The Psychology of Removing Group Members and Recruiting New Ones

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The removal of group members and the recruiting of new ones are central processes in the maintenance of a group, yet they receive little study. Bases for determining who will be expelled and who initiated are stated in the form of propositions. A number of hypotheses are then offered concerning conditions that may cause events to run counter to these propositions.

In the computing room of a large organization the man in charge of the main machine, on the night shift, had demonstrated that he was thoroughly unreliable. He would fail to show up for work, would give phony excuses for his absences, and would expect others to substitute for him on a moment's notice. He was criticized by his supervisor for his undependability a number of times, in writing, but the supervisor had no authority to take more drastic measures. After a year and a half of repeated no-shows, the employee was asked to stay away from work, but was not removed from the payroll. Many meetings followed, by the executive committee of the organization, by the staff of the computing department, by a committee appointed to examine the matter, and by a group of coworkers who objected to the favoritism he had received. There were also endless interviews with him, his colleagues, and an amateur lawyer who "defended" his client before many groups. Thus, hundreds of man and woman hours were spent in deciding whether the man should be fired. Finally, he was asked to resign. Instead, he simply disappeared.

    Is this the organization man? The helpless target of arbitrary and capricious acts by his organization? Hardly. More energy was spent in protecting him from the institution than he spent in its behalf. For reasons that

are still respected in that place, the officers wanted to be doubly sure that their appraisal of him was accurate. In such matters it is easier to be wrong than to be right.

This is not an isolated instance. Millions of citizens were amazed recently at the millions of dollars and millions of hours devoted to deciding whether the chief executive officer of this nation should be removed from office. Frequently there are stories in the press about workers, students, scientists, or policemen who complain they have been dismissed without just cause, and a court holds up the dismissal until hearings have been conducted. Even when expulsion of an unwanted person is easy, because the expellers have enough power to fire anyone they dislike, they may feel the need to legitimizé their "personnel action" by extracting a confession from the victim, or by publicizing the reasons for the exclusion. The book *Gulag Archipelago* reveals that in some places such justifications can be pretty elaborate, and unjust.

The ushering of members to the outside of a group is often a severe source of strain for all involved. Just as unpleasant, however, is the friction that can arise when a group recruits new members for its roster. Potential candidates are screened, studied, and sorted in order to find an appropriate individual, and tension will develop if one applicant is thought, by some, to be unfairly favored, or ignored. Clubs, companies, and colleges are commonly pressed by advocates, moreover, to favor the admission of specific candidates and are damned if they do; likewise if they don't.

Dropping members and finding new ones are most critical processes for a group's continued existence. Each unit, or some designated part, must decide which persons, if any, will be asked to depart, who will be invited to stay, and who will be welcome to enter. Despite the importance of these transactions, they have received remarkably little examination beyond anecdotes and descriptive data. The purpose of this paper is to develop a preliminary understanding of the intake and outgo of members and to direct special attention to the reasons that removing and recruiting them may be conducted in ways that are (or are not) in the best interests of all concerned.

Almost all writing about arranged departures and arrivals of members has been directed to the feelings of the target persons. For example, emphasis has heretofore been placed on the removee's loss of self-esteem, mental health, or well-being, not to mention his loss of money. Or, attention has been directed to a recruit's initial reasons for joining a group and his satisfaction from doing so. Our concern, in contrast, is group-centered. Enrolling and disenrolling of members are taken to be processes that are performed by the group for the good of the group.

The relevant phenomena and the research known to me suggest that several kinds of steps are typically taken in organizations on these matters.

These steps are presented below in the form of *propositions,* each of which will serve to introduce related information and speculation. The propositions, and a number of derivations, have been phrased so they can be linked to concepts that have previously been used in the study of groups, such as group cohesiveness, social pressures, rejection of deviant members, membership motives, goals of groups, and the like. Developing an explanation for the events of interest here can best be facilitated by a good fit between future research into removing and inducting, and past research on group behavior.

REMOVING MEMBERS

Proposition 1A. Members of a group decide upon conditions that must not be allowed to develop in that unit through the actions of colleagues.

In order for a group to exist and give its members some sense of accomplishment, the participants regularize relationships among themselves, among parts, and among activities. These regularizing efforts require joint planning and more or less explicit decisions—the more complex the social unit, the more these agreements tend to be both precise and public. When firm understandings are reached concerning appropriate conditions in a group, these are often expressed in terms of negative injunctions; that is, in terms of what shall not be allowed or tolerated, instead of what shall be approved or welcomed. One has fewer excuses for failing a negative injunction than for failing in an affirming action, and liability depends on whether actions within a group have had undesirable consequences, not on whether they failed to do good.

A restriction is a neater criterion than is an affirmative duty because what should *not* be done can be precisely put and monitored, whereas what ought to be done is open-ended and harder to monitor. Critics of an ethical code published by a pharmaceutical manufacturers' association, to give an example, view it as a weak statement because most of its articles are rather bland platitudes about the good things a drug company ought to do. The principles would have more influence, say the critics, if they described what a drug maker should *not* do. Eight of the Holy Bible's ten commandments are stated as negatives; that is, as "thou shalt not." And labor–management contracts are richly supplied with barriers to certain actions, because each side wants accurately to evaluate the opposition's actions by employing clear criteria.

Some of the unwanted conditions in a group are worth noting: (a) embarrassment over the group's poor performance; (b) inappropriate size of the group—a loss of members when that is not desirable, or an excess of

them when they are not needed; (c) insufficient supply of persons who have the necessary talent, involvement, and experience, so that the group cannot do what it must; (d) inadequate collaboration or excessive conflict among parts of the organization; (e) inadequate procedures for accomplishing its task; (f) unfavorable relations with agents who place pressure on the group, attack it, or interfere with its functioning. And others.

Some groups are fairly tolerant of those who transgress its injunc-junctions. Examples are college faculties, psychotherapy groups, and creative crews in research or writing. Other groups are more strict in demanding adherence. Examples of these are work groups, religious bodies, communes, professional societies, military units, fraternities, and ward teams in a hospital. This and the following propositions are more relevant to the latter kind of group than to the former.

Proposition 2A: The unattractiveness of a given member in the eyes of his colleagues is determined by (a) the negative value of his recent actions and (b) the perceived probability that he will display these actions in the future.

(a) The negative value of an act by a member is a function of its significance to the group, and the degree that it is prohibited there. One can easily find examples of acts that lead to rejection by some organization or other. College professors have been released, according to Caplow and McGee (1958), for a quarrelsome disposition, immaturity, and unacceptable political beliefs. College students have been expelled (over the years) for poor schoolwork, cheating, drinking, gambling, smoking, wearing shorts, driving an automobile in the college town, and breaking rules of sexual propriety. In fraternities and sororities, members are rejected if their values are not those of other members (Scott, 1965). In the American Psychological Association, a member can be dismissed for violation of ethical standards, for committing a felony, or for actions that are a threat to the public. In the American Medical Association a physician can be discharged from his county medical society for alcoholism, use of drugs, performing an improper abortion, or illegal behavior (Derbyshire, 1974). In a factory, any member who will not exert himself may be let go. Certain actions by certain members, then, are more repulsive under certain conditions.

(b) The severity of any negative action by a member is weighed and a judgment is made as to whether he will repeat it, how often, and to what degree. This perceived probability will be greater if he displays such characteristics as the following: he has been engaging in the unwanted behavior for some time, he is seen as not able to drop it from his repertoire, he is aware that his actions are damaging to the group and yet he persists, or he has shown a large rather than a limited variety of unpleasant acts. Any situation that causes distortion or incorrect estimates of these matters causes inaccurate appraisal of the person's acceptableness.

To summarize, an unfavorable action in the eyes of group members, and signs that this action is likely to reoccur in the future, make the actor more unattractive to his associates.

Proposition 3A: As a participant in a group is more unattractive to his colleagues, the latter are more willing to designate him as not a member.

A *group* is a collection of individuals who are interdependent on one another to some degree (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). A *member,* in accord with this definition, depends upon his group for attainment of consequences he values, such as income, sense of accomplishment, pride in group, affiliation with others, social power, protection, and so on. Such a collection of individuals, by the same token, depends upon each member in order that the group can move toward achievement of its purposes. The point to make now is that the membership of a group can remove a member by arranging things so that the rejected one can no longer depend on the group, and the group can no longer depend on him—the conditions of belonging are abolished.

In an essay on what he calls "degradation ceremonies," Garfinkel (1956) lists eight steps or stages that must be passed in order successfully to denounce one who deserves to be denounced. The last step goes: "Finally, the denounced person must be ritually separated from a place in the legitimate order, i.e., he must be defined as standing at a place opposed to it. He must be placed 'outside,' he must be made 'strange'." Removal of a member from his group may seldom be a ritual or a ceremony, but there are subtle distinctions among the verbs used in various settings to describe the process of removal: expel, discharge, dismiss, disenroll, denounce, impeach, excommunicate, reject, release, fire, ostracize, terminate, layoff, RIF, let go, "pink slip," can, et cetera.

Our emphasis is on the negative evaluation of a rejectee, although many expelled members have attractive qualities that are outweighed by their undesirable attributes. The old basketball player who is released, even though he is still a good player, as good as a new recruit, is not of interest here if he is let go merely because the manager believes it will be wiser in the long run to "go with youth" than to rely on experience, and the number of players he may keep on the team's roster is limited. The old player's skills are not disparaged by his release, only his age, an attribute the player cannot change (Snoek, 1962).

Some ways in which a member is rendered unable to depend on his group are clear enough—he is given no salary check, his uniform and badge are removed, he is not allowed to have a workplace, he is not invited to meetings, or he receives no messages from headquarters. Other ways are more variable and serve as deprivations so the focal person will voluntarily resign. These include ignoring him, giving him little work, or trivial assignments, and advising him to find a new job, or enter a new field.

Preventing a person from depending on his group also makes the group unable to depend on him. Some familiar practices used by organizations are not always the same as those just mentioned. For example, unwanted professors are "sold down the river," according to Caplow and McGee (1958) by secretly arranging job offers for them. This gambit is also used in the Federal Civil Service, and its effect may be hastened by giving a poor worker excellent performance-appraisal ratings so others will want him. An unattractive member may be given a "lost elephant post," one that isolates the rest of his colleagues from him (Huenefeld, 1970) or, distant agencies may be invited to make use of his services in the hope that he will gradually drift away to their side (Sills, 1957). A not-uncommon practice, if all else fails, is to declare the job that is filled by the unwelcome member to be no longer needed in the organization—whereupon the current occupant of that post is no longer needed as well.

It is striking how little is known about why organizations dispense with given colleagues. Many units conduct exit-interviews with those who are leaving, but the reasons given by exmembers after they have been asked to depart, or have decided to do so without prompting, are inadequate and biased (Ross & Zander, 1957). More studies are needed in which relevant data, collected at an earlier time, are later compared for those persons who have left and for those who have not. Research is also wanted on the nature of the decisions that lead members to expel one of their number.

Proposition 4A: The tendency of members to reject an unattractive colleague may be strengthened or weakened by conditions other than those that initially caused his unattractiveness.

In many places one can find evidence that matters beyond a member's mere repulsiveness determine whether he is dismissed. Some of these matters serve to *increase* the number of removals from a group. Most common, of course, are forms of discrimination; a participant is removed for reasons other than just cause. In a large university, 180 persons were discharged from noninstructional jobs within one year. Of these, 56% were black and 44% were white, 54% were women and 46% were men. Is it likely that the blacks and the women were more unattractive? Of 36 faculty members whose dismissals were studied by Caplow and McGee, all but two were assistant professors. Are assistant professors consistently the most unattractive members of the faculty? The number of physicians released from the staffs of hospitals throughout the country, according to information provided by Derbyshire (1974), suddenly had a sharp increase when the courts ruled that a hospital would be held accountable for any professional act performed by a doctor within its walls. It does not seem likely that a number of doctors suddenly became unattractive at the moment this new rule was passed. Poorly performing organizations typically release more members than do organizations that are succeeding—this is demonstrated at

the end of a professional sports season when losing teams rid themselves of managers and players, while winning teams leave well enough alone. Hamblin (1958) has reported that groups do not change leaders when things are running smoothly, but do when a group's performance falters.

Organizations often invent procedures or customs which make it easy to remove members when a time arrives for that. Examples are granting a degree, graduation, limit to term of eligibility, probation in hiring, up-or-out policy, forced retirement from work, and annual dispersal of excess community members, as in the mammal called a *marmot* (Barash, 1974). An especially colorful example of such dispersal is the *lustrum* which was held every 5 years throughout the Holy Roman Empire. At that time noses were counted by an official named a *censor,* and unwanted people in each community were exiled.

There are also states of affairs in organizations that *inhibit* the rate of dismissals. Among medical doctors, there is what Derbyshire calls "a conspiracy of silence." That is, doctors seldom report information to their local medical society about the unprofessional conduct of another physician, information that might lead to his removal from that society. This unwillingness to tell is apparently based on a misapplication of the ethical standard that one doctor does not speak ill of another doctor in front of a patient. In the present instance, a doctor does not speak ill of a colleague before a colleague, although the malpractice is a medical menace. As a result, the number of reported misbehaviors and instances of malpractice by doctors is far below what is believed, through other channels of information, to occur. Appraisal systems are similarly unreliable in government and industry because superiors do not like to give unfavorable ratings to subordinates (Goffman, 1952; Zander & Gyr, 1955) and they dislike to communicate unfavorable opinions about a person to that person. The appraised individuals are made to appear less inadequate mainly because it is more convenient to observers to make them so. The most potent constraints on the frequency of discharge finally are rules for tenure or seniority found in most large organizations.

An increase in the removal of members, we should note, means that the organization is being actively protected against such members; whereas a decrease means that these persons are being protected against the group. Anticipating a bit, an increase in recruiting of attractive persons means that either or both individual or group is being helped, whereas a decrease in recruiting means that either the organization or the would-be member is being deprived.

The above anecdotes, illuminating Proposition 4A, suggest that it might be useful to consider several hypotheses which offer (in more or less testable form) statements about matters that increase or inhibit the rate of removals. The removee, we assume, is not eager to leave the group.

Hypothesis a. As the cohesiveness of a group is greater, the ten-
dency to remove an unattractive member is stronger.

This hypothesis has been supported by Festinger, Schachter, and Back
(1950) and by the work of Schachter (1951, 1954). The critical experiment
has been replicated and supported in seven countries. The *cohesiveness* of a
group is defined as the strength of the members' desire to remain as
members. Observe then that less cohesive groups tend to be more tolerant of
unattractive persons. More generally speaking, this hypothesis suggests that
members who are particularly involved in the fate of a group are more alert
to the threat that an unattractive person represents for that group.

Hypothesis b. The tendency to remove an unattractive member is
weaker as the reason for removal is less just.

A just procedure when deciding whether to expel a member is one that
gives primary weight to his offensive qualities, rather than to his other attri-
butes, and follows accepted rules for making an objective appraisal of him.
To be unjust then, is to be biased or dishonest in judging the effect of his
actions on the group, by judging certain members incorrectly, by giving
them unusual benefit of the doubt, or by breaking rules of due process
developed in that organization. The point of the hypothesis is that some
members (or agents outside the group) are likely to object if, in their view,
colleagues are being unfairly judged and removed for reasons other than
unattractiveness as defined above. A socially irresponsible decision by
members of a group, we may note, is one in which an alternative is accepted
that is known to be inferior to another alternative when all outcomes are
considered. Irresponsibility increases as there is greater harm to persons
because of inferior choices.

The amount of weight placed on justice within a given group may
stem from several sources. There is traditional, but not universal support in
western society for practices that protect persons from the actions of their
group. There is civil rights legislation, increasing in detail and coverage year
by year, that prevents discrimination in firing or hiring. There are laws that
require due process to be followed in releasing or selecting people—but
these laws do not apply to all groups. There are standards and goals set by
national associations and by local organizations that require fair practice
for their attainment. It stands to reason that social pressures toward fair-
ness are more effective as the originators of these pressures have greater
power to influence members of the group.

Hypothesis c. The tendency to remove an unattractive member is
weaker as the harm caused for him by the removal is greater.

As has already been noted, expulsion may hurt the expellee. His loss
of self-esteem has been discussed by Goffman (1952) and by Cartwright and
Zander (1968), and this loss is greater if the dismissal is based on grounds

that are derogatory to him (Snoek, 1962). Removal from a group can mean that the target person is deprived of his job, income, career, opportunity to practice a profession, status, or other things he values along with his membership. Removal may furthermore expose him to dangers from which the group has shielded him, whether these were physical or psychological. Removal may also foster rejection by other agencies, especially when it is in some way a dishonorable discharge, and the reason is not concealed. Thus, compassion for a potential rejectee is more likely as it is more apparent that dismissal would cause him greater harm.

Hypothesis d. The tendency to remove an unattractive member is weaker if that removal is harmful to the group.

An illustration is the retention of an unattractive member because dismissing him will make the group look bad (because it is not able to help inept members improve themselves) or will generate conflict between those who support him and those who do not. Some organizations, as a result, keep members they would prefer to expel. Such a restraint is common in schools, prisons, communes, hospitals, theological seminaries, and religious sects. There is also the possibility that procedures for justifying the dismissal of an unattractive member may be so complicated that it is easier to live with the stress he causes than to endure the strain of dismissal hearings.

Hypothesis e. The tendency to remove an unattractive member is weaker if doing so decreases valued contributions he makes to the group.

An unattractive person's behavior may be excused, or overlooked, because he has done things in behalf of that organization that outweigh his faults. Hollander (1960) describes such a person as having "idiosyncrasy credit," that is, he is allowed to be deviant because he previously has made valuable contributions to the organization.

Hypothesis f. The tendency to remove an unattractive member is weaker if doing so exposes the group to retaliation by the rejectee or his supporters.

When such retaliation is feared, an unwanted member may be allowed to resign, thereby saving himself, and the organization, from backlash. This privilege is often provided to prestigeful participants. Members of a labor union are not lightly dismissed, nor are others who can readily organize a cohort of supporters, such as a popular young professor who calls upon students to help him keep his job.

Removal of an unattractive person is less likely to occur, in summary, if his ousting will be unfair or cause harm to him or the group. In many organizations elaborate procedures have been developed to prevent such unwanted by-products of dismissal.

Voluntary Departure

Students of personnel practices often remark that an individual resigns when he is not appreciated, recognized, or provided satisfaction by his group (Ross & Zander, 1957). A member who is unwelcome probably senses that fact and he may therefore quit before he is fired. In the rank and file it is not unusual for a business firm to lose from 35 to 50% of its work force each year. The proportion of losses at the managerial levels are much lower. The ideas advanced earlier are best suited, perhaps, to the behavior of one who will not or cannot leave an organization even though he is not wanted. Such persistent people might be those with more training, more need for the agency, or more status there.

Voluntary departures are no doubt more frequent than dismissals. In a study of professors, for example, only 17% were dismissed; of the rest, 57% resigned, 16% retired, and 10% died (Caplow & McGee, 1958). Many of those who resigned did so, it is believed, because they were urged to leave. The reasons that professors gave for leaving suggest that things were not always going well for them; they include discord in the department, drifting away because of other interests, personal reasons, and an unbeatable offer from another school.

The Consequences of Rejection

We have noted that it is not pleasant to be dropped from membership, especially if one leaves under duress. Goffman (1952) has written with great insight, based on his own experiences, about the "destruction" of a rejectee's self-concept because a forced removal reveals to him that his former colleagues think he is inept. It is also possible that departure of an unwanted person may initiate "a time of healing" within a group and may allow a recovery of efficiency and coordination that had been lost during the presence of the departed one.

Whatever the personal consequences of removal may be, and they are not all bad, organizations commonly try to reduce the negative ones. The target person may be helped to find a new job. The reasons for his dismissal may be kept from others or not accurately reported to them. He may be allowed to save face, in ways noted by Goffman and by Clark (1960), such as providing him a new view of himself, offering him a different social position, offering him another chance, allowing him an emotional catharsis, and the like. Clearly, the motivation here is sympathy and care for the individual's health rather than adherence to a code of civil rights.

RECRUITING MEMBERS

In order to speculate sensibly about recruitment and what causes it to go one way rather than another, we first note a proposition that parallels an earlier one.

Proposition 1B: Members of a group decide upon conditions that should be developed in that unit through the actions of members.

As we all know, groups do not state their standards exclusively in the form of "shall nots." Often they express the standards as desired outcomes, usually in terms that are less precise than those used to express negative injunctions. Examples of desired group conditions include attaining pride in their unit as a result of its performance on a task, maintaining optimal size of the group, securing members who have the talents for the work to be done, encouraging smooth collaboration instead of friction among members, developing effective procedures for the group's work, and fostering useful interactions with agents outside the group.

Proposition 2B: The attractiveness of an individual in the eyes of group members is determined by (a) the value of his particular acts or attributes, and (b) the probability that he will reveal these qualities in the future.

Personal qualities a group might value include skill, ability, talent, money, good name, experience, training, physical attractiveness, willingness to work, or even lack of undesirable attributes.

In some organizations great care is taken in observing and measuring the characteristics of potential members. The candidates are given tests, individual interviews or try-outs, and the spouse may be examined as well. Search committees in colleges, churches, business firms, and government agencies spend huge amounts of time in the sorting and selecting of potential candidates. Indeed, this task can become so onerous that a firm of recruiters may be hired to do it. Because the tests are sometimes poor ones and the results are sometimes misused, there has been a proliferation of rules, even laws, concerning who can measure such things and how. Because of the dangers attributed to testing programs, job applicants have been advised to give incorrect answers when taking tests (which probably ensures that the applicant will be passed by) (Whyte, 1956).

There are associations in which a potential member does not need many qualities in order for him to be attractive; it is enough if he has the initiation fee, or a vote, legs that can help in a demonstration, a marinated liver, or a soul to be saved. In other kinds of groups, the attractiveness of a potential member depends almost entirely on the fact that he needs the group, or that the group will do him good, and members welcome the chance to help him.

Proposition 3B: An individual who is more attractive to those in a group is more likely to be invited to be a member.

An invitation extended to an outsider, unlike the removal of an insider, requires assent by the invited one. That is, he must be asked and he must accept, unless of course he is being put in prison or being drafted for the Army. In a study of participants in a voluntary agency it was observed that 90% had been asked to join, whereas only 10% had applied for membership on their own initiative. Among those who were recruited, 52% came on the request of a friend, 20% on the request of a community member, and 18% through the invitation of a colleague at their workplace (Sills, 1957).

When recruiting, again in contrast to removing, members must convince a potential recruit that he will benefit from joining and these appeals are made in various ways. The newcomer is shown that the group's programs are important to the community of which he is a part and he will presumably help that community by joining (Toch, 1965). He is shown that the group provides opportunities he values, such as a chance to use his skills, to practice his profession, to accomplish personal goals, to have fun, to be wanted, to earn money, to have security, to be personally changed in some way or to escape (Anderson, 1947; Sills, 1957; Scott, 1965). He is shown that the group contains members who are similar to him and who presumably therefore, will cooperate with him (Newcomb, 1961; Scott, 1965). He is told that the organization will defend or protect him against fearful conditions—the kind of line that is pushed by the KKK, Communist Party, John Birch Society, Alcoholics Anonymous, unions, and fundamentalist churches. He is gently led to become involved in the group through being given a small job to do for it, which is definitely not accompanied by an invitation to join, so that he can convince himself over time that there are appealing qualities in the unit (Huenefeld, 1970). Or, as a member of a group that agrees to help another group, he is gradually enfolded within the one initially needing help and, as a result (it is hoped) he decides to join it (Huenefeld, 1970). Having a part in the activities or programs of an organization may make it evident to the participant furthermore that he will benefit from full-fledged membership, and he can then be further socialized until he deeply depends upon that unit (Katz, 1964; Coulter & Taft, 1973; Whyte, 1974).

Sometimes it is necessary for a group to be convinced about the virtues of a potential candidate. The decision makers must accordingly be told how and why the potential member "is like us," "will benefit us," or how "we will benefit him." The permeability of the membrane that divides an organization from outsiders determines in part the amount of care that is

taken in choosing new recruits. A group with a thin boundary (a group that anyone can join), such as a social movement, will be less careful, though perhaps not less active, in getting people to sign up. A group with a thick boundary (only special people can join), like a professional association or an elite club, will be extremely careful in that respect. Kanter (1972) has observed that communes differ in their readiness to accept new members. Those that one joins in order to escape the world are easy to penetrate, while those that one joins in order to save the world are harder to get into.

Proposition 4B: The tendency of members to enroll an attractive individual may be strengthened or weakened by conditions that did not initially cause him to be attractive.

Faults in recruiting are not as dramatic as those in expelling, so they do not get as much attention. Yet, one hears accounts that are in accord with this proposition. Often, these stories describe complaints against discrimination in hiring because members of minority groups, or women, are not given adequate consideration for the openings. Truly, some persons are hired for reasons that do not strike one as first class. The criteria recruiters said they used in selecting new members for business firms were examined by Quinn, Tabor, and Gordon (1968). Of those interviewed 98% reported that they used possession of a "good clean-cut appearance" to evaluate managerial candidates, and 69% used "looking like a manager" as an evaluative criterion. Bowman (1962) found that "having a good appearance" ranked above a college education, loyalty, and inventiveness. Other studies have reported that fat people, or short ones, are seldom chosen as managers.

School superintendents often feel pressure to hire one teacher rather than another, the mayor's daughter, perhaps (Gross, Mason, & McEachern, 1958), and a southern university president, who was warned against appointing members of minority groups, was fired when he ignored the warning. A tight budget limits the hiring of people in some organizations, others cannot get enough people today, especially colleges, military units, and nursing staffs. Within a large organization, moreover, particular parts may be given more support by higher officials and allowed to do more recruiting. It can happen that the favored units are not the most critical for the fate of the larger entity, and thus the recruited persons may not in fact be the most attractive. Who decides who can recruit, or not, and why? There are no data on that question.

There are reasons, however, that the most attractive persons are (or are not) the ones who are actually recruited. Some of these intuitions are amenable to study and are stated here in the form of hypotheses, as before.

Hypothesis g. As the cohesiveness of a group is greater, the tendency of members to prefer attractive recruits is stronger.

The idea is that members who are more concerned about the fate of their group, because it is an important means for their attaining valued ends, will be more eager to bring promising candidates into the unit. To illustrate, the officers of a United Fund Executive Board, who were more committed to the success of that agency, were more interested in the quality of the volunteers brought in to help the Fund than were officers who were less committed to its success (Zander, Forward, & Albert, 1969). The hypothesis also implies that groups with less cohesiveness are not as likely to weigh the attractiveness of new members; thus, less attractive persons are quite recruitable in such a group.

It follows that an individual's appeal will be based on matters that are important to current members. That is, a nurturing person will be more desirable if members see their group as a source of nurturing, an able and vigorous individual will be more desirable if the members are concerned with group success on a motor task, or an influential person will be more desirable if the members are striving to have their group generate changes in society. Perhaps this is a special version of the way in which birds of a feather flock together (Scott, 1965).

> *Hypothesis h.* Individuals who are seen as more able to benefit from membership are more likely to be invited to join a group.

As already remarked, the prime purpose of some organizations is to help individual members, as persons. Examples are churches, political parties, social movements, self-improvement societies, or communes. Here, the neophyte is taken in not because of what he can do for the group but because of what the group can do for him. Goal-directed organizations do not neglect this member-improvement purpose. Think of the company that hires the son of a manager's friend because experience on a job will help him grow up. Or, recall the untrained young person who is recruited in order to give him a chance.

> *Hypothesis i.* A failing group, in contrast to a succeeding one, is more likely to seek and accept new members.

The gist of this hypothesis has been mentioned earlier, in passing. Quite commonly, "well enough is let alone," and "new problems call for new faces" in an unsuccessful enterprise. Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter (1956) have described many religious sects that engaged in active proselyting only after the future of their sect was threatened.

> *Hypothesis j.* As the members of a group place more weight on the importance of objective procedures, they are more disposed to choose a recruit because of merit rather than other attributes.

A recent editorial about recruiting in *Science* states: "If this principle (merit) is lost, mediocrity becomes inevitable" (Denny, 1974). A just group

seeks to provide equal treatment for all and develops a procedure (due process) to ensure that justice is met. Justice also demands that members search for reasons that justify any departure from equal treatment for all. We noted above that there can be many reasons for fairness in an organization, not the least of these is the value placed upon justice itself in the social environment of the group.

Due process in recruiting is, in some cases, determined by a set of rules jointly developed by a number of organizations. The recruiting of athletes by colleges, for example, is done in accord with strict regulations that are to keep one school from obtaining an unfair advantage, in talent, over another. Recruiting of college players for professional teams is likewise governed by a set of ethics, not always honored, as is selecting of interns by hospitals, and staff members by congresspeople.

Hypothesis k. The stronger the cohesiveness of a group, the more members will adhere to objective procedures in recruiting.

Ordinarily, stronger cohesiveness enhances adherence to whatever norms exist in a group concerning recruitment of members (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). Hypothesis g suggested, however, that greater group cohesiveness engenders stronger attention to the attractiveness of potential recruits, that is, to their merit. Both that hypothesis and the present one imply, therefore, that stronger cohesiveness leads to more careful use of due process in recruiting. Thus, the intention to recruit attractive persons, and to be more just in doing so, are probably better developed in more cohesive units. It may be, then, that unjust recruiting is more often allowed (or even encouraged) in groups with low cohesiveness, in today's climate at least.

Finally, several types of restraints upon recruiting are worth noting. One is the unwillingness of members to seek additions to their number because new members must be broken in. A social action group that looks into the ethical practices of business firms, as an illustration, often talked about the need for more members to share their work load, yet they made no move to find recruits and did not welcome persons who applied for membership. They, in fact, avoided new members. A small club quit seeking new members after several invitees refused an invitation to join, and a research unit stopped searching for additions to its staff because the searching took too much time away from research.

In summary, an attractive individual is more often invited to join a group if it needs him or he needs it, and the unit is more cohesive. In the latter kind of group, furthermore, recruiting will more often be fair and just.

Successful Recruiting

Some groups are more successful in obtaining recruits and some practices in recruiting work better than others. Published comments on how to

obtain new members advocate procedures that are surprisingly similar to those used in selling, or in getting people to change their minds.

In asking rural people to take part in groups devoted to improving agriculture and rural life, Anderson (1947) reports that groups have more success if the whole family is invited to join, and youth clubs commonly hold that membership campaigns are most effective if newcomers are invited by friends who already are members. The point is that individuals will be more comfortable in an unfamiliar setting if they are brought there by familiar others. Anderson also believes that the invitation is most telling if it is first offered to the individual who is the decision-maker of the family, usually the mother. Accordingly, a group might ask a manager, teacher, minister, or other official to put in a good word for joining the group that is seeking the person's membership. Huenefeld (1960) advocates that a political campaign recruit persons in pairs, because each can give support to the other when needed.

Many agencies establish procedures, or even ceremonies, which lead to membership at an established time. These procedures have familiar names: initiation, confirmation, investiture, entrance, licensing, inauguration, rite de passage, swearing in, and the like. In Norway, one becomes a full-fledged member of the Lutheran church as soon as one leaves the Mother's womb—no questions asked.

Writings about recruiting are mainly devoted to the reasons individuals give for accepting an invitation to join a group or for applying to join it. These issues are central in work by Schachter (1959), Jackson (1959), Snoek (1962), Smith (1966), Cartwright and Zander (1968), and Zygmunt (1972).

Consequences of Recruitment

Even though recruiting new blood is done to improve an organization, this improvement does not always happen. Caplow and McGee assert that when a professor does not work out well it is because he was not thoroughly investigated prior to his hiring, or because undue weight was given to matters other than his merit. Slesinger (1961), in a similar vein, reports that the management levels in government agencies are often burdened with mediocre persons because poor recruiting practices, along with the protection provided by civil service, allows less capable people to drift to the top. Some groups have an interesting flavor about them because they appeal to lost souls, fanatics, or disturbed people. The book, *The True Believer* by Eric Hoffer (1951) sympathetically describes these groups and their special kinds of members, as does Kanter's review (1972) of old and new communes.

Selective recruiting causes an organization to ingest persons who become committed to it and who value their participation there (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Slesinger, 1961; Kanter, 1972). Groups that favor recruitment of individuals who are "like us" are known to hold their members longer and to have more stability (Scott, 1965). Part of the reason is that the similarity in beliefs and style generates harmony. It is apparent that wise recruiting can be a substitute for internal social control in the sense that people, who are recruited because they know how to behave, do not need to be pressured to conform to the group's standards. Etzioni makes this point in the following paragraph:

> All other things being equal, socialization and selectivity can frequently substitute for each other . . . . If the number of potential participants is close to that of actual participants, the degree to which selectivity can be increased is limited and the organization will have to rely on socialization to attain a given level of equality. A very large number of potential participants and a very high degree of selectivity may be required to recruit participants who do not need any socialization at all in order to fulfill organizational requirements (1961).

SUMMARY

We have examined a number of facts, near-facts, and opinions about the removing and recruiting of group members. These notions have been ordered under propositions that may be useful assumptions in an attempt to explain the psychology of expelling and initiating. A fuller explanation must be based, of course, on studies of what it is that causes what in these matters. The propositions:

Removing Members

1A. Members of a group decide upon conditions that must not be allowed to develop in that unit through the actions of colleagues.

2A. The unattractiveness of a given member in the eyes of his colleagues is determined by (a) the negative value of his actions, and (b) the perceived probability that he will display these actions in the future.

3A. As a participant in a group is more unattractive to his colleagues, the latter are more willing to designate him as not a member.

4A. The tendency of members to reject an unattractive colleague may be strengthened or weakened by conditions other than those that initially caused his unattractiveness.

Removal of an unattractive person is less likely to occur if the removal will be unfair or cause harm to him or the group. In many organizations elaborate procedures exist that are designed to prevent unwanted byproducts of rejection.

Recruiting Members

1B. Members of a group decide upon conditions that should be developed in that unit through the actions of members.

2B. The attractiveness of an individual in the eyes of group members is determined by (a) the value of his particular acts or attributes, and (b) the probability that he will reveal these qualities in the future.

3B. An individual who is more attractive to those in a group is more likely to be invited to become a member.

4B. The tendency of members to enroll an attractive individual may be strengthened or weakened by conditions that did not initially cause him to be attractive.

An attractive individual is more often invited to join a group if it needs him or he needs it, and the unit is more cohesive. In the latter kind of group, moreover, recruiting will more often be fair and just.

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