the manager with a sound way of thinking on management problems, a sound philosophy of communication is supposed to provide every executive engaging in any kind of communication with a sound way of thinking about communication problems.

Second, some formal training program in the application of the principles of general semantics should be provided, whenever possible. Members of a committee who are seriously interested in improving their communication ability will find it very rewarding to get acquainted with the major principles of general semantics. Here, again, no list of rules can be provided which will automatically improve the committee's work. What is needed is awareness of the principles and
their constant application. Essentially, the problem of a committee member is that of discovering the true relation between the signs and symbols (words, gestures, and other means of communication) and the objects for which they stand. This is very important in the case of committees since not all the members are familiar first hand with all the facts with which they have to deal. It should be recognized that a complete situation cannot be reproduced orally inasmuch as our perceptions are not perfect. Facts tend to change with time; this, too, should be borne in mind. They should realize that some information cannot be conveyed at all to others. It may be felt by an individual but not very easily verbalized. Members can acquire this information only by going through the experience themselves. Members are faced with the problem of how to ascertain the extent to which the facts with which they are presented correspond to reality. This can be ascertained to some extent by comparing information that is presented to the committee through various independent sources. Members should realize the advantages and disadvantages of discussions at the various levels of abstraction. The more abstract the discussion is, the more is there a danger that it will become divorced from reality. On the other hand, the advantage of discussions at high levels of abstraction is that they allow imagination to operate fully. Members must beware of the common tendency to classify all phenomena
into two divisions. To communicate most effectively, they must realize that all facts may range from one extreme to another. Most facts have approximately a normal distribution over the entire range, and to assume a two-valued orientation is an extremely unfortunate barrier to effective communication. Projection, or the tendency to attribute to others motives which are our own, should also be guarded against. The danger that members with great prestige may influence the decisions of the committee is also always present, and should be watched. Finally, the limitations of language in general should always be kept in mind. First, no language possesses enough words to represent the infinite number of facts. Second, the structure of language tends to be static while that of nature is variable and dynamic. Facts constantly change while words tend to refer to the old version of the facts, not the changed ones. And third, the many qualities which we attribute to reality are actually only our own intentional feelings. The best way in which to avoid semantical barriers to communication is to get acquainted with available literature in this science and try to use the various principles.

Third, the committee should attempt to reach an integration of ideas whenever possible. Integration of ideas refers to reaching conclusions which are entirely acceptable by all the members of a committee, and are considered by them to be superior to the solutions which they origi-
inally proposed. It is not a compromise; the latter is reached through combining some elements of each participants views. It should be pointed out that communication in committees tends to bring about such integration of ideas through the operation of the "feedback" mechanism. Each communicator modifies his messages in accordance with the reactions of the members of the committee, so that the final version of the communique is more or less acceptable to all participants.

Fourth, members should attempt to offer an optimum amount of information to the committee. It should be neither too detailed nor too general. There is an optimum amount of information that should be conveyed in committees by the various members. If it is less than this optimum, the conclusion reached may not be valuable at all. If it is more than necessary, the members may be flooded with impertinent details which will only confuse them.

Fifth, committee meetings may be used for other purposes than that of reaching the best policy. It may be used as a means of indoctrination, allow utilization of other advantages of participation, encourage self-co-ordination, and afford opportunities of bringing into the open areas of conflict. Besides serving as a means to arrive at a joint decision, communication in committees aids in indoctrinating the various participating executives with the true spirit of the policy under consideration. Thus, participation in committees helps in orienting the executives, so that when an opportunity presents itself.
they may be self-co-ordinated without too much difficulty. Communication in committees also serves in acquainting executives of the strategies of their colleagues, so that when they must make a decision which requires information as to what other executives would do, they can proceed without too much hesitation. Frequent meetings of committees provide the members with an opportunity for a valuable common experience which results inevitably in better understanding among the participants. Communication in committees tends to bring out into the open areas of conflict, so that they may be dealt with promptly.

Discussion in committees causes participants to get personally involved in the problem and the solution to such an extent that they are more apt to carry out any recommendations made in such a group than decisions made in any other kind of a forum. This would suggest that problems requiring a high degree of compliance on the part of the particular members who belong to a committee should be submitted to that specific committee for resolution, even if other considerations would warrant formulation of the policy in some other way. It may be worthwhile to add that there is evidence that, within limits, compliance with a decision reached in a group tends to increase with the passage of time.

Sixth, participation should be spread as equally as possible among all members. The committee should not be dominated by one individual or any combination of a number of members. All attempts to dominate the decision of the
committees either by individual members or by any factions, should not be permitted. A policy decision should be reached only after full participation of all members has been encouraged. All members should be allowed and urged to contribute all they can to the understanding of the problems discussed and in suggesting possible solutions. There is experimental evidence that indicates that the more equal the participation of the members, the more rational and intelligent are the obtained results.

Seventh, to achieve effective communication, satisfactory human relations among members must exist, and the group must be as cohesive as possible. It is impossible to conceive of an effective committee if the members in it do not get along with each other. This problem of human relations must be solved first. Mutual confidence and trust are absolutely essential for effective communication. Another factor which will increase the productivity of the committee is its cohesiveness. The more cohesive the group (cohesiveness refers to the extent to which members like each other and the group as a whole, and want to remain a part thereof), the more effective and efficient will be the communication process. It should also be pointed out that it is not sufficient for the members to belong to the committee formally. They must also belong to the "psychological group." The latter term refers to the informal relationships, such as personal friendship for instance, that tie the members together. Changes in the opinions of members may be facilitated (1) by a desire of the members of
the group to maintain uniformity, (2) when the members desire to remain in the group, and (3) when members do not belong to many groups with conflicting viewpoints (frames of reference). It also suggests that to keep the psychological group together, the discrepancy in opinion must not be allowed to become too overwhelming.

Eighth, the status of the participants in committee discussions will definitely affect the communication process. Every communique should be transmitted with due regard to the status of the prospective recipient. In general, the status of the communicator will determine the authenticity, authoritativeness, and intelligibility of messages.

Communication in a committee should be as informal as possible so that differentials in hierarchical status will not interfere with the smooth flow of the communication process. All information that pertains to a certain policy under consideration should be brought up during the committee meeting. If some of the information is disclosed informally to some members and withheld from others, the effect is to worsen the state of morale in the committee.

Members should be aware of the tendency of those who belong to a higher hierarchical position to communicate among themselves, and those of lower status to address their communiques to the higher status members. Status should not be the determinant of who speaks to whom. It is rather the relevance of the comment to the views expressed by each member that should determine the who-to-whom matrix.

Ninth, the committee members should try to make
logic the basis of their communication. The effect of sentiments upon both the communicator and the communicant should be recognized and identified. Sentimental factors of communication should be minimized as much as possible and replaced with logic.

Tenth, to be an effective communicator, one must perform a number of tasks successfully. Some of them are mentioned here briefly. The communicator must first ascertain the true "intent" of the message which he wishes to communicate. He must decide what "effect" the communique should create. When he decides what should be the effect of the message, he then must determine the "image" of the communicant. He must know the communicant pretty well before he can determine the "image" of the recipients of the communique. In essence this means that he must be able to predict the response of the communicant to the various stimuli which he may use. It is the task of the communicator to translate as well as he can inner private feelings into public communicable language. The communicator must know the particular elements in a message to which the communicant will respond, to the neglect of the other elements. In other words, he must know the "set" of the communicants. The "set" of the communicants is determined by their self-interest, needs, and familiarity with the various elements in a situation. The communicator must constantly be on the lookout for "completion" and "organization" of the data by the communicant, which are caused by imperfection in perception, and which may completely distort the meaning of the intended message. Other factors
which the communicator must take into consideration are the
moods of the committee members, their ethnocentric tendencies; and the level of the technical terminology which they
can comprehend.

Eleventh, to be an effective communicant, one must
perform a number of tasks successfully. Some of these are
mentioned here briefly. The task of the communicant in a
committee is first to ascertain the intent of the speaking
committee member. He should constantly pay attention to the
total context of the situation. He must determine to what
extent the formal factors of the committee organization
affect what the communicator is saying. Just as the com-

municator must have an "image" of the communicant, so the
latter must have one of the transmitter of information.
The communicant should look out for any intentional or unin-
tentional "slanting" attempts by the communicator.

Twelfth, barriers to smooth communication should be
watched for and overcome. There are many barriers to com-
munication. In addition to those which we have already
mentioned above, it may be worthwhile to list "frame of
reference." Frame of reference refers to the elements of a
situation which will attract the communicant's attention.
Thus, self-interest is a determinant of the frame of refer-
ence in that it channels one's attention to elements in a
situation which advance one's well-being. Differences of
values and goals also act as barriers. The committee members must agree on a given set of goals and values before communication becomes possible. Fortunately, there is a process of autonomous adjustment of the members' goals and values which is largely unconscious. There is a tendency on the part of members to present data in the committee which will please the other committee members. This must be watched for, too. In general, with the passage of time, the various members are indoctrinated with a somewhat similar value, belief, and goal system, which automatically improve the effectiveness of communication. The best remedy to all the communication barriers that have been mentioned up to now is constant awareness of them; and a spirit of watchfulness for any communication obstacles to smooth transfer of information among all the members of the committee.

Thirteenth, it is the task of all the committee members to make sure that discussion in the committee proceeds in the right "direction." To reach the most rational policy possible, communication in the committee should be conducted in such a manner as to choose the most logical "direction." The most serious problem in effective policy formulation is thinking in the wrong "direction." Members must always correct their colleagues when it seems to them that the latter are thinking in the wrong "direction." In choosing
the right "direction," all members should make their contribution.

Fourteenth, the committee will operate most effectively and efficiently in an atmosphere of complete cooperation. The members must cooperate to the utmost, and attempt to aid each other in offering suggestions, correcting others' errors of thinking and agreeing with suggestions made by others which appear logical to them. A spirit of competition among committeemen is most detrimental to the achievement of good results.

Fifteenth, no important policies should be decided immediately after the formation of a committee. The members of a committee must be allowed sufficient time to reach a common frame of reference, which for all practical purposes serves as a common system of values, beliefs, or goals. It has been proven experimentally that a committee is an excellent device for inducing a common system of doctrine to all participants.

Sixteenth, there is some experimental evidence which indicates that committees with five members give better results than other sizes. This size seems to be best for most problems. Some experts suggest, however, that different kinds of problems may require different sizes of committees for best results of the problem-solving process.

Seventeenth, members must always maintain a perceptive mind for any information which may change their opin-
ions. Communication becomes valueless when members refuse to be influenced by others' opinions. A willingness to be influenced by pertinent, valid, and true information is facilitated by the members' desire to continue the operation of the committee and make sure that the communication process carried on in it is effective and efficient. When membership in a committee holds high prestige for the participants, the tendency for such a committee is to be more productive than others, in which membership is held in lower esteem. Committee members should not be allowed to hold concurrent membership in several committees, the objectives of which often tend to conflict.

Eighteenth, the leadership of the committee should be as democratic as possible. The degree of dominance of the leader of the group is the most important factor determining such factors as total activity, satisfaction of the members, and the organization and procedure of the committee. From available experimental evidence, it appears that a leaderless committee (or one with a very weak leader) is more active, unorganized, prone to make errors in the solution of problems, and more enjoyed by its members than a committee with a strong leader. On the other hand, committees with a strong leader are less active, more stable,
better organized, less prone to create errors, but are less liked by the participants than committees with a weak leader. The best results will be obtained by a committee with a leader who is very democratic in the conduct of meetings, yet not so weak as to allow the disadvantages of the leaderless group.

Nineteenth, a skilled leader could upgrade the quality of the committee's work. This he should do by allowing members with minority views to present their arguments to the entire group. This he should also do by preventing the majority group from exerting social pressure upon the minority to change sides. The leader should determine the subject for discussion, state the problem in constructive terms, and ask exploratory and stimulating questions.

Twentieth, the committee must first decide upon the objective that the discussed policy must accomplish. Let us turn now from a discussion of how to communicate to a discussion of what should be communicated among the members of a committee in the formulation of policy. The first thing that the committee must do is clarify the objectives which the proposed policy is to serve before discussing any details of the policy. All members must have exactly the same objective in mind. The problem, as seen by whoever submitted the problem to the committee, must be checked against reality. If the committee decides that the problem is wrongly formulated, it should be returned for reformula-
tion to the line executive, or the secretariat that considered the problem and recommended decision on it. Assigned problems should not be too specific nor too general in the range of alternatives that may be considered as potential solutions. Part of the problem of clarification of the objective is the determination of the technical and ethical elements in the problem that must be taken as "constants." All discrepancies in the opinions of the members as to the essence of the problem should be resolved through the process of integration of ideas. When integration of ideas is found impossible due to one reason or another, compromise or even domination may have to be resorted to.

Twenty-first, the committee must decide whether it is the right forum for the policy under consideration. When the members of a committee have finally reached an agreement concerning the nature of the problem, it has to decide whether it should proceed to discuss the issue involved and formulate a policy. It must decide whether a new policy is essential; whether there is already a policy which covers the problem; whether it would not be premature to formulate the problem now; whether the policy is pertinent to the prevailing conditions; whether this specific committee should handle the policy problem or if another one is better qualified to formulate it; whether it would not be better if the line executive should decree this specific policy;
whether the situation is such that there is sufficient time for a committee to convene and discuss the problem; and whether the committee has sufficient information on which to make an intelligent decision.

Twenty-second, the next step is for the members of the committee to analyze the functions necessary to reach the objective. This is usually done through a vertical breakdown of functions, which allows the use of the concept "functions and means hierarchy," which corresponds closely to an organization hierarchy. The committee may then use this analysis to clarify for itself the problem of how the objective can be accomplished step by step.

Twenty-third, the committee must then select the principles and rules of action that will link the functions with the objectives. To accomplish this in the most rational manner, the various consequences of the various alternative policies must be determined. The consequences must then be listed in the order in which they succeed in accomplishing such linkage. The committee must then select the policy, the consequences of which were listed as preferable to the rest.

Twenty-fourth, a committee should only be assigned the formulation of policies which involve the solutions of very difficult and complex problems. When the formulation of policy involves easy problems, or very local ones, the
individual in charge may be able to formulate an adequate policy himself.

Twenty-fifth, only topics about which there is disagreement, and which are relevant to the work of the members, should be brought to the committee's attention. To make the committee's work as productive as possible, only topics about which there is disagreement should be brought to its attention. If there is already agreement as to the decision that will be adopted, the member's time will be wasted, and their morale will be lowered. The best results from a committee's communication process will be obtained when the subjects discussed are considered to be relevant to the work of the members of the committee. It is obvious that committee members would not exert themselves to solve problems which bear no relevance to their daily work.

The effectiveness of the communication process in committees will also improve if the members find out at an early stage of the discussion just what discrepancies do exist in their views. If the discrepancy in views is overwhelming, it may be wise to avoid discussing the problem to prevent an open split in the committee, which may be detrimental to its existence.

Twenty-sixth, the techniques of role-playing and self-evaluation should be used as a training device for improving the productivity of the committee work whenever possible. Skilled social scientists should be employed to supervise
the training of the members through the device of role-
playing and self-evaluation. When a committee is engaged
in making very serious policy decisions which may involve
the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars; the
cost of training members of a committee of the kind men-
tioned in this paragraph, may prove very well spent indeed.

C. Some Remaining Problematic Areas
Requiring Additional Research

Some of the information presented up to this point
was drawn from scientific sources, and is verifiable experi-
mentally. Some is drawn from sources which may be consid-
ered "systematic" in the sense that it is based on wide
and varied experience of alert observers but not on con-
trolled scientific experimentation, and could not there-
fore be considered as reliable to the same extent as in-
formation mentioned earlier. Some of the notions that
have been included are still in the realm of unproven
theory.

The project suggests many areas which are still
problematic and await scientific exploration. The answers
to some of these questions may improve the effectiveness
and efficiency of communication in committees tremendously.
Some such research problems are presented below. The
problems that are mentioned here are by no means an exhaus-
tive list. They are merely those general areas which appear
to the writer to be the more significant ones.

1. The whole area of decision-making should be surveyed. There are many theories of the speculative kind about the question of decision-making, but very little of it has been established experimentally. There is a great deal of research that is being done on this subject by the various Armed Forces, and some of it will no doubt be made public for the use of economic organizations. There is, however, room for research on this problem that could be undertaken directly by economic organizations.

2. Additional research should be conducted to determine when the committee is the most useful forum for policy formulation. Some policies are more economically decided in other ways than through the use of committees. Some information is available about this point, but much more is necessary and could be used.

3. The whole area of participation should be further investigated. How to encourage participation is only one question. A more important one is how to encourage that kind of participation in which every member contributes to the discussion a proportionate amount of information that is commensurate with his acquaintance with the problem being considered. How much information should each member contribute to any specific problem under consideration, and how should he be encouraged to do so.
4. How large should a committee be for the various problems that confront it. We know that a committee of five members gives somewhat better results than committees of other sizes. But there is evidence that different problems require committees of various sizes for best results. This is indicated from the work of Bavelas. Can experimental or other scientific research establish the optimum size of a committee for the various problems that may face it?

5. Could various patterns of communication in committees be discovered that correlate with the various kinds of policy problems? In other words, is it possible that an optimum communication process pattern exists for each kind of policy?

6. We know that a communicator must have an "image" of the communicant and must be acquainted with his "set" and frame of reference. But in a committee he is addressing himself to a number of members. How is the "averaging" process of the "sets" and frames of reference of the members to take place? Does the communicator choose a content that will be receptive to some kind of an arithmetic average of the entire membership, or is the content addressed to a "set" or frame of reference which is weighted in the sense that members with more power and prestige count more in this choice of content?
7. What should be the role of outside experts? To what extent should they be allowed to influence the decisions of the committee? How can a committee judge the extent to which the advice of an outside expert is pertinent to the conditions of the organization which they represent when the advice is totally unfamiliar to them?

8. Can any of the work done by information theorists that are interested in the general area known as cybernetics be applied to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of committees? Their work should be followed carefully; it is quite possible that some of it could be applied to committee work when it becomes more finite.

9. What are additional possibilities for training members to be better communicators and communicants? The whole area of training should be further explored. Could the costs of supervising role-playing and self-evaluation be reduced? Could something be done that will encourage committee members to participate in such training programs? Are these techniques as effective and efficient as they could be? Are there any devices which may accomplish the end of better communication more effectively and efficiently?

10. The effect of reducing oral discussion to writing may also be investigated. Do suggestions tend to be more conservative when minutes are taken in the committee meeting? Does taking minutes reduce or improve the committee's
work in any other fashion? Does reducing the orally agreed upon policy into writing affect communication in the committee? If it does, in what way?

11. Another general area which warrants concentrated research is that of removing constraints to what may be called "group rationality." To encourage maximum rationality of the group, absolute flexibility of the various aspects of a committee will have to be assured. Different problems will require different sizes of committees, various chairmen will be adequate for various problems, the composition of the membership may have to be changed with each new problem, and the general organization may have to be more flexible. In practice, of course, the committee is a rather rigid organization, with the members, chairman, and other factors remaining the same for all kinds of policy that come up for consideration. The problem essentially is that of making the committee as flexible as possible so that it may be most suitable to handle any policy problem that may be required. How should a committee be organized so that maximum flexibility will be permitted? How should the constraints to "group rationality" be removed?

12. Many of the factors which enter into the process of policy decision are uncertain and at the best may only be estimated very roughly. The members of a committee assigned to formulate a policy may have to make many assumptions upon which to make a decision. How should they determine the
probability of the occurrence of these assumptions and that of the desired consequences? This problem is directly related to that of the degree of "contingency" that the policy should permit. In other words, on the one hand a policy should guide action in a certain desirable direction, and thus restrain action in other directions. On the other hand, because of the uncertainty of the assumptions upon which the policy was determined, it must leave maximum leeway for contingencies. What is the correct balance between these factors?

13. Most committees operate in an environment in which precedent is an important element in new policy decisions. Theoretically, for a policy to be most rational, each decision should be reached on the basis of the pertinent forces which have bearing on the problem without regard to precedents, conventions, habits, norms, and other "constants." On the other hand the operation of precedents and the other "constants" save the time of the committee in that it does not have to reconsider the effects of all these elements anew. However, it only saves time when these constants are correct, and that is what is problematic all the time.

14. Another problem which warrants research is the determination of other "constants" which are taken for granted by the committee and of which we are not aware. It is obvious that committee men cannot guard themselves against.
"constants" of which they are not aware.

15. Another area which is problematic is that which is due to specialization and division of labor. The committee may be composed of specialists. It may be assigned to solve policy problems which are familiar to only a minority of the total membership. How can they be taught all the pertinent aspects of a problem with which they have no experience? This area, if conceived very broadly, involves the whole realm of learning.

16. The whole problem of what the sociologists call "power" and "influence" is problematic. Which of the members has access to information which is denied to others? What is the distribution of information (or ignorance) among the members? How does this affect the committee decision which theoretically is reached by the entire committee?

17. More research is needed in the area of the determinants of the executives' "set" and frames of reference.

The Significance of This Study with Respect to the Field of Management

The recent increase in the size of business and industrial organizations has brought to the fore the problem of co-ordination of thought among executives responsible for the various departments of an organization. One device
which is used for the purpose of such co-ordination, and which will most likely grow in significance in the future, is the committee technique.

This suggests that more interest in seeking ways to improve the productivity of business and industrial committees is clearly justified. Committees should be studied from all points of view. However, since oral face-to-face communication is perhaps the most important in the committee's work, a study of communication in committees may perhaps be the most rewarding of all directions of attack.

This dissertation has been a modest attempt to study the communication aspects of policy formulating business committees. It has been attempted to draw as heavily as possible from available material on communication in the various social sciences, which bears on the subject of communication in policy formulating business committees. On the basis of this study some recommendations have been offered which may aid in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the committee technique.

One of the basic premises of this project is that students of business and industrial management should apply knowledge accumulated from the various social sciences to current business management problems. The various social sciences have arrived at some basic knowledge about communication in general and in small groups in particular. It
has been tried in this project to collect as much material as possible from the various social disciplines, and apply it to the understanding of communication in business committees. Since additional information about communication in small groups is being published continuously, it is hoped that such added material will be studied in the future with the intention of uncovering better ways to make the committee constantly more productive.
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