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AN EVALUATIVE FOCUS

ON

HUMAN RELATIONS  
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by

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INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

I was troubled when asked to prepare a working paper for this Conference. What was wanted, according to my correspondent, was a relatively short outline of recent developments in the area of human relations research as it applies to the field of industrial relations. The term human relations meant certain things to me, but I wasn't quite sure that my correspondent held similar notions. His use of the term "short outline" reinforced my doubts, for I could not conceive of the possibility of any brief treatment of human relations as I viewed it. Subsequent correspondence did not clarify the matter, but I did agree to prepare a paper, centered about some key issues and designed to serve the purpose of stimulating discussion at the Conference.

If my correspondent and I perceived human relations differently, there might be an even greater variety of perceptions represented by the persons who would be at the Conference--and there was ample evidence from usages in the literature to support this possibility. I therefore decided that it might prove interesting to send questionnaires to a number of researchers and of management and union representatives designed to get responses to questions which might indicate the degree of ambiguity inherent in the term human relations.

I prepared three somewhat similar questionnaires. Following are the questions which they contained:

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my deep appreciation to Arnold Gebel and Fred Massarik of the research staff, Human Relations Research Group, who have provided me with invaluable assistance and stimulation in connection with the preparation of this paper, and to Mrs. Pat Slay whose secretarial skill in so many ways has lessened the burden of its completion.

- When the term "human relations" is used, what does it bring to your mind?  
(All respondents)
- What relationships, if any, do you see between "human relations" and the conventional social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics? (Researcher respondents)
- What do you feel have been the most valuable contributions, over the past twenty years, made by "human relations" research? (Researcher respondents)
- What do you feel have been the most useful contributions of "human relations" research to (management)(unions)? (Management and union respondents, respectively)
- What do you feel have been the most significant deficiencies (as viewed by management)(as viewed by unions) of "human relations" research? (Management and union respondents, respectively)
- What do you feel are currently the most pressing unsolved problems toward which "human relations" research should be directed? (Researcher respondents)
- What do you feel are currently the most pressing unsolved problems (faced by management)(faced by unions) toward which "human relations" research should be directed? (Management and union respondents, respectively)

The questions were designed to be general in order to permit respondents to project into them as much as possible of their own individual ideas and feelings with respect to human relations.<sup>2</sup> While applicability to the field of industrial relations was not specified in any of the questions, my covering letter accompanying the questionnaires stated that I had been asked "to prepare an appraisal of human relations research, particularly as it applies to the field of industrial relations, broadly defined."

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<sup>2</sup> I learned there is some personal hazard in this type of approach. For example, one non-respondent wrote me briefly: "I believe that a mail questionnaire is a suitable method for the purpose of ascertaining simple, well-established opinions, in which case respondents may be asked to make checkmarks. In your case, however, you ask respondents to write articles on difficult subjects. If and when I feel like writing articles on your subjects, I shall do so in print."

Questionnaires were sent to approximately eighty researchers, eighty management representatives, and eighty union representatives. No attempt was made to select a representative sample. The researchers, for the most part, were chosen from among persons who have done research in industry or who had made contributions that had proven to be useful in the industrial setting. Also, effort was made to select representatives of many different points of view. The management representatives were chosen primarily from lists of key functionaries in the Committee for Economic Development, the American Management Association, the National Industrial Conference Board, and the National Association of Manufacturers. The union list was developed with the advice of colleagues who designated persons who they thought might have an interest in the subject matter of the questionnaire. An attempt was made to reach representatives of national unions, of state organizations, and of local units, as well as of independent unions.

Usable responses (completed questionnaires or letters) were received from forty-three researchers, twenty-nine management representatives, and twenty-one union representatives.<sup>3</sup> An analysis of these responses is presented in Part II of this paper. It is my hope that many Conferencees will find most useful the variety of perceptions reflected in this analysis.

Part I presents my own tentative view of various aspects of the field of human relations. In it, I often use ideas reported in Part II or in the literature as a point of departure for statements of my own. My primary purpose has been to raise questions, to point up issues, to take a stand--in short, to provide a target for discussion.

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<sup>3</sup> Names of those who responded are to be found in the appendix. I want sincerely to thank all of those who took the time to complete a questionnaire. Many carefully considered responses were received from many busy people.

PART I

A VIEW OF HUMAN RELATIONS

## OUT OF DIVERSITY, AN EMERGING DISCIPLINE?

Writing in 1950, John W. McConnell stated: "Facetiously, someone has remarked that human relations are whatever those interested in human relations study. If one may judge by the divergent approaches of a number of research groups, no single definition is at present possible."<sup>1</sup> In viewing the varying perceptions of human relations summarized in the first section of Part II of this paper, one can with considerable certainty state that human relations means many things to different men. Varying ideas are brought to the minds of the respondents by the term human relations. These ideas may be broken down into several categories, including interpersonal phenomena, a field of study, a body of knowledge, an applied field, and an art.

All three groups of respondents most frequently see human relations as interpersonal phenomena, but there is great diversity among the respondents as to the nature of these. Some respondents think in terms of person-to-person relations, others in terms of group-to-group relations, and others in terms of both. Often groups per se are not specifically mentioned. Some see the specified relations as being human relations wherever they occur, while others use the term to denote those relations occurring in specific institutional settings (such as family and church), in organizations, between specified individuals within a given organization (for example, between supervisors and employees within a business unit), and between specified groups (for example, labor and management, or differing ethnic groups). The same diversity of response which appears in discussions

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<sup>1</sup> "Problems of Method in the Study of Human Relations," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. III, No. 4 (July, 1950), p. 549.



of human relations as interpersonal phenomena occurs when the other categories are discussed.

Diversity again appears when we examine the researchers' views of the relationships, if any, between "human relations" and the conventional social sciences. The perceived relationships reported range from "little" at one extreme to the emergence of human relations as a distinct discipline at the other. And, I might add, there appears to be no consistency between the way the researchers see human relations and the way they see the conventional social sciences in relation to human relations.

The existence of the wide variety of perceptions raises a real question as to whether we will be clear at the Conference on what we are going to talk about. The preliminary program of the Conference draws a distinction between two research approaches—one involving human relations research and the other involving research in relations between unions and management. I believe many of the respondents would include the latter as part of the former. Further, the preliminary program refers to "the 'human relations' approach in industrial relations research." I doubt whether we can agree that there is such a single approach; but if we can, we will probably disagree as to how it might be characterized.

Of equal concern is the limitation of human relations research to studies in relations among individuals and groups in organizational situations. It is true that a few respondents see human relations research (or research in human organizations) as limited in this way. However, in my judgment, such a limitation, if accepted, will seriously reduce the usefulness of the Conference. This is not to deny the value of trying to understand interpersonal phenomena in organizational settings. Rather, the

point is that if we focus only on research done within organizations, we exclude from our consideration a vast amount of organization-relevant research that has been conducted both in the laboratory and in non-organizational settings. A rigid adherence to the mentioned limitation would create one more barrier between social scientists with varying research interests.

In light of the diversities emerging from the responses to the questionnaires, one might raise the question as to whether the term human relations has any intrinsic usefulness. It is undoubtedly ambiguous, subject to a wide variety of uses and interpretations. I, for one, am not wedded to the term, but I would like to make explicit what it means to me. What is important here is not the term itself, but that to which it refers.

I see a new discipline emerging--a discipline which will ultimately integrate the social or behavioral sciences. It will bring to bear the theories, methods, and techniques of all the social sciences upon the study of interpersonal phenomena, including relations between persons and between groups, wherever these relations occur. This discipline will be a field of study focusing upon definable phenomena and yielding a body of knowledge relevant to human behavior. It will have its applied branch which will use knowledge emerging from basic research in the solution of particular problems for specified purposes. Associated with the latter branch will be researchers, who will use existing knowledge to provide a systematic basis for later implementation, and practitioners, who will diagnose situations and take action which they deem appropriate in terms of objectives to be achieved.

I would not hazard a guess as to how long it might take for this new

discipline to emerge full-blown, but the current trend in this direction is apparent and the ultimate outcome, in my judgment, inevitable. True, in many quarters there is an apparent lack of real enthusiasm for such a development. For a number of years now, talk of interdisciplinary research and of cross-disciplinary integration has been in the air, yet the instances of successful interdisciplinary research collaboration in the social sciences are meager. In universities there have been but few examples of the establishment of departments which are designed to integrate the social science disciplines. Apparently the union field is not the only one in which jurisdictional problems exist.

Lack of enthusiasm for the development is also to be found, I believe, among the researchers' negative comments with respect to human relations. One might ask why, for example, feelings of hostility arise when the term is used. Additional evidence is provided by the fact that researchers in their responses rarely identify themselves with human relations. Where explicit statements are made, the individual typically associates himself with a specific discipline which, I suspect, is for him still home base.

But the signs do not all point away from the suggested trend. There are individual researchers who are increasingly incorporating the theories and methods of disciplines other than their own in their work. There are research groups comprised of individuals from many disciplines who are attempting in one way or another to pool their respective competencies in the work that they do. Some universities are encouraging interdepartmental collaboration and occasionally establishing new integrative departments. And in very recent years publications on research methods have appeared which bring together in an effective way methods developed in

different disciplines.<sup>2</sup>

I am certainly not alone in seeing this trend. There are many others who have noted it before. Nearly six years ago E. Wight Bakke stated:

It is obvious that the problem of human behavior with which we are dealing can not be understood in terms of psychology or any one of the social sciences alone. Is it not possible, therefore, that, in attempting to follow the problem wherever it leads us, and employing whatever concepts and research techniques are relevant, we shall be able to define the problem in such a way and develop concepts and a theoretical framework of such a nature that a major contribution will be made to the foundation for an integrated social and psychological science? Whether or not this result appears possible or attractive to present scholars in these fields, we who are studying industrial relations are forced to work in this direction. It is not a case of choice alone, but of necessity, for we can not get results satisfactory to ourselves and applicable to the solution of practical problems by employing the concepts, theories, and methods of any one science.<sup>3</sup>

Morton Grodzins, referring specifically to the field of public administration, has written:

Human relations researchers do not regard public administration as a separate science but rather as one subject matter of their more generalized discipline. They have moved in the direction of producing a set of useful methodological tools and a body of data organized in terms of hypotheses whose general validity is testable. They have, in other terms, been concerned with producing a behavioral science.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Leon Festinger and Daniel Katz, Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences (New York: The Dryden Press, 1953); John Gillin ed., For a Science of Social Man (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954); Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch, and Stuart W. Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951); and, William F. Whyte, "Modern Methods in Social Research" (monograph prepared for the Office of Naval Research under contract NONR-4012).

<sup>3</sup> "Industrial Relations Research," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 92, No. 5 (November, 1948), p. 379.

<sup>4</sup> "Public Administration and the Science of Human Relations," Public Administration Review, Vol. XI, No. 2 (Spring, 1951), p. 94.

John W. McConnell writes with reference to the researcher himself:

This catalog of interested parties would not be complete without mention of a hybrid type of researcher who may be the prototype of the new social scientist. Although the individuals who fall in this category are drawn from all the disciplines, they are not merely eclectic in their approach, seeking to satisfy the main premises or to utilize the principal method of the several disciplines. Rather, their distinguishing feature is the urge to generalize about behavior within a framework of concepts covering the essential elements of human behavior from motivation to environmental circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, a committee at the University of Chicago, established under an award from the Ford Foundation to conduct a self-study of their research and training in the behavioral sciences, has come to this conclusion:

We should not be concerned to define the behavioral sciences in terms of organized groups of faculty members, in terms of detailed distinctions in subject matter, nor in terms of exclusive prescriptions with respect to method. Rather we should identify men and work directed toward a wide purpose with a central focus. This central focus consists of a dominating interest in the nature of humanity as that nature may be understood through objective description of regularities. The behavioral sciences should be conceived of broadly enough to embrace the study of man at the level of the individual, the primary or intermediate group, or the mass society or civilization, with no commitment to attempt an exclusive reduction to the subject matter, tools, or research strategy of any one level.<sup>6</sup>

I have come to use human relations to refer to this emerging discipline in its varying aspects. Perhaps we can each hasten the development of this discipline by attempting to bring to bear on the interpersonal problems which we study the best that we have in theory and methods from all of the social sciences.

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<sup>5</sup> Op. cit., p. 552.

<sup>6</sup> Bulletin, American Anthropological Association, Vol. I, No. 3 (December, 1953), p. 6.



## THE PRESENT STATE OF HUMAN RELATIONS RESEARCH

Any discussion of the contributions made by human relations research should be based upon some common conception of the field of human relations. Using the broad frame of reference which I have suggested in the preceding section would obviously make necessary an extremely extensive survey of the social sciences. However, our concern at the Conference, as has already been indicated, is primarily restricted to human relations research as it applies to the field of industrial relations.

In recent years a number of articles and books have appeared which have attempted in one way or another to summarize, review, or present and interpret contributions of this more restricted type.<sup>7</sup> And the working paper prepared for this Conference by Chris Argyris does an admirable job in presenting and evaluating the present state of research in human relations in industry.<sup>8</sup>

It is not my purpose here to duplicate the efforts of these writers. However, in light of what I have said in the preceding section, I think it

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example:

Eliot D. Chapple, "Applied Anthropology in Industry," in A. L. Kroeber, ed., Anthropology Today (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 819-831.

Conrad M. Arensberg, "Behavior and Organization: Industrial Studies," in John H. Rohrer and Mizafer Sherif, eds., Social Psychology at the Crossroads (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), Chapter II.

Morris S. Viteles, Motivation and Morale in Industry (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1953).

Delbert C. Miller, and William H. Form, Industrial Sociology (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).

Robert Dubin, Human Relations in Administration (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1951).

<sup>8</sup> "The Present State of Research in Human Relations in Industry," Yale Labor and Management Center, 1954.

of crucial importance to emphasize that there have been many more contributions to an understanding of industrial human relations than is generally indicated by surveys of studies that have been carried on exclusively in industry. For example, the work on learning theory has relevance to the problem of behavioral change and, more specifically, to leadership and training; work in the field of social perception has relevance to the problem of effectiveness in interpersonal relations; studies of broad social cultures have relevance not only to an understanding of the more limited cultures of industrial organizations, but also to the research methods which might be used in studying these more limited cultures; and the growing knowledge with respect to resistance behavior in therapy groups may be quite pertinent to a better understanding of the problem of resistance to change within organizations. As I see it, those of us who are primarily concerned with human relations in industry have a continuing responsibility to construct bridges between the methods and findings of non-industrial human relations research and the work that we are doing.

Some observations are in order with respect to the respondents' perceptions of the contributions of human relations research. Again, with few exceptions, there is great diversity among these perceptions.

The researcher respondents associate fifty-six different persons with contributions to the field. However, only five of these--Lewin, Whyte, Maier, Moreno, and Roethlisberger--are mentioned by three or more respondents. Not only do the five just mentioned represent a considerable diversity in background and interest, but the same is true of the remaining fifty-one persons also named.

The contributions over the past twenty years seen by the researchers as being most valuable fall most frequently in the topical areas of groups, leadership, motivation, social organization and structure, and morale.<sup>9</sup> The researchers typically discuss findings, but it is rare that evolving theories are noted. In fact, the only direct mentions of theories involve group theory in general (one mention), the "science of organization" (one mention), Lewin's field theory (two mentions), Whyte's framework of analysis (two mentions), and McGregor's theory of human behavior (two mentions). In spite of these relatively few direct references to theory, I believe there has been an important theoretical development in each of the topical areas mentioned, as well as in such areas as communication, role, status, intergroup relations, and the like.

The researchers also make few mentions of contributions to method. I suspect that most of them primarily think of such contributions in connection with the specific disciplines from which they stem rather than in connection with human relations per se.

Turning to the contributions of human relations research to management and unions as seen by representatives of each of these groups, some additional points of interest arise. With but one exception, the management respondents all note contributions of value to them, whereas, more than a third of the union respondents see no such contributions. I believe this reflects

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<sup>9</sup> For excellent recent summaries and critical evaluations of work in each of these areas, see: For groups--Mary E. Roseborough, "Experimental Studies of Small Groups," Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 50, No. 4 (July, 1953), pp. 275-303; for leadership--Fillmore H. Sanford, "Research on Military Leadership," in Psychology in the World Emergency (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1952); for motivation and morale--Viteles (op. cit.); and for social organization and structure--Arensberg (op. cit.) and Chapple (op. cit.).

the fact that, at the present, developments in the field of human relations have generally had a greater impact upon managements than upon unions. The management respondents see contributions of theory and method only infrequently, and the union respondents see none. On the other hand, in reporting contributions there is frequent use by the management people and some by the union people of such terms as "greater awareness," "better understanding of," "importance of," "better idea of," "appreciation of fact that," and "a new respect for." It therefore appears that although specific sources can not be cited, to some extent at least key findings or conclusions are "getting across" to people who might be able to use them. But it also appears that business and union personnel think primarily in terms of answers to immediate problems rather than in terms of broader formulations which might, over the longer pull, be of even greater value to them.

As contrasted with the researcher respondents, the management respondents most heavily stress the area of motivation. They make little mention of groups, morale, social organization and structure, and leadership. The union respondents make most frequent mention of work in the area of groups, and yet there is a relatively low frequency of mention even here.

## THE NEED FOR BETTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

Greater similarity of view exists among the management and union respondents when reporting upon the deficiencies of human relations research than is true of their responses to any of the other questions. With the exception of some matters relating to values which will be discussed later, most of the deficiencies come under the general heading of public relations, that is, the relations between researchers on the one hand and management and union representatives on the other.

Inevitably, the researcher inadequacies that are mentioned characterize to a greater or lesser extent at least some researchers. These inadequacies include focusing upon peripheral problems, dealing with large rather than small enterprises, imposing one's own problems on others, carelessness in research method, isolation from or naivete with respect to the problems being studied, and unwarranted generalizations. We are certainly not perfect, and there will always be need for us to keep our professional competency and standards high. However, I suspect that these deficiencies would often not appear so serious if a better basis for understanding had been established between ourselves and the industrial and union representatives interested in our work. Many of the perceived deficiencies may not, in fact, exist. Rather, they may stem from generalized feelings about researchers, theorists, and professors, generated both by lack of understanding and by perceived threats associated with what the researcher does and the implications of his findings. As in the area of race relations, problems of this type can perhaps best be solved by different groups beginning to "talk" with each other.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> An analysis of one aspect of this problem will be found in Fred Massarik and Paula Brown, "Social Research Faces Industry," Personnel, May, 1954.



Another aspect of the researcher's public relations problem involves the communication of research results to interested parties. There is considerable evidence that many human relations notions have gotten across to managers and, increasingly, to union people. One management respondent, pointing out that executives are becoming sensitized to the importance of a better understanding of the motivations and aspirations of the people beneath them, remarks: "This downward look doesn't come easily to the executive and thus the constant pressure of 'human relations' teaching, the speeches about it, the conferences and books, make him do a lot more thinking about his responsibilities in this respect than ever he did ten or twenty years ago." On the other hand, another management respondent, after mentioning a number of contributions which have been made, states: "These researches have hardly been felt in industry today...their chief contribution to date, to the mass of American industry, is to make them (managers) aware that there is a growing body of social science. Industry is beginning to wonder what it's all about and how it can be applied." Judging from the comments of manager and union respondents, if we are imparting knowledge, we are not doing it as effectively as possible. When our work is labeled "theoretical," when our reports are seen as vague and as involving technical language and terminology, and when we are told we should try to translate our findings into practical operational terms without oversimplifying, we should ask ourselves whether the criticisms have merit. I believe they do. Certainly, communication among researchers is difficult enough. Most, if not all, of us have experienced the impossibility of "keeping on top" of the current output of published technical reports in the social sciences, but at least much of the time we can understand what we are saying

to each other. Apparently, the manager and the union man do not have even this advantage. They are asking us to talk sense to them.

I am not sure what our responsibility should be in this respect. Does it end with reporting our findings to our colleagues in an appropriate professional journal? A management respondent points out that "the value of any research to people, other than those who participate in it, lies in the opportunity for utilization of the results." Should we be of help in bridging the gap between findings and practice? I suppose each researcher must make this decision for himself. Certainly there is an increasing number of examples of two or more reports being written on a given piece of research—one for professional colleagues and the other, a more popular version, for potential users. Recent articles in the Harvard Business Review and in Personnel are illustrative of this latter type.

There are other solutions which might be considered:

1. Perhaps there is need for a greater number of "science writers" in our present society—individuals with both writing skill and an ability to popularize without changing meaning. It may be that if we researchers can't do the job ourselves, we should stimulate the interest of those who can.

2. I feel there is a growing need for the writing of books (including texts) designed to bring together in an integrated fashion the most significant work in a given area. The principal books to date in the human relations field (with some exceptions) are collections of readings rather than integrations. Perhaps the readings stage is an intermediate one and we will soon see individuals willing to attempt the broader integration for which there is such a need at present.

3. Perhaps our institutes of industrial relations and other appropriate university agencies can do more in the way of producing popular pamphlets, newspaper releases, popular lectures, and the like to convey to potential users the results of significant research.

4. Another solution may be inherent in the following observations of three management respondents:

- There is not enough effort on the part of universities to coordinate research and pool data for the accumulation of knowledge.
- Some national agency, like the IRRA, should prepare an over-all plan--showing areas needing study, showing how to coordinate and integrate findings, showing how to get application of what we know now and what we later on discover.
- Perhaps, some thought should be given toward setting up a project for the evaluation of the results of "human relations" research from all sources and publication, in condensed form, of those findings and ideas which appear to be significant.

In each of these statements, the need for a pooling or integration of findings is suggested, apparently to be carried on by some university or national organization. The recent efforts of this type of the Society for Applied Anthropology are certainly helpful. Perhaps additional thought should be given to other satisfactory means for meeting the expressed need.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Deciding the directions which our research efforts should now take must ultimately be the decision of each individual carrying on research. However, I believe there is much to be gained from a frank discussion of the alternatives facing us. What, in general, does it seem most important for us to do research-wise?

The respondents to the questionnaires have numerous suggestions to make. The researchers feel that currently the most pressing unsolved problems are similar to those on which they see progress as already having been made. There is apparently the feeling that work must be continued in areas such as groups, leadership, motivation, social organization and structure, and morale. Few researchers refer to the need to integrate the concepts being developed in these various areas. Further, they express little interest in research methods, but again perhaps only because they see it to be the primary responsibility of the conventional disciplines to make such contributions.

The management respondents, in looking ahead, place the same stress on the individual as they do in evaluating the recent past. There is great concern with the individual as a unique human being functioning in a larger social context as well as with such specific individual problems as motivation, attitudes, selection, training, and advancement. In contrast, however, the managers make few mentions of research in the area of groups or of intergroup relations. Human relations to the managers thus appears primarily to involve individual rather than group relations. There is one other item of particular interest in the management responses. The area of communication is much more frequently mentioned as a currently pressing

problem than it was mentioned as an area in which progress has been made to the present. This apparently is a problem of real present concern to managers.

The currently unsolved problems toward which researchers should now turn their attention as seen by union respondents differ in significant respects from those seen by either the researchers themselves or by the managers. It is true that union respondents show some concern for human relations problems related to the effective internal functioning of the union, but their primary emphasis is on building, maintaining, and strengthening the union. Additionally, however, the union respondents are interested in interpersonal problems that are internal to the business organization itself; they are interested in problems arising out of the union-management relationship; and they are concerned with many problems in the broader social area, ranging from those in civic responsibility to those involved in the issues of war and peace.

In appraising the wide range of problems to which all of the respondents suggest that researchers should now turn their attention, I feel there are a number which warrant additional emphasis:

1. Need for a better understanding of the variables underlying interpersonal effectiveness.--Interpersonal effectiveness is influenced by three types of variables--personality variables, interpersonal variables, and situational variables. Much recent research has arrived at broad statistical generalizations about groups of individuals, types of relations, and varieties of situations. I feel that these generalizations represent good beginnings. However, our work must rapidly proceed to the point where we can make individual predictions, that is, where we can predict how a



specific individual with a given personality involved in a given interpersonal relation in a given situation will behave.<sup>11</sup>

Progress here depends on concentrated research on numerous exciting problems. For example, there is the problem involving the relation between deeper personality variables and overt behavior. I feel quite strongly that we have milked dry what I prefer to call the "superficial" trait approach in which we have been explaining overt behavior in terms of such generalities as the need for status, security, and recognition. The experiential insights gained by therapists added to the numerous recent research findings relating to the authoritarian-personality syndrome, social perception, social sensitivity, and flexibility provide an indication of the deeper roots which we must explore.

2. Bringing about attitudinal and behavioral change.—One management respondent states the problem here in these terms: "How do those charged with responsibility of improving 'human relations' transfer their insights to others who 'need' them?" I would restate this question as: What is the most effective role which a trainer (supervisor, union leader) might play in the process of facilitating attitudinal and behavioral change? A satisfactory answer must inevitably involve a better understanding of the dynamics of resistance to change. I suspect that most of what is now done by practitioners in dealing with resistance represents distillations from experience, and certainly much experience has already been gained. However,

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<sup>11</sup> For one example of work aimed in this direction, see: Jeanne Watson, "The Application of Psychoanalytic Measures of Personality to the Study of Social Behavior," (Paper presented at the 61st Annual Convention of the APA, 1953; mimeographed and available from Research Center for Group Dynamics, University of Michigan).

there is a paucity of findings from research to give the practitioner a sound foundation against which to validate and to improve his art.

3. Evaluation of the impact of training.--Closely related to the preceding problem is the one involving the evaluation of attitudinal and behavioral changes resulting from training. It is my judgment that most practitioners, in developing their art, have been flying by the seat of their pants. It has been quite difficult to measure the relative impact of alternative training techniques used. The time dimension is very much tied in with this evaluation problem. There is some research which indicates discrepancies between measures of the impact of a training program taken at the end of a program and those taken sometime later.<sup>12</sup> Apparently measures taken after a time lapse would be more meaningful, but they are complicated by the intervention of other variables. The evaluation area is certainly one to which thoughtful research needs to be directed.

4. Recognizing the importance of culture variables.--A psychologist has recently stated: "Perhaps one of the outstanding weaknesses of contemporary psychological theory is the relative neglect of the environment by many of the most influential theoretical viewpoints."<sup>13</sup> We have often neglected the sub-cultures of the plant or union in which our research has been carried on as well as the broader culture of which the plant or union form a part. I have often wondered, for example, about the cultural boundaries of conclusions such as the one that says that effective

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Edwin A. Fleishman, "Leadership Climate, Human Relations Training, and Supervisory Behavior," Personnel Psychology, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Summer, 1953), pp. 205-222.

<sup>13</sup> Isidor Chein, "The Environment as a Determinant of Behavior," Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 39 (1954), p. 115.

leaders are those who are employee-oriented rather than work-oriented. Such boundaries, I believe, are rarely made explicit in the published reports of our research. Likewise, we have often neglected problems of intra-personal role conflict arising from membership in different reference groups.<sup>14</sup>

There remains the problem of how best to take culture into account in our work. Four years ago William F. Whyte dealt with the question in this way:

Whether we shall consider the environment, is not, I believe, the central issue... The problem is to discover the most effective ways of taking the environmental factors into account. I am simply proposing that we take the social systems of union and management as the central items for study. I am suggesting that we will make progress faster if we study small, manageable units, even when they are parts of large organizations. The influences flowing down from top management and top union can be noted as they are manifested in the behavior of the people under observation. Similarly, the community influences must be noted in exactly the same way; as they come out in specific items of behavior within the social system.<sup>15</sup>

As I read him, a differing emphasis in approach is suggested by Conrad M. Arensberg, who states:

Much of the individual behavior social psychology seeks to explain is a by-product of changes in the larger organization--themselves networks of interpersonal role adaptation--of which the small groups so far studied are but minute parts. Small-group dynamics is a dependent, not an independent variable.<sup>16</sup>

In short, we must give greater attention both to the impact of different

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<sup>14</sup> The kinds of problems which I have here in mind are well illustrated in Melvin E. Seeman, "Role Conflict and Ambivalence in Leadership," American Sociological Review, Vol. 18, No. 4 (August, 1953), pp. 373-380.

<sup>15</sup> In Part II of John T. Dunlop and William Foote Whyte, "Framework for the Analysis of Industrial Relations: Two Views," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 3, No. 3 (April, 1950), p. 401.

<sup>16</sup> Op. cit., p. 324f.

levels of culture themselves and to the methods for best accomplishing this.

5. The individual in the organization.—According to Dorwin Cartwright, one of the questions men of practical affairs ask about groups is: "How do you keep a group from destroying the individuality and personal freedom of its members?"<sup>17</sup> The great concern of the management respondents for the individual supports Cartwright's statement. The question is one which should haunt researchers as well.

The individual brings to the organization a number of personal needs, some of which, at least, must be satisfied in the organizational context; at the same time, he is expected to behave in a way which will make possible the attainment of an organizational goal. Sometimes the satisfaction of personal needs and the attainment of organizational goals are congruent, but often they are not. Typically, I suspect, the incentive formula is essentially this: "If you do what we want you to do, then we will make it possible for you to satisfy a personal need of your own." When this is true, the performance of work by the individual is only a means of attaining something else that is really important to him; it has no inherent meaning in itself. Another formula which thwarts the individual is: "If you don't do what we want you to do, then some undesired event will occur." This in essence is coercion—a frequently used leadership device. From an organizational point of view, we really do not know very much about the role which coercion of necessity might have to play in cases where the

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<sup>17</sup> "Toward a Social Psychology of Groups: The Concept of Power," Presidential address delivered before the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Cleveland, Ohio, September 5, 1953. Mimeographed.



congruency of personal and organizational goals is not possible. And do we know what the implications of the use of coercion are to the individual?

Another aspect of the problem of the individual in the organization is well pointed up by one of the management respondents:

In all the research that we have scanned, very very rarely do we ever come across anything that shows any real interest on the part of the researcher in the individual's contribution--as an individual. Sure, most research is ostensibly dedicated to the better life for the individual, but the criteria generally seems to be his adjustment to the group. But has there ever been a paper which studied a situation--and followed it up--in which the group was thoroughly upset and agitated by an individual and in which, just possibly, the disturbance and lack of equilibrium turned out over a long period to have been best for all? Has there ever been a study which in its design entertained the possibility that the team research idea produced less than individual research? What about the giant research teams of industry? It is generally taken for granted that this is the way of the future....

...For better or worse we are becoming a bureaucratic society, and the task of first importance is to further the gains of a bureaucratic system without succumbing to its pitfalls. What does this entail? An emphasis on that which is dynamic, on the individual spark--on the necessity for the individual sometimes not to get along....

A third phase of the problem involves the relationship of the so-called informal to the formal aspects of organization. There is a growing body of research about the informal and certainly for a number of years much attention has been given to the formal. What we need to know more about is the optimum interlinkage of the two. Just to cite one example: of what relevance to the attainment of organizational objectives is the grapevine as a means of communication (a means which is closely associated with the satisfaction of personal needs)?

A fourth aspect of the problem is one which poses the conflict between democracy and authority associated with formal hierarchies. Daniel Bell has stated that "ultimately, the problem of leadership is shaped by



the fact that while we live in a society of political democracy, almost all basic social patterns are authoritarian and tend to instill feelings of helplessness and dependence.... Our factories, hierarchical in structure, are, for all the talk of human relations programs, still places where certain men exercise arbitrary authority over others."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, one of the management respondents, in pointing out this paradox in human relations, states somewhat differently:

...On the one hand, all of us are brought up on a Christian ideology, the broad general principles of which call for "equality" (the basis for our Declaration of Independence and Constitution), and, in essence, are important for self respect, providing participation, etc.; on the other hand, there is what is usually referred to in our society as a status system, inequality, rank, differentiation socio-economically, etc....

As the democratic value orientation becomes more deeply imbedded in our social fabric, we are being forced increasingly to examine the extent to which democratic principles have applicability within bureaucracies. For example, many people from industry who have participated as trainees in the National or Western Training Laboratories in Group Development find themselves asking fundamental questions of this nature. Perhaps the problem is not essentially one involving a choice between two extremes, democracy or authority; but, as William F. Whyte has said: "It is a problem of weaving authority and participation effectively together."<sup>19</sup> As I see it, the problem involves the definition of appropriate limits by authority and the

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<sup>18</sup> "'Screening' Leaders in a Democracy," Commentary, Vol. V, No. 4 (April, 1948), p. 375.

<sup>19</sup> "Leadership and Group Participation," New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Bulletin 24 (May, 1953), p. 406.

exercise of freedom or democracy within these limits. The questions of how the limits should be defined and how democracy can best be implemented within them require much additional research.

Closely related here is the notion of power. All kinds of key questions remain to be answered with respect to this construct, but these have already been well pointed up by Dorwin Cartwright in his recent presidential address to SPSSI.<sup>20</sup>

6. Establishing appropriate criteria for the evaluation of performance.---

I believe that most researchers who have been working in the industrial setting have been plagued by the criterion problem. This is also of considerable importance to the operating man. It is of interest to note that more management respondents express concern about this problem than do researcher respondents. As researchers, we are often interested in discovering variables associated with effectiveness, but what is effectiveness in any given setting? Is it profitability, maximum output, individual satisfaction, development of the individual, or what?<sup>21</sup> The variables related to effectiveness may very well be different depending upon the criterion (or criteria) of effectiveness which we choose. But just selecting the appropriate criterion is not enough. Once chosen, how do we operationally define the criterion? And if there is in fact more than one criterion, how

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<sup>20</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> See Bernard M. Bass, "Ultimate Criteria of Organizational Worth," Personnel Psychology, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Autumn, 1952), pp. 157-173, in which he suggests that an organization be evaluated in terms of: (1) the degree to which it is productive, profitable, and self-maintaining; (2) the degree to which it is of value to its members; and (3) the degree to which it and its members are of value to society.

do we combine them in the work we do? Finally, the problem remains of evaluating performance (whether individual or group) with reference to the criterion or of relating the variables under study to the criterion. I see these unsolved problems at present as critical barriers to useful progress in the area of human relations research in industry.

The operating man, in making organizationally relevant decisions, is faced with similar problems, and the need for answers is as real to him as to the researcher.<sup>22</sup>

7. The area of intergroup relations.—Since one aspect of this area is to be the focal point of discussion the second day of the Conference, I will make but brief comment here. As I have stated above, I think it important that the study of intergroup relations be viewed as one part of the broader field of human relations, and not as something separate therefrom. In my opinion, one of the major unsolved problems here involves the roles of conflict and cooperation in the relations between groups. Is cooperation always desirable and always possible? What happens when the objectives of two groups are diametrically opposed; and what about the process of accommodation which, it seems to me, is often the feasible middle-ground between the two extremes? We need to know much more about this process. I also see in the intergroup area a growing awareness of the problem of the individual—the person caught between two or more groups. This problem of dual loyalty presents challenging questions for research.

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<sup>22</sup> For some interesting points of view on many phases of the operational problem, see: Irving R. Weschler and Paula Brown, eds., Evaluating Research and Development, Human Relations Research Group, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Los Angeles, 1953.

In the opinions of the respondents to my questionnaires and from my own point of view, these are some of the focal points for research in the period that lies ahead. Before we leave this topic, I think it important to re-emphasize a point which has already been mentioned, namely, the need for integration. As I see it, this need occurs at four different levels:

1. As already noted, there have been many valuable contributions to theory in such topical areas as groups, leadership, and morale. However, various researchers working in any given area often develop frames of reference which do not seem to take into account the frames of other researchers in the same area. From the published reports, in fact, one often gets the impression that some researchers are not aware of what others have done or are doing. Certainly, integration at this level is crucial so that the work being done in a given area becomes additive. To accomplish this objective, means must be found, among other things, to improve the present state of inter-researcher communication. We on the West Coast are particularly sensitive to this problem; for an article, published with a considerable time-lag after completion, is a poor substitute for more frequent personal contact or other direct notice that a particular type of work is being carried on.

2. The results of human relations research carried on in laboratories and other non-industrial settings must be integrated with the research work done in the industrial setting itself. I feel that those of us who work mainly in the industrial setting are often unaware of the relevance to what we are doing of work done in other settings.

3. Additional effort needs to be directed toward the integration of research methods. Probably greater progress has already been made here

than in other aspects. Such methods as the non-directive interview, sociometry, and scaling techniques are to be found in the tool kits of many researchers in the human relations field, but there is still room for greater gains. For example, I think it would be most fruitful to explore the integration of many of our more precise quantitative methods with the subjective, clinical, insightful approach.

4. There is need for an integration of theories stemming from the different topical areas (groups, leadership, morale, etc.) into broader theories which deal with the relationships between them.<sup>23</sup> This need is well expressed by some of the respondents. One researcher states:

It seems to me that we need to take a look at the mass of empirical generalizations available, and see (1) to what extent they are integrated into some sort of systematic conceptual scheme and (2) begin to place more emphasis upon systematic theory building before, during, and after the empirical research.

Another researcher says:

I feel that our greatest need at the moment is for the development of a more systematic and integrated theory of human relations. The field is full of theoretical statements, many of which are well-buttressed by research. However, these theoretical statements have not yet been woven together in any satisfactory fashion....

Finally, a management respondent suggests:

Perhaps it is about time that more concentrated effort be made to bring the related bits of data and information now available into an integrated whole to provide us with understanding of human relations, broadly speaking....

What the most useful focal points for integration of this type will

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<sup>23</sup> For an excellent presentation of this point of view, see: Fay B. Karpf, "American Social Psychology--1951," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LVIII, No. 2 (September, 1952), p. 192.



be, I am not sure. There are some who are using the organization as a focal point for integration.<sup>24</sup> The area of communication offers interesting possibilities in view of the fact that it is through the communication process that all interpersonal relations occur. George Homans has accomplished much integration around the concept of the human group.<sup>25</sup> And we in our Human Relations Research Group are currently attempting an integration focused on the concept of leadership.

I doubt whether scholars are yet ready for the broad sweeping integrations of theory, but we are taking the first steps in this direction.

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<sup>24</sup> Bakke and some of his group at the Yale Labor and Management Center are making continuing contributions toward integration focused on organizational behavior. See, for example, E. Wight Bakke, Bonds of Organization (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950).

<sup>25</sup> G. C. Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950).

## A POSTLUDE ON VALUES

Any evaluative discussion of the area of human relations would be incomplete without some attention being given to ethical questions. The most frequently recurring theme in a large number of the responses to the questionnaires is an ethical one. There are many variations on this theme; they break through implicitly when purposes or objectives are mentioned as well as in many explicit statements. In addition, many writers of journal articles in recent years have addressed themselves to matters of value associated with the field of human relations.

It seems to me important to be clear on the points at which values enter in. For example, we should distinguish between value problems involving the researcher himself and those involving the practitioner. I do not propose to provide final answers here. My hope is to state and attempt to clarify what, in my opinion, are some of the key value issues with which we have to deal.

Let us begin by highlighting the value problems associated with practitioners in the field of human relations (and in a very real sense this category includes every person).

The ethical concerns arise because knowledge of and skill in human relations can be and are consciously used in interpersonal relations by individuals and groups to serve their own ends. Such use is often justified by the practitioner in terms of the "goodness" of the ends which he seeks. However, he should not lose sight of the possible differing values and perceptions of those with whom he deals. For example, to one respondent, the term human relations "brings to mind formulae for manipulation," and to

another human relations is a "refined exploitive technique." Morton Grodzins states it bluntly when he says, "The short point is that the science of human relations constitutes an effective tool for the manipulation of men."<sup>26</sup> What is posed is a conflict in values between the practitioner and the individual who is being "practiced upon." In the industrial relations field, the practitioner is generally seen as a manager or trainer; and the "practiced upon," as unions and subordinates or as trainees.

How are the goals of this manipulation perceived? According to a researcher respondent, managers see human relations as:

...a way of reducing the importance of the union or any other organization that may be contrary in purpose to their organization, and/or  
 a way of reducing their guilt feelings about the previous history of management, and/or  
 a way of reducing their present guilt (?) feelings growing out of the realization that they have power over many people and that they are the top representatives of a type of organization whose basic structure is authoritarian, and/or  
 a way of increasing profits, and/or  
 a way of decreasing employee disinterest in and lack of identification with the company, and/or  
 finally, a few who really believe that inherent in the nature of organization are certain human relations problems which, if not understood, may have serious consequences in our entire life (e.g., the inherent dependence, economic and psychological, of the employees toward the management).

In their responses, managers frequently mention such organization-relevant goals as attaining an effective organization, efficiency, increased productivity, high morale, supervisory success, reduction of absenteeism and tardiness, and promotion of industrial peace. But they also specify individual-relevant goals such as understanding and cooperation, welfare of all personnel, reduction of tensions, feeling of participation, dignity

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<sup>26</sup> Op. cit., p. 99.

and well-being, and comfort and health. From the context of their statements, it is difficult to tell to what extent they see the individual-relevant goals as being themselves means to the attainment of the organization-relevant goals. The union representatives in their responses mention such objectives as improving relations among people, individual dignity, sense of satisfaction and feeling of security, opportunity to develop individual personality, relief of tensions, better management-union relations, and developing more valuable union members including the understanding of union aims. There is no question but what these objectives of the two groups are often perceived as being incompatible. Perhaps we need some further research here on the values themselves in order to determine the extent to which such incompatibility exists. For example, one manager respondent suggests that we need more evidence bearing on the question of whether the highly satisfied individual is also a high producer.

It may be that there are many broad objectives whose attainment would satisfy the principal needs of all parties concerned. In those cases where objectives appear to be irreconcilable, there is still another "out" suggested by a union respondent who feels that researchers have provided insights that enable the trade unionist to recognize when he is being manipulated or handled to achieve management's objectives. Widespread knowledge of human relations and skill in the art are powerful countermeasures to manipulation. I believe unions have directed too much attention to management's use of human relations instead of preparing themselves as adequately in these uses. However, there are recent signs that at least some unions are beginning to make up this deficiency.

Trainers in the field of human relations are often seen as individuals

with a full bag of tricks trying to bring about changes in trainees which are not desired by them. I, for one, agree with the condemnation of trainers who function in this way and agree with the researcher respondent who specifies the facilitation of self-direction as the proper objective of trainers.

Next we turn to value problems associated with the researcher himself.

The first area of concern here is with the operational methods which he uses.

Included in this area are these problems:

1. The relationship of the researcher to the host organization in which research is being conducted.--How much of his purpose does he disclose to the host? What should he do in avoiding disruption of the normal functioning of the organization? Does he invite participation in the planning and execution of his project? What, in short, are his obligations to the host?

2. The relationship of the researcher to his subjects.--Primarily involved here is the question of collecting data from people without their knowing the true nature of that data and the purposes for which it will be used. The error-choice technique of attitude assessment and some uses of projective instruments would be appropriate illustrations here.<sup>27</sup>

3. Confidences held with respect to the publishing of research reports.--Here the question is the obligation of the researcher to preserve in his published reports the anonymity of individuals and organizations as well as any other information which has been disclosed in confidence.

4. Making findings generally available.--Does the researcher have

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<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of some of the ethical and public relations problems faced by the researcher, see Irving R. Weschler, "Problems in the Use of Indirect Methods of Attitude Measurement," Public Opinion Quarterly, (Spring, 1951), pp. 133-138.



responsibility to make the results of his work generally available through publication or otherwise to any and all potential users? My feeling here is that we do leave ourselves open to the charge of being parties to manipulation if we grant a monopoly of certain knowledge to some who can use this knowledge for their own purposes to the possible detriment of others.

The second area of concern is with the researcher's value orientation.

To argue, as some do, that the researcher can divest himself of valuations with respect to the subject matter upon which he works is, I believe, fallacious. The researcher can not escape such valuations. Certainly, his choice as to what he is going to work on involves a value judgment. When he does basic research, his purpose is to test hypotheses in order to add to knowledge; but even then, his basic frame of reference has an impact on the way he formulates his problems or on the methods he selects. When he does applied research, by definition he is typically using the findings of basic research in seeking answers to practical short-run problems. The major difficulties arise when his research objectives are not liked by others, and such a reaction is not unusual. A union respondent points out that human relations researchers who exist solely to create labor relations plans designed to develop a docile work force, to get acceptance of a paternalistic attitude by management toward workers, or to achieve exploitation in the guise of friendly and considerate treatment, have done a disservice to the general field of human relations research. Another union respondent states that "human relations research has too often attempted to gloss over conflict of interest and has too often concentrated upon means of suppressing that conflict through manipulation;" while still

another feels that human relations "has served to counterattack, boldly or subtly, the union-consciousness of workers."

What I believe is most important here is that we remain clear on the distinction between science and values. Science is method--making observations, drawing inferences and testing inferences. A subject matter is treated scientifically if the scientific method is followed, regardless of the objectives for which the method is being used. So even where a researcher is interested in discovering effective means for defeating union organization or for overcoming management resistance to such organization, it is still possible for him to be scientific in the discovery of these means.

But the concern is often expressed that researchers interested in certain objectives will permit that interest to affect the scientific method which they use. Wilbert E. Moore points out that "the opening of new professional opportunities in rendering technical advice on the internal organization of manufacturing plants and their relation to the community implies dangers to objectivity in the sense of freedom from special pleading and evaluative bias."<sup>28</sup> It seems to a union respondent that too many researchers "pose as detached, objective observers and analysts, whereas, in fact, detachment and objectivity go out the window when the goal of increased productivity is accepted.... What I do object to is their pretense that their work is somewhat scientific and objective when it is so often anything but that." Finally, a researcher respondent points out that "the ardent human relationers are not really concerned with scientific results but rather in propagandizing a particular philosophy." There is no question

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<sup>28</sup> "Current Issues in Industrial Sociology," American Sociological Review, Vol. 12, No. 6 (December, 1947), p. 653.

that this possibility exists, but it does not need to be an essential accompaniment of interest in specified objectives.

Another area of concern involving researchers is that their adherence to certain specified objectives keeps them from exploring important alternative value areas. A researcher points out that "human relations practitioners must be careful not to lose sight of the many researchable problems that may be not service but dangerous activity, but nevertheless needs doing (i.e., dangerous in the sense of challenging certain basic assumptions, either of others in the field or of those who give the money)." Arthur Kornhauser points out not only that researchers for management tend to concentrate on restricted and short-run research undertakings, but also that certain areas of research are taboo. He says, "Management's prerogatives are not to be tampered with; studying them might reveal needed changes or concessions. Likewise, the motives and private attitudes of top executives are sacrosanct. Research is usually steered away from all such matters. They are dangerous."<sup>29</sup> Daniel Bell sums up the point when he says that almost none among the researchers "seem to be interested in the possibility that one of the functions of social science may be to explore alternative (and better, i.e., more human) modes of human combinations, not merely to make more effective those that already exist."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "Industrial Psychology as Management Technique and as Social Science," American Psychologist, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July, 1947), p. 225.

<sup>30</sup> "Adjusting Men to Machines," Commentary, Vol. III (January, 1947), p. 80. For another view on this point, see W. A. Roivisto, "Value, Theory, and Fact in Industrial Sociology," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LVIII, No. 6 (May, 1953), pp. 564-572.

What, I wonder, are the values which motivate researchers? Is it the quest for money, for power, for knowledge and understanding, or is it something else? These are value questions which each of us must answer for himself. It seems to me, as but one observer, that increasingly researchers are being motivated by concerns for the individual, for his emotional well-being, for his opportunity to enjoy life, for his better integration and more effective satisfaction of needs (as one researcher puts it), for his self-expression and development, and for a greater voice for him in the determination of his destiny. Are these values of which we need be ashamed? I think not.

PART II

HOW IS HUMAN RELATIONS PERCEIVED?

An Analysis of the Responses of Researchers  
and of Management and Union Representatives  
to a Specially Designed Questionnaire



## WHAT IS HUMAN RELATIONS?

All respondents were asked the question: "When the term 'human relations' is used, what does it bring to your mind?" Their responses fall into the following categories:

### I. Interpersonal Phenomena

The largest number of respondents see human relations as interpersonal phenomena. These phenomena are of two related types:

#### A. Interpersonal Relations

Such phrases as "relationships between people," "human behavior in social situations," "processes involved when two or more people are in communication with each other," "interplay of personalities," "area of interaction between people and between groups of people," "all the interpersonal and intergroup relations among people," are used. Some respondents think in terms of person-to-person relations; others in terms of group-to-group relations; and others in terms of both. Groups, per se, are not specifically mentioned in many instances; and it is none too clear as to whether a respondent who states, for example, "relationships between people," is including intergroup relations in this phrase.

Usually, no restriction is placed on the setting of the interpersonal relations. However, a specific setting is sometimes mentioned; for example, a group, organization, family, team, school, hospital, church, government, agriculture, and industry. A still greater restriction finds the relations limited to superiors and subordinates, employee and company. It is of interest to note that the union respondents, with one exception, do not specifically mention either intra- or inter-union relations. In sum, the interpersonal

relations mentioned range from the "entire area of social relations" at the one extreme to the "relations between employees and representatives of the company, particularly the first line supervisor" at the other.

#### B. Problems of Interpersonal Relations

A few respondents see human relations as "the problems associated in the interaction between two or more people," "that area of problems in emotional and social relationships of persons with each other which arise whenever two or more find themselves together over any appreciable time span," and "social problems." More narrowly, one respondent sees human relations "in terms of hierarchical problems, using hierarchy in the sense of a management institution." Some specific problems mentioned are behavioral change, leadership, communication and understanding, securing action and cooperation.

### II. The Study of Interpersonal Phenomena

Some respondents speak generally of "a study of interpersonal relations and group structure," "any systematic study of interpersonal relations," and "the study of the interaction of individuals." However, a few limit the study of interpersonal relations to those occurring within organizations. One (who prefers the term "human organization") refers to "the study of the adjustment of individual personalities to one another in the structure of the various institutions in which they take part, under the constraints of the techniques, systems, procedures, which make up the cultural framework of the organization." Another refers to "the field growing out of sociology, social psychology, and social anthropology, bringing to bear the methods and theories of those disciplines on the study of organizations."

### III. A Body of Knowledge

One respondent, for example, calls it "a subject matter area for the training of students, laymen, and professionals."

#### IV. Specified Research Methods

The term brings to the mind of one respondent "the newer social science research methods (Lewin, Moreno, and others)."

#### V. An Applied Field

"The application of scientific findings describing the conditions under which personal relations of various kinds develop." "The recent upsurge in applied interest in sociology, psychology, and anthropology."

#### VI. An Aspect of Management

"A systematic plan for industrial personnel designed to insure that employees are properly selected, placed, compensated, supervised and treated by management;" "that sphere of the industrial function which is concerned with the motivation, appeals, impressions, influences, feelings, and responses that attend people in their working environment;" "the policies and their administration affecting personnel;" "the aspect of management which aims at increasing the effectiveness of an organization by methods that take into consideration the individualities of the people in the group;" "management responsibility involving consideration of employees as members of a social system larger than the organization with which they are directly connected."

#### VII. An Art

"The art of handling or dealing with people;" "the success or failure with which supervisors or other management representatives carry on their day-to-day contacts with those under their supervision or with other management representatives;" "the art of living with people."

#### VIII. A Term with Value Implications

Many responses, in one way or another, carry with them some kind of value

implications:

A. In general, "the phrase may imply a point of view, such as ideas about a growing and evolving social system (or systems)," or, human relations is "coming to be a sort of catch-all religion in which adjustment to the organization by the individual is the end goal." "There is a point of view being expressed--a point of view involving a particular set of social values; as a consequence, investigations lack rigor of control and conclusions are biased. Terms are never well defined, nor are concepts really clarified. ...The ardent human relationsers are not really concerned with scientific result, but rather in propagandizing a particular philosophy."

B. To many, human relations implies a good practice in, or the quality of, interpersonal relations. For example, human relations is "an ethical system emphasizing the positive good that may result from the right kind of inter-relationships among people." It is "a spirit of cooperation and understanding between individuals and groups at all levels of the organization;" "the attitude of one human being toward another;" "the dignity, the sense of satisfaction, the feeling of security, or the lack of it, that individuals have in the plant, factory, or office;" "how well people get along with one another, showing ethical regard for each other;" "liking and disliking;" "considerate behavior;" "good manners;" "decencies of relationships."

C. To others, human relations implies manipulation. It "brings to mind formulae for manipulation." It is a "refined exploitive technique." And it is often seen as a device by which management can attain ends which do not coincide with those of employees or unions.

## IX. Miscellaneous Perceptions

In addition to the perceptions of human relations already listed, a number of others are reported. Among these latter, some of the more interesting are:

- Experts, usually academic, who can impart techniques that, if followed, will enable conflict-ridden executives to eliminate most of their problems with superiors and subordinates.
- A group of researchers working within the industrial setting on various levels of discourse.
- All of those things which affect people in a work situation from the time of hiring through working life, bearing in mind the things that affect them in the work place and the things that affect them in a community.
- The movement in industry...which has attempted to give the worker more participation, and hence satisfaction, in the organization.
- It is synonymous with the terms "industrial relations" or "personnel relations."
- It suggests the identification with the enterprise itself of the individual men and women throughout the organization.
- Many respondents mention the fact that the term human relations is frequently used as a synonym for race or ethnic relations.

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Sixteen respondents reflect, in one way or another, negative feelings with respect to the term human relations. Of these, all but one are researchers; the other is a union representative. Their expressed feelings fall into four groups:

- A. It is "a disturbing phrase that produces some vague feelings of hostility in me," and "it leaves me with a dissatisfied and wishy-washy feeling."
- B. It is an "unfortunate term;" it is "too mushy;" it has "little meaning;" it is "very vague;" it is "too broad;" it has "different usages;" it is a "catch-phrase" and "catch-all;" "confusion;"



C. The term suggests "a great deal of fuzzy thinking" or of "loose thinking." It suggests studies that are called human relations "to escape the discipline of established theory in the appropriate fields."

D. The term "somehow smacks of sentimentalism;" it involves "fine sentiments;" "it connotes back-slapping and fanny-patting;" "good-doer attitude;" "dogmatism;" "public relations."

#### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HUMAN RELATIONS AND THE CONVENTIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCES

The researcher respondents were the only ones asked: "What relationships, if any, do you see between 'human relations' and the conventional social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics?" Most of these respondents are agreed that there is some relationship between human relations and most, if not all, of the social sciences. However, the exact nature of the relationship varies widely, as one might suspect, from the wide variation in perception of human relations itself.

The respondents frequently refer to every social science field, although there is about equal specific mention of sociology, psychology (most frequently social psychology), and anthropology (most frequently social, cultural, or applied anthropology). In the relatively few instances in which specific comments are amplified, sociology is seen as being relevant to status and social classes, a theoretical framework and methodology, the social fabric, and information about types of groups and relations between groups; psychology is seen as being relevant to a theoretical framework and methodology, motivation and attitude, the individual and his feeling about other people, applied techniques such as attitude measurement, and individual differences; and anthropology is seen as being relevant to a theoretical framework

and methodology, studies of customs or sentiments, the importance of culture in explaining differences in behavior, and the culture concept. The field of economics is seen as having but a peripheral relationship, if any, to human relations. Its motivational theory--relating to "the rational, peculiarly motivated human being"--is seen as the closest tie-in to human relations. Other fields were mentioned, each of them but once: group dynamics, psychiatry, psychotherapy, biology, medicine, education, law, political science, public administration and business administration.

The relationship which the respondents see between human relations and the conventional social sciences fall into the following broad categories:

#### I. Little Relationship

One respondent states that "as far as I can tell, there is relatively little relationship between human relations and the conventional social sciences."

#### II. Human relations are the interpersonal phenomena which are studied by the social sciences.

Human relations "refers to the multiplicity of relationships, studied by one or more of the social sciences." It is "the set of behaviors that the social sciences usually attempt to study in one form or another." "It is the raw subject matter of several of the social and behavioral sciences." One respondent points out that "human relations or institutional behavior is a subject matter, not a science," and he points out that we in the human sciences should not confuse our sciences with our subject matters.

#### III. Human relations is equated with one or more of the specific disciplines.

One respondent points out that "the amusing manifestation at the moment is that, true to form, the proponents of each of the separate disciplines are now attempting to bring 'human relations' under their separate aegis." Reflecting this,

an anthropologist points out that "applied anthropology in our terms is the science of human relations" and that "anthropology provides the broadest framework for the understanding of human relations of any discipline, bringing together as it does the factors of personality, organizational structure and culture." Another respondent indicates that he does not make a distinction in his own mind between human relations on the one hand, and social psychology and sociology on the other.

IV. Human relations, in some sense, is involved in some specified manner with applications.

It is the "application of social scientific theory to present problems." It is the "applied aspects of social psychology, sociology, and anthropology to organizations, particularly industrial and governmental." The conventional social sciences "can provide confirmed 'facts' to be applied in 'practical' situations." The conventional disciplines "can make worthwhile contributions to the development of an effective 'human relations' program" (presumably in industry); and human relations is "one focus of application."

V. Human relations, however defined, is in some sense a resultant of the social sciences.

This category is a somewhat fuzzy one, for it is often difficult to determine how the respondent sees the human relations to which he is relating the conventional social sciences. In some instances, respondents simply indicate that all or some of the conventional social sciences have made a contribution to human relations. One respondent sees human relations as the "core (and meeting ground) of the social sciences." Another states that "if progress is to be made in human relations, then the relationship existing between it and the social sciences demands that the findings of the social sciences be the core in understanding human relations." In a more specific sense, a respondent sees the conventional social sciences as providing us "with a theoretical framework and a methodology for studying human behavior."

And in the same vein, another sees human relations as dealing "with methods and theories growing out of sociology, social psychology, and anthropology, bearing upon the study of organizations." These last two perceptions are closely related to the next category.

#### VI. Human relations is becoming, or is, an integrated field or separate discipline.

One individual sees human relations as having become "the focus about which to integrate the social sciences; it is an integrated field rather than a new specialty." Another states that human relations "should represent the integrated activity of all of these different disciplines, with each discipline bringing to it separate skills in the study of certain kinds of variables." It is pointed out by still another that if the term is used to designate a discipline, "then it would seem to be a kind of omnibus, synthetic discipline resting on a number of more narrowly and abstractly defined disciplines." Others see a new discipline emerging. One states that "sociology and psychology, especially, should have an important part in developing a 'science of human relations'." Another indicates that he is "wondering increasingly if we are seeing the development of a new discipline, which may contain human relations, personality, psychotherapy (individual and group), and group dynamics." Finally, one individual sees "human relations as being different from any of the older disciplines, but incorporating parts of them."

#### CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY HUMAN RELATIONS RESEARCH

The researcher respondents on the one hand and the management and union respondents on the other were asked somewhat different questions with respect to human relations research contributions. The former were asked: "What do you feel

have been the most valuable contributions, over the past twenty years, made by 'human relations' research?" The latter were asked: "What do you feel have been the most useful contributions of 'human relations' research to (management) (unions)?" Because of this, responses will be separately summarized.

### Researcher Responses

The researcher responses fall into the following broad categories:

#### I. No Contribution

A few researchers are unaware of any contribution and report their feelings in such phrases as "I know of none" and "damn little that can be called research."

#### II. Studies

Here respondents refer to such items as "studies of groups," "studies of resistance to change," "studies of productivity and morale," and "research and psychotherapy (client-centered) with its social implications."

#### III. Specified Works, Individuals, and Institutions

A number of mentions are made of the work of particular individuals or groups; individuals per se are named; and research institutions are mentioned.

##### A. The Work of Individuals or Groups

There is mention of the general work of Kurt Lewin, Elton Mayo, Benjamin Selekman, the Michigan Group Dynamics people, and the client-centered psychotherapy exponents. Mention is also made of the following published works of individuals:

1. E. Wight Bakke, Bonds of Organization
2. E. Wight Bakke, Adaptive Human Behavior: An Outline for the Study of Human Relations



3. G. C. Homans, The Human Group
4. E. Jacques, The Changing Culture of a Factory
5. D. McGregor, "The Staff Function in Human Relations," Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Summer, 1948).
6. N. R. F. Maier, Principles of Human Relations (two mentions)
7. F. J. Roethlisberger, Management and Morale
8. F. J. Roethlisberger and W. J. Dickson, Management and the Worker (two mentions)
9. C. Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy
10. S. A. Stouffer (and others), The American Soldier (two mentions)
11. W. F. Whyte, Pattern for Industrial Peace

#### B. Named Individuals

Fifty-six different contributors are named by the researcher respondents, forty-five of them receiving but one mention. Those receiving three or more mentions are: K. Lewin (ten mentions), W. F. Whyte (five mentions), N. R. F. Maier (four mentions), F. Roethlisberger (four mentions), and J. L. Moreno (three mentions). The balance of the mentions includes persons with varying interests, such as, C. I. Barnard, W. R. Bion, R. B. Cattell, L. Guttman, K. Horney, E. P. Learned, M. Mead, C. L. Shartle, and W. L. Warner.

#### C. Institutions

The Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan or sub-units thereof are mentioned most frequently. Also mentioned are the Personnel Research Board at The Ohio State University, M.I.T.'s Industrial Relations Center, The Research Associates of Philadelphia, and the National Training Laboratory in Group Development at Bethel, Maine.

#### IV. Concepts and Theories

Illustrative of the items falling into this category are these concepts: industry as a society, culture, status, power, authoritarianism, teamwork, and satisfaction; and these theories: Lewin's field theory, Whyte's framework of analysis, and McGregor's theory of human behavior.

#### V. Findings and Emphases

Under this heading are items such as "new recognition of small work group as an important element in work organizations;" "a more permissive and work-oriented emphasis to human problems in government and industry;" and "emphasis to the dynamic behavior of organizations." Also under this heading are listed the following independent-dependent variable relationships which the respondents see as having been established:

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>
Group membership	Follower-leader relationship
Administrative and supervisory freedom	Productivity and morale
Permissive supervision	Employee productivity and morale
Participation in decision-making	Acceptance and implementation
Authoritarian personality	Leadership
Concepts of political democracy	Successful translation to industrial hierarchy
Morale	Productivity or efficiency
Non-economic factors	Behavior in industrial relations
Personality	Small group behavior
Socio-psychological variables	Behavior
Group membership, needs, perceptual distortions	The way work is performed

## VI. Research Methods

Items falling under this heading are: "general developments in methodology," "sociometry," "the implied need for a co-disciplinary approach," "pioneering in using experimental and observational techniques," "a method for the study of culture in relation to individual behavior," "developing the hypothetical deductive method in the social sciences," and "trend toward the process-function point of view."

## VII. Applications

Here we have such items as "measurement of attitudes of employees toward supervisors, job, and company;" "development of methods of placing employees on a job that corresponds to his aptitudes, etc.;" and "giving each employee adequate training for his job."

Specific techniques in application mentioned are: methods of non-directive (client-centered) counseling (multiple mentions), role playing, training techniques in human relations, applied psychiatry and therapeutic developments, projective techniques, techniques of group problem-solving of labor and industrial problems, and the Kerr-Speroff empathy test.

\* \* \*

Another way of viewing all the responses is in terms of the topical areas to which they refer. There are five principal headings, clearly interrelated, under which these responses most frequently fall. They are: groups (thirteen mentions), leadership (thirteen mentions), motivation (nine mentions), social organization and structure (nine mentions), and morale (six mentions). Other areas, receiving from one to three mentions, are: communications, interaction concepts, ethical considerations, resistance to change, status, emotional basis of conflict and cooperation, psychotherapy, role relationships, socialization, decision-making, culture, and power.

## Management and Union Responses

We next turn to the most useful contributions of human relations research to management and to unions as seen by representatives of each of these groups. Their replies fall into the same categories as those applicable to researcher responses. However, the distribution of items by category for the former responses differs in important respects from the latter.

### I. No Contribution

Only one management representative could think of no contributions made to management by research in the field of human relations. However, over a third of the responses of the union representatives are definitely of the no contribution type, or reflect an admittedly inadequate knowledge of the field on the part of the respondents. Typical of these two kinds of responses are: "human relations has contributed very little directly to unions;" "I am not aware of any specific research undertaking that has materially contributed anything of value to the trade unions;" "not sure enough of nature of contributions to comment." One of the strongest comments coming from a union representative was: "It is significant of the value of human relations research to unions that in the ten years in which I have been research director, I have never had occasion to consult the literature of such research. So far as this union in particular goes, human relations research is of no value whatsoever."

### II. Studies

A number of studies were mentioned by both management and union representatives. Typical of the diversity of these are: "studies of scientific and social factors which motivate union members and leaders;" "studies of what is involved in supervisory effectiveness;" "studies on employee budgets;" and "studies of the nature of

a member's relationship to his local and international."

### III. Specified Works, Individuals, and Institutions

#### A. The Work of Individuals or Groups

The general work of Elton Mayo and the Hawthorne experiments are mentioned by management respondents. More specifically, a management representative names Clark Kerr's "The Short-run Behavior of Physical Productivity and Average Hourly Earnings," and representatives of both groups mention the National Planning Association's "Causes of Industrial Peace Under Collective Bargaining."

#### B. Named Individuals

Management representatives make mention of Dr. Gaudet, H. Jennings, C. Kerr, K. Lewin, R. Lippitt, and D. Yoder; while union representatives name Father T. Purcell, S.J., and J. Seidman.

#### C. Institutions

There are management mentions of the Harvard Business School and the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan; a union representative names the National Training Laboratory in Group Development.

### IV. Concepts and Theories

There are only two mentions falling in this category, and they come from management representatives. One highlights "the work which has been done on the theory of organization structure, delegation, and staff relationships." The other points up "the attempt at integration of the various disciplines and approaches to the behavior of individuals in interaction."

### V. Findings and Emphases

A number of the responses of both management and union representatives fall



in this category. Many of the management responses in this category are preceded by such phrases as: "greater awareness of," "better understanding of," "stimulated," "better idea of," "appreciation of fact that," "a new respect for."

Both management and union respondents indicate a number of findings relating independent and dependent variables. Included among the management responses are, for example:

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>
Man's attitudes, morale, and satisfaction	Quantity and quality of performance
Attitudes and viewpoints	Importance to job
Motives and aspirations	Health of organization
Scientific and social factors	Motivation of union members and leaders
Individual differences	Selection, placement and promotion
Communication process	Reduction of tension, increase of satisfaction, and production of maximum cooperation
Nature of the human being	Effective organization
Environmental factors	Adjustment to the work situation
Most of the other relationships not specifically mentioned in the above listing involve needs, motivation, and the like as independent variables, and efficiency, productivity, and the like as dependent variables.	

Included among the union responses are, for example:

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>
Understanding of the "other guy"	Using community resources for the benefit of all
Emotion	Disputes between people
Unfounded fears caused by insecurities	Relief of tension and more harmonious and constructive union-management relationships
Understanding of communications	Developing of more valuable union members and growth of understanding of union aims

## VI. Research Methods

One contribution to method is mentioned by a management respondent. It involves "the reliable and very useful statistical methods for dealing with groups of employees and employee attributes." There are no union responses falling in this category.

## VII. Applications

The techniques and methods mentioned by management respondents fall under the following headings: testing, selection and placement, opinion or employee surveys, Harvard case materials, communications, and personnel development. One union respondent points out that "many of the techniques of group discussion that have been developed or refined by group dynamics people are now used by unions."

\* \* \*

Turning to the topical areas to which the responses refer, with one major exception, the responses of both management and union representatives do not fall into neat categories. The one exception is to be found in the case of motivation (including such items as needs, personality, and importance of the individual) which is mentioned in many management responses. Typical of other management items are: "reasons for top executive failure;" "greater awareness of importance of communication;" "the fact that individual differences can be measured;" and "the translation of individual attitudes into group reaction." Reflecting the range of union responses are the following: "the nature of a union member's relationship to the local and international;" "surveys on what members think of unions;" "pointing up of the existence of group influences and the responsiveness of individuals to them;" "a new understanding of communication between individuals, groups, and groups and individuals;" and "greater awareness that human relations are a necessary and vital need."

## DEFICIENCIES OF HUMAN RELATIONS RESEARCH

Management and union respondents only were asked the following question: "What do you feel have been the most significant deficiencies (as viewed by management) (as viewed by unions) of 'human relations' research?" Their responses, combined, unless specific mention is made to the contrary, fall into the following categories.

I. Researcher Inadequacies

## A. Philosophical deficiencies or biases of researchers.

- Researchers have too often concentrated upon means of suppressing conflict through manipulation.
- They make the assumption that human relations means the erasure of conflict between the individual and his environment, and the assumption that the individual is meaningless in himself and contributes only as a member of a group.
- They fail to recognize that democratic action can result only from the resolution of conflict in an atmosphere of freedom.
- They completely fail to come to grips with the central problem that democracy grows out of a division of real power and not as a result of a game.
- The "morality of productivity" is accepted by so many industrial relations "scholars;" they believe that increased productivity is in itself a social good.
- They have worked toward the accomplishment of goals viewed as undesirable by the workers.

## B. Researchers focus "upon peripheral problems, losing sight of the core."

C. They "do not recognize sufficient cultural and socio-economic factors outside the plant, focus exclusively on plant relationships, forgetting that the general life pattern is truly controlling of human behavior."

D. "Research is conducted in the context of the larger company environment, whereas the bulk of industrial employees work in small enterprises."

E. Lack of concern for management problems.

- The social scientist imposes his problems as those appropriate to research, rather than seeking management's assistance in research planning.
- Broad research is undoubtedly necessary, but management people are looking for solutions to immediate, pressing, and serious problems in their own companies.

F. Carelessness or deficiencies in research method.

- Not working in a scientific manner. There is far too much tendency to treat the subject emotionally.
- Detachment and objectivity go out the window when the goal of increased productivity is accepted.
- Their work is sometimes faulty in design.
- They work on poorly conceived problems.
- They do not have adequate knowledge of methods and techniques for studying human behavior.
- They are most superficial in dealing with direct, obvious relations, forgetting that man hides what he wants to withdraw.

G. Researchers remain isolated from or are naive with respect to the problems they seek to study.

- They are not trained in the practical aspects of business.
- They sometimes lack the practical experience necessary to a full appreciation and understanding of industrial problems.
- Degree conscious researchers seem prone to assume that they must not descend too far from their ivory towers lest they be defiled by contact with such people as lesser union officials.
- Too many social scientists are making studies who do not have the first hand knowledge of the employees, the employer, or the union.
- There is a tendency of human relations research programs to ignore or bypass union organization.

(Most of the union responses with reference to "researcher inadequacies" fall within this sub-category.)

#### H. Deficiency in the process of generalization.

- Making findings from a small amount of research or an insufficient number of people involved and stating the findings so as to imply scientific results which are open to dispute.
- The "grand rush" to arrive at generalizations based upon insufficient data from research, particularly in the practical setting.

### II. Applicability of Research Results

#### A. Theoretical character of results

- Most of the work has been too academic.
- Most of the material is not yet in the form to have sufficient practical application.

#### B. Problems of bridging the gap between theory and practice

- There should be more try-out of research results to insure that findings are critically examined outside of the "laboratory."
- Research is conducted by men who are interested almost wholly in research for its own sake, and who are not sympathetic to application of findings.
- There has been a dichotomy between theory and practice; these two must be integrated.
- Some experiments are academic in nature, and they are slow to find their way into the relations of management and workers.
- There has been a failure to select a few of the basic factors needed for better human relations and stress their use and application.

### III. Deficiencies in the Communication of Research Results

Under this category, respondents appear primarily concerned about the way in which research results are reported:

- The reports are too vague and too hazy.
- The research that has been done and the other information that is available is at such a level that it is difficult to assimilate.
- Much of research has tended to use the technical language and terminology of psychologists in reporting the findings.



- Researchers must give more attention to semantics, translating their findings into practical operational terms without over-simplifying.
- One respondent sincerely believes that research reports on this subject can be sharpened to serve a greater value to those in a position to apply their findings.

#### IV. Neglected Research

A few problems have been neglected according to the respondents:

- More concentrated effort should be made to bring the related bits of data and information now available into an integrated whole.
- There has not been enough effort on the part of universities to coordinate research and pool data for the cumulation of knowledge.
- There has been a lack of research on best methods of utilizing findings in industry and a lack of knowledge for use in helping build the art of human relations.
- There is need to further investigate the integration of all the social sciences into an objective appraisal of how we work together.
- There is a lack of adequately tested new techniques in the development of supervisors.
- Very little real headway has been made in solving the problems of the aging work force.

(All the items in this category are contributed by management respondents.)

#### V. Deficiencies in the Establishment of Criteria and in the Evaluation of Performance

A key management problem is pointed up by these statements:

- The establishing of criteria is the most pressing unsolved problem in "human relations" research.
- We are unable to measure results.
- We have never been able properly to evaluate the impact (on the individual) of experience inside the work place compared with that outside of the work place.

(All the items in this category are contributed by management respondents.)

## THE MOST PRESSING UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

In order better to help us plan our future work, the respondents were asked to give their opinions as to what things should come first in human relations research. The researcher respondents on the one hand and the management and union respondents on the other were again asked somewhat different questions. The researchers were asked: "What do you feel are currently the most pressing unsolved problems toward which 'human relations' research should be directed?" The other respondents were asked: "What do you feel are currently the most pressing unsolved problems (faced by management) (faced by unions) toward which 'human relations' research should be directed?" In reporting the responses, it will be most expeditious and meaningful to deal separately with those from each group.

### Researcher Responses

These responses fall under the following principal headings:

#### I. Development of Clarification of Human Relations Theory Itself

The need for better theory is emphasized, as follows:

- We need more and better theory by which behavior in organizations can be predicted, changed, controlled, and motivated.
- Our greatest need at the moment is for development of a more systematic and integrated theory of "human relations."
- There is the need to come to some kind of better understanding of the role of theory in the "human relations" operation--i.e., how to make the practice of "human relations" a phenomenon tied more closely to the growing theoretical interests of the various disciplines.

#### II. Further Development of Specific Concepts and Theories Within Human Relations

A number of specific items are mentioned by the respondents. Those items receiving multiple mentions will be indicated in the listing which follows:

- There should be efforts to use and test the Bakke, Homans, and Whyte frameworks and the hypotheses growing out of the experimental studies by Alex Bavelas and the people in the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the University of Michigan.
- Cross-cultural studies should be made.
- Mathematical models should be developed which may be applied more efficiently to the social sciences.
- The description and measurement of groups as groups should occur---that is, the determination of the dimensions of groups by actual studies of their behavior and reactions to various external stimuli, just as has been done with the personality and ability dimensions of the individual.
- More studies should deal with actual working people in their work situations instead of with school children and students.
- We need an understanding of behavior in organizations.
- There is need for advances in motivational theory (three mentions), in problems of behavior and personality change (five mentions), and in leadership theory.
- Authoritarian and minority group relations research needs unbiased repetition.
- We need an understanding of decision-making processes in complex, rational social situations.
- Information theory may turn out to be a big gun.
- More needs to be known about the facilitation of communications within groups (two mentions).
- There is need for improved role theory (three mentions), and for studies on morale (three mentions), and on resistance to change.

### III. Study of Specific Conceptual Relationships

There are a number of independent-dependent variable relationships which the researcher respondents see as being in need of further study:

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>
Normative system of work situation	Spontaneous social system
Group structure	Informal relationships
Situational and social variables	Individual behavior
Organizational structure	Individual personalities

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>
Internal, group and cultural determinants	Behavior
Personality	Social Behavior
Motivation	Belongingness
Morale	Output
Various predictive factors	Behavior and personality change
Various predictive factors	Changes in perception of self and others
Various predictive factors	Behavioral sequences
Various predictive factors	Morale

#### IV. Work on Methodology and Techniques

In this important aspect of the researcher's task, the respondents point up the following:

A. There is need "for experimentation in human relations" and for research on "effective techniques or methodology." "Basic methodological research-- the development of observational and experimental facilities and techniques which make it possible to make better science" appeals to another.

B. There is need for "a sharper and quicker device for recording changes in interpersonal, interactive relationships," and for "using factor analysis, or some related 'hard-headed' analytical method to yield primary dimensions for describing groups."

C. "New methods of studying human attitudes and behavior, such as various projective techniques," deserve further experimentation; and we have to determine "the reliable measure of morale."

D. Techniques are needed "for promoting and using group activity in problem-solving."

E. There is need for "methods of promoting objective attitudes toward individuals and groups."

F. "The work on the use of interpersonal methods in personnel selection and industrial relations...is in need of convincing validation."

#### V. Facing Value Problems of the Researcher

In carrying on research, there are certain value questions with which the human relations researcher will have to deal.

- He needs to disengage himself from partisan research in connection with special interest groups, and to redefine his research responsibilities in terms of larger and more critical problems confronting human beings in general.
- He must be careful not to lose sight of the many researchable problems that may be not service but dangerous activity, but nevertheless needs doing (i.e., dangerous in the sense of challenging certain basic assumptions, either of others in the field or those who give the money).
- On the other hand, there is over concern with ideals and the resulting neglect of institutional realities.

#### VI. Dealing with Problems in the Applied Area

The problems involve:

##### A. Development and training

- How to train?
- Ways must be found for the development of more skilled industrial supervisors.
- Methods of altering the direction and type of organized behavior and patterns of behavior in groups are needed.
- We need to develop techniques to influence employee attitudes.
- How do human relations experts transfer their insights to others?
- Research must be conducted to answer adequately questions about the efficacy of various kinds of training programs (in leadership, for example).



## B. Selection

- There is need for research on the selection of supervisors.
- How do we determine qualifications for top and middle management personnel?

## C. Others

- Research must be directed along the lines of reducing such tension areas as union-management relations, prejudices related to religious differences, and democratic vs. authoritarian leadership in the schools, industry, and government.
- There is need for the development of group standards of acceptance of creative deviant members, and for the resolution of the conflicts of multiple group membership.
- Research on multiple decision-making in complex organizations must be carried on.
- Research should be directed toward the development of information and methods by means of which citizens may protect themselves from "psychological" assault.

## D. Finally, there are applied problems facing the researcher himself.

- How does he encourage the awareness among our society that research in human relations is necessary, important, and badly in need of financial support?
- How does he obtain research funds without having to do a lot of "management oriented" research, or without having to write two sets of research papers--one for management, and one for the scientists?

## Management Responses

One management respondent points out that: "Managements of business and industries, for the past 150 years or more, have been facing problems, solving problems, and growing in understanding of the best practical approach in human relations; this despite any so-called research by the various disciplines or 'human relations' research." Then, after referring to problems faced by management as of December, 1953, he states: "By the time the human relations research experts get around to working on these problems, many may have been resolved." Whether or not human

relations researchers "take them on," there are certainly a large number of currently unsolved problems faced by management as reported by the management respondents. The vast majority of these problems lie, as would be expected from the wording of the question, in the applied area; but some relate to research methods and techniques.

### I. Problems in the Applied Area

With few exceptions, the applied problems do not fall into neat categories, but those that do will be so indicated.

#### A. Problems with a societal frame of reference

- Research should be carried on with respect to solving problems inherent in a highly mechanized society, including problems due to frustration resulting from mechanization.
- Research should deal with problems of greater utilization of all our human resources.

#### B. Problems with an organizational or institutional orientation

- We need to know how basically different types of organizations--business and union--may attain and pursue a common purpose.
- There is the problem of the labor-organization allegiance as against the economic-and-political-system allegiance of the industrial worker.
- How do we maintain the loyalty of rank and file employees toward the company over a period of years?
- We need to find a supportable creed to justify and rationalize the operation of our economic system.
- We need more adequate knowledge of the effect of organizational structure on efficiency.

#### C. Problems relating to the individual as an individual

- We must find ways and means of satisfying the "whole man," rather than expeditiously solving his individual ills.
- We must achieve a better understanding of the individual; too much is being done with the group or collective concept.

- We need to give more attention to the dignity of the individual, and to a better life for him.
- We must learn how to retain individual personal relationships in the face of expansion and complex management organization structures.
- We must learn more about the needs of employees as individuals as against their needs as union members.
- We must discover how to impress people regarding the fairness of employment and promotion regardless of race, color, or creed.

#### D. Problems in communication

Considerable need is expressed for greater understanding of the communication process and of problems associated with it.

- New ways must be found to help management understand this process, particularly with respect to perception of blocks and why they occur.
- The worker must be given a better understanding of the factors upon which his job security depends.
- We must learn how to obtain an understanding of human relations at the various supervisory levels.
- Two-way communication must be improved.
- Satisfactory communications must be achieved between management and employees and between members of management.

#### E. Problems involving attitudes

- We must learn how to build employee attitudes for understanding and sympathy of others' viewpoints.
- We need to know more about how union leaders, union members, and management feel about a number of crucial current issues.
- Generally, we need an analysis of employee attitudes.
- What are the feelings of management, employees, unions, and Negroes regarding white-Negro integration?

#### F. Problems in motivation

- We need an understanding of worker motivation.
- There is need to know how to use motivation for greater industrial and individual progress.

--There is need to develop non-financial incentives among key administrative and professional personnel.

--What is the effect of seniority on incentives?

--To what extent do workers really desire to move up the scale?

--Proof is needed for the proposition that a highly satisfied individual is a high producer.

#### G. Problems in morale

--We need to know more about the effect of wage inequities and of organizational structure on morale.

--We need to know the relation between morale and production.

#### H. Problems in selection

--Criteria for supervisory selection need to be developed.

--How do we select managers and employees who can get along with people?

#### I. Problems in training

--Some workable scheme to train all line supervisors to treat employees as individuals must be discovered.

--An evaluation of training, particularly for supervisors and higher managerial personnel, must be pursued.

--We must develop means for the development of supervisory executive ability.

#### J. Problems in participation

--The possibilities and limitations of participation by employees in the solution of company problems need to be explored.

--Ways must be found to increase the employee's feeling of participation in the business.

#### K. Problems in resistance to change

--We must learn how to overcome the resistance of people toward sound management decisions after explanations have been given.

- We must know how to get unions and other employees to recognize the importance of technological and other improvements that increase production.

#### L. Problems in turnover and absenteeism

- Why do workers quit?
- What are the reasons for executive turnover?
- What causes absenteeism?

#### M. Miscellaneous problems

- How to measure individual merit?
- New ways must be discovered for supervisors to learn how to carry on discussions of work performance with employees.
- How do we solve problems in dealings with white-collar people?
- The effective utilization of the middle-age men and women as they approach retirement deserves considerable attention.
- What are the criteria for using individuals after they reach the normal retirement age?
- Without mentioning any details, three respondents indicate concern about problems involving leadership, groups, and cooperation.

## II. Research Methods and Techniques

Relatively few management respondents are concerned about improving research methods and techniques. Those that are mention these:

- The problem of measuring deficiencies and their consequences in human relations.
- The evaluation of existing human relations tools.
- An analysis of employee attitudes.
- Development of measures (ability, temperament, attitude, efficiency, health) to aid in the decision regarding an employee's continuing work after retirement age.
- Development work in establishing performance criteria.
- Establishing criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of human relations programs.



## Union Responses

All of the currently unsolved problems faced by unions, as reported by the union respondents, lie in the applied area. These respondents feel that researchers should concern themselves with the problems which fall into the following main categories:

### I. Problems in the Broader Social Area

- The unsolved problem of war and peace.
- How to get union members more interested in international "human relations?"
- The economic "facts of life" as they apply to human relations.
- Political action as it applies to human relations.
- Providing approaches to solutions of race problems and tension.
- Developing leaders at the community level, capable of dealing with such problems as segregation, fair employment, health and welfare, social security, and the like.
- How to get union members to take more seriously their civic responsibilities?
- Research should be directed to bring more general attention to the idea that society should extend to every citizen the right of a decent education, shelter, clothing, medical care, decent jobs, and a voice in the conditions of the job.
- How to best serve the union member in his non-occupational and non-plant interests?

### II. Problems in Union-Management Relations

- Study of the nature of group conflict within the labor-management area.
- Why are some employers still opposed to trade union organization?
- How to increase productivity while protecting the workers' interests as over against those of management?
- The effect of grievance adjustment and the number of arbitrations involving grievances on employer, employee, and union attitudes?
- Research should yield greater knowledge and education directed toward the understanding of each other by management and unions.
- How can the union officer cooperate with management without loss of aggressiveness in fields where conflict cannot be eliminated?

### III. Problems in Building, Maintaining, and Strengthening the Union

- An analysis should be made of the shortcomings which have prevented the organization of the unorganized.
- How does the employee's attitude toward his job affect his attitude toward the union, and why are the loyalties divided?
- Study of the problem of stimulating and maintaining voluntary activity within unions.
- An analysis of the problem of the responsiveness to the membership desires by union leaders as against the union's need for leadership and initiative.
- How develop a sustained interest in union membership?
- There is a need for the study of the problem of membership participation in unions.
- Communications between the union and its members.
- Ways must be found for more effective means of communicating human relations research to the rank and file so that this research has personal meaning to them.
- Development of better communications from the membership to the leadership of trade unions.
- How develop union leadership?
- What human relations tools might be used by unions, and how use workshops and seminars to educate workers in the use of such tools?
- The necessity for convincing union members of the absolute necessity of ascertaining facts and relying on them as against permitting their acts to be motivated by emotion.
- Impressing union members with the advantages enjoyed as a result of the collective bargaining process and of the importance of compliance with the collective bargaining contract.

### IV. Problems Arising Out of the Business Organization

- Within a great industrial unit, how may individuals best cooperate and express a feeling of brotherhood rather than one of competition and rivalry?
- How does an individual in a large plant, dominated by the drive for efficiency, find self-expression and development rather than a crushing of his personality?
- How do we deal with the impersonality of relations as brought about by such factors as the substitution of written memoranda, loud speakers, and so forth, for human relations?
- What does the employee expect out of his job?

- Research is necessary regarding the nature and quantity of training in human relations which management gives and requires of its supervisory personnel (generally speaking, there is an indifference on the part of management toward the attitude of its supervisory personnel regarding the human factors which influence the conduct of the worker during his working hours on the job).
- What affects the attitudes of the employees which result in good or bad work relations in the plant?
- Is enough time being spent to make working conditions more agreeable?
- There is need for a better method of training and placement for employees.

APPENDIX

LISTS OF RESEARCHER, MANAGEMENT, AND UNION  
RESPONDENTS TO A SPECIALLY DESIGNED QUESTIONNAIRE

## RESEARCHER RESPONDENTS

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