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Social psychological perspectives on the behavioral model

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Introduction

When Walton and McKersie (1965) published their book, I was a new associate professor who had just embarked on a series of laboratory experiments on negotiation behavior. I had been greatly impressed by an earlier book on the same topic by another industrial relations specialist, Carl Stevens (1963). So I approached the new book with considerable enthusiasm, and I was not disappointed. It turned out to be a rich basket of fruit — posing challenging issues, suggesting useful concepts, providing thought-provoking theories, and even stating hypotheses that could be tested in the social psychological laboratory.

During the period when this book appeared, social psychologists were doing laboratory experiments on mixed-motive settings. There were two main directions in this research: (1) Research on the prisoner's dilemma and the trucking game, which sought the antecedents of cooperative and competitive behavior (Deutsch, 1958; Deutsch and Krauss, 1960; Rapoport and Chammah, 1965). (2) Studies of the antecedents of concession-making and the relative gain of the two parties in bilateral negotiation (Joseph and Willis, 1963; Siegel and Fouraker, 1960). My own research on negotiation (Pruitt and Drews (1969), data for which was collected before the book appeared) was in this latter tradition.

Some of this research was atheoretical, e.g. Rapoport and Chammah (1965) or informed by mathematical models drawn from economics (Siegel and Fouraker, 1960). However, most of it was based on theories about the impact of various psychological states: e.g. trust (Deutsch, 1958), level of aspiration (Pruitt and Drews, 1969; Siegel and Fouraker, 1960), and resistance to concession (Kelley, Beckman and Fischer, 1967).

For me, and several other psychological researchers, Walton and McKersie added three new dimensions to the field: (1) Attention to negotiator tactics and the distinction between distributive and integrative bargaining tactics. These became useful additional theoretical concepts. (2) An interest in the development of win–win agreements, i.e. of joint, as opposed to relative, gain. (3) Attention to intra-organizational bargaining.

Social psychologists are always looking for new concepts and testable hypotheses in the areas they are studying. Walton and McKersie fed this appetite.

Negotiator tactics

One important source of inspiration was the book's distinction between distributive and integrative bargaining tactics and its analysis of the incompatibilities between these tactics. In order

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to measure these tactics, I changed my methodology from a note passing format to one in which the negotiators spoke to each other. This allowed me to content analyze their verbalizations for distributive and integrative tactics. (See Pruitt and Lewis (1975) for the first use of this methodology.)

I also incorporated these tactics into my theorizing, adding a third tactic, concession-making, which had been emphasized in earlier laboratory research. My basic theoretical model became one in which antecedent conditions produced psychological states, which influenced the choice among these three tactics, which in turn affected the outcome achieved (Pruitt, 1981).

This thinking led eventually to the development of a 'dual concern' model (Pruitt and Rubin, 1986), which predicted choice among these three kinds of tactics from various combinations of concern about one's own interests and concern about the other party's interests. (This model was also influenced by the work of Blake and Mouton (1964) and Thomas (1976)). In presenting this model, my co-author and I gave new names to the tactics: 'contending' instead of distributive bargaining, 'problem solving' instead of integrative bargaining, and 'yielding' instead of concession-making. These names allowed us to generalize the concepts to all forms of conflict, but two of them were basically the same Walton and McKersie concepts.

One experiment that tested an implication of the dual concern model looked at negotiator accountability to constituents (Ben-Yoav and Pruitt, 1984). By accountability, is meant the extent to which the people who are represented by a negotiator have the power to punish that negotiator for inadequate performance. In our experimental design, accountability was crossed with another variable: the negotiator's desire to build a working relationship with the people on the other side of the negotiation table. When negotiators lacked concern about their relationship with the other side, high accountability encouraged contentious (i.e. distributive) tactics. But quite the opposite was true for negotiators who wished to build a working relationship with their counterpart. The more accountable they were to their constituents, the harder they worked at problem solving (i.e. integrative bargaining). Essentially, these negotiators were faced with a role conflict produced by fear of people on their own side and a desire to impress people on the other side. They solved this conflict by looking for win–win solutions that would satisfy both sides.

The distinction between distributive and integrative bargaining tactics has also had a major impact on the theoretical thinking of other scholars. For instance, Lax and Sebenius (1986) make this distinction the cornerstone of their book on the manager as negotiator. And these tactics appear as two of five possible choices in the theories about conflict style developed by scholars such as Rahim (1986), Thomas (1976) and van de Vliert (1990).

The development of win–win agreements

As a result of this book, I switched the focus of my research to the development of win–win agreements, i.e., agreements involving high joint gain. Stephen Lewis and I (Pruitt and Lewis, 1975) devised a three-issue laboratory task involving a log-rolling form of integrative potential, drawing inspiration from an earlier task devised by Harold Kelley (1966). Many of my 24 studies on this topic were done in collaboration with Peter Carnevale (Pruitt and Carnevale, 1982). I was also stimulated in this work by reading Mary Parker Follett's essay on integration (Follett, 1940). Follett was one of two lay geniuses who inspired Walton and McKersie, the other being Edward Peters (1955).

Some of our studies tested hypotheses drawn directly from the book. For example, Walton and McKersie believed that win–win agreements were developed by means of joint problem

solving discussions between the two sides — discussions involving a sharing of information about values and priorities and a joint attack on a common problem. They hypothesized that these discussions are more likely to occur when the issues are more important to the negotiators and the two sides have greater trust in each other. We manipulated both variables in a single study (Kimmel, Pruitt, Magenau, Konar-Goldband and Carnevale, 1980) and found that Walton and McKersie were right but that the two variables interacted. For joint problem solving to occur, it was necessary *both* that the issue be important *and* that the negotiators trust each other.

More often, we used the book as a jumping off point and added to the theory as we went along. For example, our early studies suggested that joint problem solving discussions — which had been championed by Walton and McKersie — were only one of several ways to find win–win agreements. These agreements were also sometimes achieved more mechanically — for example, by incorporating part of the other side's proposal into one's own, or by systematic concession making in which one proposes several alternatives at one level of benefit to the self before making a concession. The latter two tactics can be called 'problem solving' but not '*joint* problem solving'. We also gained the impression in some of our data that a great deal of problem solving goes on *within*, rather than between, the negotiating parties ... in discussions between members of the same team or in a single person's thinking.

Other researchers have subsequently taken up the search for determinants of win–win agreements, using a similar methodology (e.g. Bazerman, Magliozzi and Neale, 1985; Carnevale and Isen 1986; Lewis and Fry, 1977; Neale and Bazerman, 1985).

Intra-organizational bargaining

One of the most interesting sections of Walton and McKersie's book deals with intra-organizational bargaining, the bargaining that often occurs between negotiators and their constituents. Here the authors are grappling with some of the complexities of negotiation between organizations. This part of the book has inspired a number of researchers, including myself, who have looked at the effect on negotiator behavior of being a representative and of various levels of accountability to constituents and trust and surveillance by constituents (e.g. Benton, 1972; Benton and Druckman, 1973; Ben-Yoav and Pruitt, 1974; Carnevale, Pruitt and Seilheimer, 1981; Klimoski, 1972; Pruitt, Carnevale, Forcey and Van Slyck, 1986; Wall, 1975; Wall and Adams, 1974).

In Walton and McKersie's view, an important task for negotiators is to persuade their constituents to accept agreements that have a practical chance of being achieved in the negotiation. This often involves an element of subterfuge. Negotiators go through the motions of heavy distributive bargaining — aimed at persuading their constituents to trust them. But in actual fact they are often engaged in a cooperative, and sometimes a problem solving relationship with their counterpart on the other side of the table. They also sometimes obscure issues, exaggerate their level of achievement and may even hide some elements of the agreement from their constituents. All of this is designed to persuade their constituents to accept the inevitable.

This theory portrays negotiators as *powerful decision-makers* who reach agreements on their own and then sell them to the people they represent. While this picture is valuable for some organizational negotiators, I believe it is erroneous for many others who do not have this kind of power; for example, most diplomats. Such negotiators can probably be better described as *intermediaries* who provide their constituents information about the other side's viewpoint and help their constituents reality-test new proposals. Such negotiators are a small part of

a much larger communication net, which must be studied as a whole to make sense of what is happening (see Pruitt, 1990).

Conclusions

It should be apparent from the above that I have been immensely stimulated by Walton and McKersie's book over the 25 years of its existence. The book laid out many issues and useful concepts. It proposed many rich theories and even contained testable hypotheses. My research and reasoning supported some of the book's conclusions and not others, but that is a feature of any good speculation. When the book came out, the field needed a jumping off point — a corpus of stimulating ideas — and that was provided.

What about the book today? Is it a museum piece or a vital classic that should still be read? The answer is a little complicated. The book is clearly out of date. For example, there is scant attention to cognitive influences on negotiation (see Neale and Bazerman, 1991; Thompson and Hastie, 1990). Yet I have read it four times and learned a lot each time. The book contains many intriguing ideas that have not yet been incorporated into other people's theories and research. It is also a gold mine of stimulating examples, drawn from case studies, that should be useful for any theorist.

What this means is that the book is not a museum piece and should still be read by all serious scholars in the field of negotiation.

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