The Role of Action in Attitude Change

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*T*he relationship of action to attitude change has been a central and recurrent theme in my work ever since my doctoral dissertation (Kelman, 1953). I have written several theoretical papers on this issue over the years (Kelman, 1962a, 1974a, 1974b, 1978), and during the 1960s several colleagues and I were engaged in an experimental program on the relationship of discrepant action and attitude change.[1] Some of the results of this program are described in Kelman and Baron (1974), but most of the experiments are still unpublished.[2] The relationship between action and attitude change has also entered importantly into my work in various applied contexts, including psychotherapy (Kelman, 1963), international exchange (Kelman, 1962b, 1975), and conflict resolution (Kelman, 1972; Kelman & Cohen, 1979). I therefore welcome the opportunity, provided by the Nebraska Symposium, to draw together some of my ideas in this area and to distill some of the generalizations that have emerged from my work. I am particularly intrigued with noting some of the continuities and changes in my thinking over the years, as I have moved back and forth between experimental and applied work. It is

exciting to observe the way these two lines of activity inform and stimulate each other and thus contribute to theoretical refinement.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to develop a general view of the relationship between action and attitude change, as I now visualize it. It is presented in the spirit of a work-in-progress—as an attempt to bring together a variety of observations and generalizations and to discover what they add up to.

The biases that I bring to this analysis will become abundantly clear as I go along. Let me, however, state them briefly at the outset.

(1) I view attitude as a dynamic process, rather than as a static entity or stable equilibrium point. Attitudes are constantly shifting and changing as people interact with the attitude object and with their social environment. This view contrasts with that implicit in many criticisms of the attitude concept which point to the frequent finding of low relationships between measures of attitude and behavior. Such criticisms tend to conceive of attitudes in static rather than dynamic terms.

(2) I take social interaction as the starting point of my analysis and look at attitudes in that context. Attitudes flow from social interaction and evolve in the course of it. In turn, attitudes feed into social interaction and help to guide the interaction process.

(3) I view attitudes as links between individuals and the various collectivities to which they belong. Attitudes are shared, to varying degrees, within relevant collectivities. The formation, expression, and functioning of attitudes simultaneously represent both individual and collective processes.

(4) I assume that the behavior of individuals within any given situation can best be understood in functional terms. That is, I see individuals as seeking to achieve a variety of goals within that situation, as coping with environmental forces that have a bearing on these goals, and as processing information in relation to these concerns. This functional view provides the framework for analyzing attitudes, actions, and the relations between them. A functional analysis of attitude-action discrepancy contrasts, in many important ways, with an analysis derived from consistency models, particularly as exemplified by dissonance theory.

(5) As a further elaboration of a functional view, I regard the individual as oriented not only toward defense and equilibrium, but also toward growth, new learning, self-development, and self-utilization. This view suggests the possibility that the relationship between action and attitude change may represent not only a

reactive process, but also an active one. That is, action may not only precipitate attitude change, but it may also represent a step in an active effort to transform one's attitudes.

THE BASIC PROPOSITION

The basic proposition to be argued in this paper is that significant attitude change always occurs in the context of action.

In speaking of *action*, I refer to overt behavior that produces some change in the environment and has real-life consequences for the actor. There are various other criteria that come to mind when one thinks of an action, although I would not include them as defining characteristics. Thus, I would be more inclined to speak of action insofar as the behavior is public and irreversible and insofar as it represents an active involvement and long-term commitment. All these conditions enhance the "action-character" of the behavior by strengthening the two defining characteristics. That is, the more public, irreversible, active, and committing the behavior is, the greater the change it produces in the environment and the more real-life consequences it has for the actor. An anonymous, one-time donation to an organization represents an action. But when the donation is public, or when it involves a commitment to solicit matching donations from others, or when it takes the form of a binding pledge to contribute a certain percentage of one's income to the organization, then the action is clearly stronger—or "more of an action." It is nontrivial actions of this kind—that is, actions characterized by active participation, public commitment, and important real-life consequences—that I have in mind as the usual context for significant attitude change.

The statement that significant attitude change always occurs in the context of action clearly does not represent a formal proposition, to be subjected to empirical test. It is hedged in by the requirements that the attitude change be "significant" and that the action be nontrivial. Although the word "always" may sound daring, I can easily handle exceptions by declaring the attitude change to be insignificant or the action to be trivial. Needless to say, for purposes of empirical testing this proposition would have to be broken down into a series of much more specific conditional statements. For the moment, however, my purpose is not to propose specific

hypotheses, but to develop a general framework for understanding major attitude changes in the real world. I shall try to argue that such changes are particularly likely to occur when people are involved in action vis-à-vis the attitude object.

The types of action that may provide the context for attitude change vary widely. Social-psychological research on the relationship between action and attitude change (particularly in the dissonance tradition) has generally been restricted to a single paradigm: the individual engages in a discrepant or counterattitudinal action and, as a consequence of that action, an attitude-change process is set into motion. In this paradigm, the impetus for action comes from the outside—that is, it is unrelated to the person's attitudes. Moreover, attitude change is a post-action phenomenon, designed to justify or explain the action that has already been taken. In my view, this is only one of a number of possible ways in which action may be related to attitude change. My discussion is not confined to counterattitudinal actions, nor to actions that entirely precede the onset of a change process. A logical distinction can be made between four types of action, each of which may provide a context for attitude change (see Table 1):

(1) *Response to situational demands.* People may engage in action vis-à-vis an object for a variety of reasons—such as situational demands, role requirements, or social pressures—that are largely unrelated to their initial attitudes toward that object. Indeed, oftentimes the action may be counterattitudinal. This is the kind of action that is involved in the typical forced compliance experiment, popularized by dissonance theory. Such actions, for the reasons postu-

Table 1

Types of action that may provide context for attitude change

| | | Source of Action | |
		Social forces	Personal attitudes
Timing of Action	Prior to Change process	Response to situational demands	Manifestation of attitude
	In midst of change process	Adherence to new policy	Testing of new attitude

lated by dissonance theory or other theoretical orientations, may create the conditions for subsequent attitude change.

(2) *Adherence to new policy*. Changes in social policy may set into motion a process of behavioral and attitudinal change. In keeping with the new policy, individuals may engage in novel actions vis-à-vis the attitude object and these in turn may create the conditions for attitude change. Research on desegregation (Allport, 1954; Saenger, 1953) provides illustrations of the conduciveness of this type of action to attitude change in the direction of acceptance of the new policy.

(3) *Manifestation of attitude*. Not surprisingly, people often engage in actions vis-à-vis an object that flow directly from their attitudes toward that object. For example, someone favorably disposed toward the field of medicine may decide to go to medical school. This action, in turn, may expose the individual to new experiences and information leading to attitude change. The change may take the form of increased commitment or greater differentiation, but it may also take the form of a reassessment of the object or even an abandonment of the initially favorable attitude.

(4) *Testing of new attitude*. Individuals may be engaged in a process of incipient attitude change—a process of reconsidering or reexamining their attitudes toward a particular object. As part of that process, they may engage in some novel action vis-à-vis the object, perhaps by way of testing out a new relationship. This action, in turn, may help to crystallize their new attitudes and to advance the change process that had already begun prior to the action.

This classification of types of action is not meant to represent a formal scheme, nor would I suggest that the four types necessarily occur in pure form. In the real world, the four categories summarized in Table 1 often blend together. I shall bring in examples of these different types of action as I go along, indicating the ways in which they may lead to attitude change. For the moment, however, my purpose is merely to point to the range of phenomena I have in mind when I propose that attitude change occurs in the context of action. In doing so, I have also tried to suggest that action can best be viewed as part of the process of attitude change—as expression of that process, or instigation of that process, or typically a combination of the two.

AN ILLUSTRATION

Having defined my domain in rather abstract terms, let me now offer a concrete example of the role of action in attitude change, in order to provide an intuitive sense of the phenomena with which I am concerned. I take my example from the Arab-Israeli conflict, on which my research has concentrated during the past few years. Specifically, I shall look at the reaction of the Israeli public to the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem in November, 1977. I was in Israel at the time of that visit and then almost immediately went on to Egypt, where I spent the next few weeks. Thus, I was directly involved in the events that I describe, with all of the advantages and disadvantages entailed by such involvement.

The reaction of the Israeli public can certainly be described as a variety of intense action. Although much of the action was symbolic in nature, it was characterized by almost total participation of many individuals in a large number of public, collective activities. Once firm plans for Sadat's arrival were announced, the entire country was gripped by a holiday mood. It is not enough to speak of enthusiasm and excitement; words like joy, euphoria, and exultation seem more appropriate.

The reaction can best be described as a combination of solemnity and celebration. On the one hand, there was a widespread feeling that a momentous, historical event was about to take place, one that represented a major turning point in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this spirit, some compared Sadat's landing in Jerusalem to the first landing of spacemen on the moon. On the other hand, the reaction was festive, joyous, and even lighthearted. When the news of the visit was first announced, spontaneous dancing broke out in one of the main squares of Jerusalem; instead of restoring traffic, the police apparently joined in. Another example of lightheartedness was the following advertisement that appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*: "Magnificent 14-room house. Prestige neighborhood. Terms negotiable. Suitable for Egyptian Embassy."

One of the most interesting reactions was the great interest shown by the media and the public in the Egyptian national symbols, the flag and the anthem. There was much concern about the unavailability of Egyptian flags in Israel. Eventually, flags were brought in from New York and Cairo. In the meantime, however, a Jerusalem flagmaker began working around the clock making Egyptian flags.

He took a chance and began the process even before Sadat's official announcement. His story was featured on TV and in the press. A lengthy item in the evening news on TV dealt with the enterprising conductor of the military band, who did not have the notes of the Egyptian national anthem. He taped what he guessed (correctly) to be the anthem from Radio Cairo, transcribed it, and began rehearsing his band. By the time the notes arrived from Cairo and New York, confirming his own transcription, he already had the head-start he needed. These incidents were of such special interest to the Israeli public, it seems to me—generating both playful amusement and a sense of awe—because they symbolized concretely the enormity of the step that President Sadat had taken.

When the Egyptian advance party arrived at the outskirts of Jerusalem, they were greeted by a large crowd that had spontaneously gathered to clap, cheer, and shout welcome. The evening of Sadat's arrival, the *Jerusalem Post* came out with a special edition, with words of welcome—in Arabic and English—in large red letters on the front page, and with a facsimile of the Egyptian national flag, suitable for display, on the back. The roads that the motorcade from the airport would be following were lined with Egyptian flags (which by now had obviously been imported and produced in sufficient numbers) alternating with Israeli flags. There was a large, spontaneous outpouring of crowds all along the route—representing all ages and social classes—waiting to clap, cheer, and wave their flags as the official cars drove by.

I was in Jerusalem that evening. I mingled with the crowds in front of the King David Hotel and then proceeded to the home of friends in order to watch the arrival ceremonies on TV. As it happened, my friends lived on a quiet residential street that was on the route of the official motorcade and I thus had an opportunity to observe people's reactions close by. The crowds on this street were not particularly dense—although they filled out just a few minutes before the motorcade arrived. People were obviously following events on TV and they started pouring to the streets and to their balconies as soon as they heard that the motorcade was approaching their neighborhood. The atmosphere was expectant and festive. Policemen in shiny new uniforms were stationed along the street, but they were friendly and relaxed, sharing in the general holiday spirit. Women brought them tea and biscuits, underlining the sense of solidarity between the public and the police. My friends' little

daughter had brought down some flowers and talked about throwing them toward the official cars. Almost casually, a policeman advised her and her mother not to throw anything, because it might make the soldiers above us nervous. Looking up, we saw for the first time that soldiers, with their guns drawn, were stationed on the roofs. Clearly, security was tight, but the atmosphere was joyous and relaxed. When the cars finally passed, they were greeted with cheers and clapping. Some of the people near me recited the blessing which is said on Jewish holidays and special joyous occasions, thanking the Lord for having "kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this day."

At no point during the entire period surroundiug the President's visit did I come across any expression of hostility toward Egypt—which is quite amazing, considering the relationship between the two countries over the past three decades. I did hear an occasional expression of skepticism, but no hostility. Indeed, such reactions would have seemed strange and totally out of keeping with the mood of friendship and cordiality that prevailed. Beyond that, I saw no sign of reticence or reserve about expressing cordiality. The question of whether it is proper and loyal to respond with such warmth to the representatives of what was technically an enemy nation did not seem to cross anyone's mind; there was a general assumption that these positive sentiments were shared throughout, by both citizens and officials. Israelis visibly and without hesitation took delight in the Egyptian flag, in the Egyptian anthem, in the Egyptian presence. Along with the spontaneous enthusiasm shown by the population, there was an apparent desire—again quite spontaneous—to make a good impression on the visitors by communicating the people's welcome of the visitors, desire for peace, and appreciation for President Sadat's initiative.

There is no question that the immediate changes in attitude produced by this event were large and significant. An early opinion poll showed that ninety percent of the Israeli public (compared to some forty percent prior to the Sadat visit) believed that Egypt really wanted peace with Israel, and that eighty percent thought that the chances for an overall peace settlement with the Arab world had improved. To be sure, these enormous changes did not maintain themselves. There was considerable backsliding in Israeli public opinion as the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations proceeded and ran into repeated difficulties. Moreover, there is no clear indication that

these changes have generalized beyond the specific Egyptian-Israeli relationship. That is, there is no evidence of a major shift in public opinion toward other Arab parties (particularly the Palestinians) and toward other issues (such as withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and acceptance of a Palestinian state). Nevertheless, the changes in attitude—at the level of elites as well as the general public—were of sufficient magnitude to support the Israeli government in making substantial concessions on the Egyptian front and in signing a peace agreement. Furthermore, it is my impression that the Sadat visit and the subsequent events have produced a fundamental shift in Israeli attitudes, which will manifest itself as negotiations on the Palestinian issue and other remaining issues proceed. These broader changes have not occurred at the level of near unanimity that characterized the immediate changes brought about by Sadat's visit, but—for at least a large segment of the Israeli population—attitudes toward the Arab-Israeli conflict have undergone a major transformation. The evolution of attitudes on specific issues will depend on external events and pressures, as well as the internal debate and political process. I would predict, however, that the reassessment of attitudes set in motion by Sadat's initiative will have a major impact on Israeli reactions to these emerging issues.

Even if the changes turn out to be less far-reaching than I am predicting, there is little doubt that Sadat's visit produced significant changes in attitudes, which have not been totally dissipated by subsequent events, and which have contributed to a major restructuring of the political, diplomatic, and military situation. These changes were mediated and enhanced by the high degree of active, positive, and collective participation of the Israeli public in the Sadat visit. Thus, the event illustrates my thesis that significant attitude change occurs in the context of action.

To explain the attitude change, one could draw on the principles of cognitive dissonance. In this view, the positive actions in the face of the negative attitudes toward Egypt aroused a high level of dissonance, which was then reduced by bringing the attitudes into line with the actions. Such an explanation, however, is out of keeping with the joyous, festive mood of the occasion; there was certainly no visible evidence that people were experiencing dissonance. (Feelings of "dissonance" did develop in subsequent months, but these were associated with a tendency to revert to earlier more negative attitudes.) Furthermore, a dissonance expla-

nation ignores the fact that the action did not simply come out of nowhere. It took place in a larger context, which both gave meaning to the action itself and provided the conditions for the development and crystalization of new attitudes. Three elements of the larger context are particularly noteworthy:

(1) The action occurred in response to a major, dramatic event, which in itself created a new psychological situation, providing the necessity, possibility, and incentive for reconsidering earlier attitudes. It provided the necessity for change by confronting people with a clear disconfirmation of the strongly held expectation that no Arab would ever accept Israel. It provided the possibility for change by generating trust and thus reducing the perceived risk of new attitudes and policies. It provided the incentive for change by creating a concrete vision of a possible and highly desirable future. In short, the event itself introduced a great deal of new information conducive to attitude change. What the action did was to make this event, with all of its implications, more salient, more personal, and more palpable. It created motivations and opportunities to consider the new information and to work through its implications for people's earlier attitudes.

(2) The action was part of a collective response, widely shared within the community. Moreover, this collective response represented an expression of official policy, which gave it complete legitimacy in the eyes of the participants.

(3) The action was consistent with an element of attitudes toward the Mid-East conflict that was latent within the Israeli public. It gave expression to a collective yearning for peace and acceptance, which was an underlying theme of the Israeli ethos, but which had been suppressed by a pervasive pessimism. In short, I am assuming that the positive attitude was already there, waiting to be released. By the same token, actions congruent with such attitudes—actions expressing friendship and displaying diplomatic niceties—were already part of the cognitive repertoire of Israelis. In addition to this general readiness for new attitudes, it should also be noted that a process of incipient attitude change toward Egypt in particular had already been under way for some time. Increasingly, Israelis had begun to differentiate between Egyptians and other Arabs, which introduced another element of readiness for attitude change.

In sum, I am proposing that public action in response to Sadat's visit contributed to attitude change by bringing the motivational and informational forces of the event into salience in a concrete and

emotionally gripping way; by creating socially shared and legit-imized experiences and commitments; and by bringing certain latent dimensions of the attitude—certain readinesses for change—to the fore. These features of the situation illustrate several of the themes of my analysis, to which I shall now turn in a more sys-tematic fashion.

CONDITIONS FOR ATTITUDE CHANGE

Before exploring the role of action in attitude change, I want to specify some of the basic conditions for attitude change—that is, the circumstances under which attitude change is most likely to occur. I shall then proceed, in the next section, to show why an action situation is most likely to provide these conditions.

The conditions favorable to attitude change are linked to what I see as three central features of attitudes: (1) attitudes are func-tionally based; (2) attitudes are socially shared; and (3) attitudes represent a range of commitment to the attitude object.

The Functional Basis of Attitudes

From the perspective of the individual, attitudes can be seen as a product of the individual's efforts to process information about an object in a particular motivational context. This view is generally consistent with a functional approach to attitude (Katz, 1960; Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956).

Attitudes are formed in the course of a person's interaction with the attitude object. This interaction may be direct or indirect. Direct interaction refers to interaction with the object itself. When the object is another person or another group—i.e., when we are dealing with interpersonal or intergroup attitudes—then direct interaction is in effect social interaction with the other person or with representatives of the other group. Indirect interaction refers to interactions about the object through other persons or communica-tion media.

In the course of such interaction, whether direct or indirect, information about the object is transmitted to and processed by the individual. The way in which the information is processed is a

function of the motivational context in which the interaction occurs. That is, the attitude we form is grounded in the particular functional significance that the situation has for us—the goals we are pursuing, the values we are hoping to maximize, the coping processes in which we are engaged. The motivational context in which the attitude is formed determines the nature of the resulting attitude—i.e., the motivational basis of the attitude and the attitude system of which it becomes a part—and hence the conditions under which we are likely to act on this attitude in one or another way, as well as the conditions under which the attitude is likely to change.

This view of attitudes implies that their functioning is a dynamic process. They develop out of our interaction with an object in a particular motivational and informational context. As we continue to interact with the object (directly or indirectly), our attitudes are tested, exposed to new information, sometimes filled out and shored up, and sometimes changed. Attitude formation and change is thus a continually ongoing process. In principle, attitudes should be developing and changing whenever we are exposed to new experiences and information; in practice, changes are usually quite slow and gradual. This follows from the fact that our attitudes, once established, help to shape the experiences we have with the attitude object. They affect the kind of information to which we are exposed, the way in which we organize that information, and often (as in interpersonal attitudes) the way in which the attitude object itself behaves. Thus an attitude, by its very functioning (quite apart from any special motivations to maintain it), tends to create the conditions for its own confirmation and to minimize the opportunities for its disconfirmation.

In short, then, as we interact with an object toward which we have established an attitude, we are subject to two competing sets of forces. On the one hand, the new information to which we are exposed produces forces toward change. On the other hand. the existing attitude creates forces toward stability—not only in the form of motivated resistances to change (which, of course, do arise insofar as the attitude has functional significance for us), but also and primarily in the form of confirmatory experiences that are inherent in the day-to-day functioning of attitudes. Which of these two sets of forces will prevail on any given occasion—or what balance between them is achieved—depends on the nature of the existing attitude, of the new information to which we are exposed, and of the situation in which the interaction occurs. In general,

however, it can be said that both stability and change are part of the essential nature of attitudes.

Attitude change processes are most likely to be set into motion when we are sharply confronted with a discrepancy between an attitude and some item of new information. Discrepant information is not enough, however, since, as we well know, there are many ways of neutralizing the discrepancy short of attitude change. The discrepancy must be sufficiently strong and clear so it cannot be readily assimilated to a pre-existing structure. For example, a clear disconfirmation of a strongly held expectation, as was provided by Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, would meet this requirement. Furthermore, the discrepancy must be challenging, in the sense that it raises serious questions about the quality of our coping with the environment or our ability to achieve our goals. Discrepant information may also be challenging in the sense that it offers new opportunities for enhancing our goals, as exemplified by the vision of the future that Sadat's visit created in the minds of Israelis. Assuming that we are confronted with information that is clearly discrepant, as well as challenging, the likelihood of attitude change will also depend on our receptivity to that information. That is, the situation must generate the necessary motivation to attend to this information and to grapple with it. Such motivation may derive either from the norms of the situation or from the nature of our personal involvement with the attitude object.

The psychotherapy situation provides a good example of the possibilities of bringing together these conditions for change. Psychotherapy provides opportunities for the occurrence of "corrective emotional experiences" (Alexander & French, 1946). Such experiences are based on the manifestation, within the therapy session, of some of the attitudes and behavior patterns that create conflict and distress in patients' real-life relationships. Typically, these attitudes and patterns manifest themselves in the ways in which patients interact with the therapist or, in group psychotherapy, with other patients (Frank & Ascher, 1951). The reactions of the therapist or of fellow-patients may constitute clear disconfirmations of strongly held expectations, or they may demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the patient's interpersonal behavior. Thus, the interactions in the therapy session provide the raw material for confronting patients with distorted, inappropriate, or self-defeating aspects of their attitudes. What is unique about the therapy situation is that it is governed by the strong norm to analyze feelings and

reactions as they occur, thus forcing the patient to grapple with the discrepant information. The essence of a corrective emotional experience is the examination of one's attitudes and behavior patterns simultaneously with their actual manifestation at a real-life level of emotional intensity (Kelman, 1963). A similar process may be conducive to insight and attitude change at the intergroup level in the course of problem-solving workshops aimed at conflict resolution. The "here and now" interactions between the parties may provide concrete, emotionally gripping, and incontrovertible illustrations of attitudes that exacerbate and perpetuate the conflict between the two groups represented in the workshop. Such experiences, coupled with norms that encourage their analysis as they occur, may serve as a basis for attitude change (Kelman, 1972; Cohen, Kelman, Miller, & Smith, 1977).

Another example of the confluence of informational and motivational factors conducive to attitude change can be taken from international exchange experiences. Foreign visitors are most likely to develop favorable attitudes toward the host country if they are involved in an ongoing positive relationship with nationals of that country. A case in point would be participation in a cooperative project, in which they play an integral role and which they find professionally rewarding (Kelman, 1962b, 1975). Such experiences often expose visitors to new information about the host society that is particularly convincing and likely to break down earlier stereotypes. They have opportunities to observe members of the host society in contexts that are important and meaningful to themselves, and some of the characteristics of host nationals become visible to them in a concrete, immediate way. They come to know aspects of the host society through direct, personally involving experiences. At the same time, their personal positive involvement with members of the host society in mutually rewarding activities creates special motivations to see the host country in a favorable light. The knowledge that they have participated in positive interactions with nationals of the host country, and that they themselves have engaged in friendly, cooperative behavior toward them, is likely to increase their receptivity to new information that calls for a restructuring of attitudes.

In sum, one of the conditions most conducive to attitude change toward an object is the *simultaneous* presence of genuinely new and challenging information about that object and of the motivation to receive that information and grapple with it. That motivation, as my

two examples were designed to illustrate, may be based in situational norms that require us to consider the information, or in personal experiences that impel us to search for or at least be open to certain kinds of new information.

The Shared Character of Attitudes

An attitude is simultaneously a personal disposition and a societal product. Attitude, in my view, always has a societal referent. Each individual's attitude is a product of social interaction, which we share to a greater or lesser extent with other members of our diverse groups, organizations, and communities. An individual's attitude is not necessarily a carbon copy of the attitudes held by fellow group members; there is often considerable variation in the manifestation of a particular attitude among the members of a group. Nevertheless, when we talk about a social attitude, we refer to a disposition that acquires a large part of its meaning from its shared character within a collectivity. In that sense, aggregate attitudes represent a system property; the attitudes of particular individuals (or subgroups) represent variants of that system property.

Within a collectivity, different attitudes differ in the degree to which there is room for variability. Certain attitudes are so closely linked to group goals, or group identity, or concerns for group survival, that there are strong pressures toward uniformity and little tolerance for deviation. Others are seen as matters of individual taste and preference, or as issues for debate within the collectivity, or as legitimate expressions of differing subgroup interests.

Within the individual, attitudes differ in how individualized they are—that is, to what degree they have been transformed, in the process of acquisition and development, from being primarily components of a social (or role) system to being components of a personal (or value) system. In this connection, the theoretical distinction between three processes of social influence—compliance, identification, and internalization—that I have proposed in earlier writings (Kelman, 1958, 1961, 1974b), may be of some relevance. A disposition acquired through compliance is essentially a tendency to give a particular verbal response rather than an attitude per se; a disposition acquired through identification is an attitude that functions primarily as part of the requirements associated with a particu-

lar role; and a disposition acquired through internalization is an attitude which, although rooted in shared values, allows the individual to make independent assessments of social demands. These different kinds of dispositions represent different kinds of relationships of the individual to the social system, yielding different degrees of flexibility and independence. Yet all of them derive their meaning from the fact that they are shared with other members of a collectivity.

The nature of the attitude as initially held by the individual—that is, the place it occupies within the individual and within the collectivity—determines the conditions under which it is likely to change. In all cases, however, attitude change typically involves a process of interaction within a group or society. It is through social interaction, in the context of the larger social system, that we explore new information and its implications, compare our views with those of others, become aware of new possibilities, communicate new expectations to one another, and test out what is legitimate and what is normative.

In short, attitude change is typically rooted in some process of communication within a group. The terms of this communication process are frequently set by various political authorities or opinion leaders. In the course of this process, individuals stimulate each other, reinforce each other, test out their own views, and compare themselves with others. As a result, new shared definitions of problems, new social norms, and new attitudes arise. The attitude change process, whether it takes place at the level of compliance, identification, or internalization, is likely to evolve to a significant degree out of such social interaction.

Attitude as a Range of Commitment

Many attitude theorists now assume that an attitude represents a range, rather than just a point on a scale. In this spirit, I propose that, for each individual, a given attitude represents a *range of commitment*. This concept clearly overlaps with the concept of latitude of acceptance (Sherif & Hovland, 1961), except that it is concerned with action potential rather than with judgments. One might think of a person's range of commitment as the range of relationships with or actions toward the object that the person finds ac-

ceptable, just as latitude of acceptance refers to the range of positions on an issue that a person finds acceptable.

It is important to keep in mind that the range of commitment may cross the zero point—that is, our range of possible relationships with a particular object may include both positive and negative associations and actions, both approach and avoidance tendencies.[1] My assumption here is that attitude toward an object very often is a resultant of conflicting approach and avoidance components—an issue to be discussed more fully below. In my exploration of attitudes in the Middle East conflict, for example, I have been particularly struck with the extent to which totally contradictory attitudes seem to coexist in the same individual and to emerge under different circumstances. Our standard procedures of attitude measurement miss the ambivalence that so often characterizes attitudes, since they derive a single average score, which defines the person as positive, negative, or neutral. One minimal way of obtaining a better picture of the range of commitment represented by an attitude would be to measure approach and avoidance components separately.

Within a person's range of commitment, one can identify a point representing the modal level of commitment (which is presumably the point to which a person's position on an attitude scale would correspond, if it were possible to devise situation-free attitude measures). The modal point is the best representation of our current equilibrium position—that is, it describes the way we are most likely to relate ourselves to the object under the present set of circumstances. It does not tell us what we would do in all situations, since our behavior vis-à-vis the attitude object fluctuates around the modal point. In some situations, we may display a level of commitment closer to the upper end of our range, in others a level closer to the lower end. The modal point tells us even less about what we might be prepared to do under changing circumstances. The concept of a range of commitment suggests that there may be potential

3. The term "commitment" is somewhat problematic here, because it is generally used to refer to degrees of positive association. For the moment, however, I can find no better term to designate the dimension of attitude that relates to the kinds of actions a person is prepared to take vis-à-vis a particular object. It should be clear, though, that I use commitment here to describe a dimension that goes from active liking or friendliness, through various degrees of approach, indifference, and avoidance, all the way to active hostility.

relationships to the object that are so far out in the range (i.e., so far removed from the modal point in either direction) that they are not likely to be manifested in the course of fluctuations that normally occur from situation to situation. But they may represent latent possibilities that might surface under the appropriate circumstances.

The notion of latent positions at the outer ends of a person's range of commitment has implications for the possibilities of attitude change. Attitude change in this scheme (as distinct from fluctuations around the modal level) would take the form of a shift in one's modal level to another position within the range and/or a shift in the entire range. One can think of the latent positions that are already present within the person's range of commitment as representing a readiness for such shifts, given the proper circumstances. The degree of readiness for a shift, the direction it would take, and the circumstances that might precipitate it may vary as a function of different qualitative factors. The possibility of such a shift to a higher or lower level within the person's range may be largely unconscious, or it may be actively entertained or even desired by the person. For example, we may be willing or even eager to become more actively involved in an organization or profession—to give more of our time to it or to take a leadership role—but the opportunities to do so may not have presented themselves, or other competing forces may have kept us at our present level. Conversely, we may feel ambivalent toward an organization or social group to which we belong, and be willing or even eager to withdraw from it, but the opportunity to do so gracefully in the face of competing considerations may not have arisen. Perhaps the most interesting cases are those in which we are not actively aware of the possibility of shifting toward a now latent attitude position precisely because no opportunities have presented themselves. The absence of opportunities may not only keep us from manifesting certain positions within our range, but it may even keep us from recognizing their existence.

A new event or a new situation may bring to the fore a relationship to the object that has hitherto been latent. I suggested above that Sadat's visit to Jerusalem had precisely that effect on the Israeli public. Typically, an event or experience will have this effect because it presents opportunities or necessities that have not been present before. People may have been ready for this new relationship—in the sense that it was within their range of commitment and part of their potential repertoire—but it had not previously been

manifested. Now that it has been activated, it may help to create the conditions for attitude change, producing a shift in the person's range of commitment and establishment of a new modal point.

In sum, one of the conditions most conducive to attitude change is the activation of a latent attitude position already represented within the person's range of commitment. This condition does not assure change; much depends on whether the precipitating event or experience itself marks the beginning of a process of structural change, rather than a temporary, aberrant phenomenon. However, attitude change becomes more likely because an already existing readiness for change has been mobilized.

ACTION AS THE ARENA FOR ATTITUDE CHANGE

The view of attitudes as functionally based, socially shared, and representing a range of commitment places them squarely in an action context. Attitude is not a static psychological entity that can be separated—functionally or temporally—from the flow of action, but rather it is an integral part of action. Attitude and action are linked in a continuing reciprocal process, each generating the other in an endless chain. Action and interaction are the ground on which attitudes are formed, tested, modified, and abandoned. Attitudes are formed in the course of interaction with the object; they are constantly tested and reshaped in interaction with relevant others; and they are characterized by a range of potential action commitments.

I have discussed three situational conditions that enhance the probability of attitude change: the simultaneous presence of new, challenging information about the object and motivation to grapple with that information; the involvement of the person in social interaction with relevant others; and the activation of attitude positions that are already present in the person's repertoire but have hitherto been latent. I shall now argue that these three conditions are most likely to be present in an action situation and that action therefore constitutes the typical arena for attitude change.

(1) Action often provides the context for the simultaneous presence of genuinely new and challenging information about the object and of the motivation to consider that information. This is particularly true for intergroup and interpersonal attitudes, where action takes the form of social *interaction* with the attitude object. There are many kinds of information about another person or group

that we can gather only in the course of interaction with the other. It is only through interaction that we can observe, for example, the other's reaction to what we do, and our own reaction to what the other does.

The examples I gave in the last section illustrate the role of action in bringing together informational and motivational forces conducive to attitude change. Thus, corrective emotional experiences in psychotherapy occur in the context of an action situation. It is because patients are engaged in an active process of interacting with the therapist or fellow patients that the information about their own behavior and its consequences is highly salient and emotionally gripping. At the same time, the motivation to consider this new information derives from the analytic norms governing this action situation. Similarly, the international exchange experiences that, I suggested, are particularly conducive to attitude change occur in the context of an action situation. By virtue of their participation in rewarding joint activities with members of the host society, foreign visitors are likely to be exposed to positive information about that society at a time when they are particularly receptive to finding and noting such information. Their receptivity stems from the fact that they are actively involved in positive associations with the other, which leads them to define themselves as friendly toward the other and to define the other as worthy of that friendliness.

These examples illustrate how confrontation with new and challenging information, as well as motivation to grapple with such information, are particularly likely to occur in an action context. The coming together of these informational and motivational forces in an action situation serves as the occasion for reexamining one's attitudes, thus providing a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for attitude change.

(2) Action links the individual to a relevant collectivity or social network, thus providing another major condition for significant attitude change. Again, of course, the process of collective sharing does not necessarily lead to attitude change; it may just as easily serve to reinforce resistance to change. But where significant change does occur, it is more likely than not to have been shaped by social interaction.

In an action situation, individuals interact directly with other members of their group, organization, community, or society; and they interact indirectly with leaders and opinion makers. It is in the course of such interaction that personal reactions are tested and

compared, that a shared interpretation of new events is developed and supported, that new norms are created and enforced, and that new commitments take on a public character. Good illustrations of these processes can be found in the active, public response of Israelis to the visit of President Sadat.

Many factors determine whether the outcome of such interaction processes will actually be attitude change. For example, the probability of change depends on the nature of the event that precipitated the action—the extent to which it is truly dramatic and compelling in character. Another set of factors relates to legitimization processes that bolster the action—the extent to which new interpretations and norms are encouraged by relevant authorities. Where these various factors *are* conducive to change, however, social interaction engendered by active participation provides the conditions for attitude change. Insofar as change is shaped by social interaction, it is particularly likely to take the form of identification, but not exclusively so (Kelman, 1961). Changes at the level of internalization also involve a processing of information that is mediated through social influence.

(3) Action may create the opportunity or necessity to enter into a new kind of relationship with the attitude object. This relationship may represent a degree of association that is within our range of commitment, but which has not previously been manifested. Thus, the action may bring to the fore a component of our attitude that has been latent—a level of commitment that has been quite distant from our modal point. The manifestation of this attitude may then provide a starting point for attitude change. The advantage, of course, is that this starting point is already within our psychological repertoire, so that the usual resistances to change are likely to be reduced—and indeed, internal forces toward change may already be at work.

In some cases, the component of the attitude brought to the fore in the action situation may be one of which we are not actively aware or which we do not consider as a possible position, except under the most hypothetical circumstances. Israeli attitudes toward Egypt, as manifested at the time of Sadat's visit, might be an example here. In these cases, the likelihood of attitude change subsequent to the action would depend heavily on the array of informational, motivational, and social supports that accompany and follow the action. On the other hand, there are some cases in which the action may correspond to a component of the attitude of which we had been quite aware, and which was already close to manifestation. Thus,

the action situation may represent an opportunity for us to adopt a new role that we have been anticipating for some time (with more or less ambivalence); or a challenge to make a commitment that we have been toying with but that remained unexpressed because of competing pressures or anxieties; or a deliberate effort to mobilize internal and external supports for a new level of commitment by creating irreversible consequences and social expectations that would prevent us from backsliding. In these cases, we may be ready for change and the action may serve as part of the process of bringing that change into being. Once the action is taken, it helps to sharpen and stabilize the new attitude and to strengthen commitment to it.

ATTITUDES AND THE DEMANDS OF THE ACTION SITUATION

In view of the general nature of attitudes, I have argued that action is the central arena for the occurrence of attitude change. The conditions for attitude change are most likely to be present in an action situation: action may provide for the simultaneous occurrence of new and challenging information about the attitude object and of the motivation to consider that information; action may engulf the individual in social interactions with and around the attitude object; and action may bring to the fore a latent component of the attitude that represents a certain readiness to change. I now want to turn to the question of *how* action brings about attitude change—that is, what are the dynamics of action that make it conducive to attitude change?

Before discussing the dynamics of action, however, let us look at the problem confronting an individual in an action situation. Specifically, I want to look at the role and fate of the individual's initial attitude toward the attitude object. From this point of view, the action situation essentially represents a situation in which the person's attitude toward the object is being put to the test.

It may be helpful to view each action situation as an episode in a continuing socialization process, because this allows us to apply to this problem a social-psychological framework that conceives socialization as a process of negotiation between the socializee and "society" (or an organization or institution) as represented by the

socializing agent. Each party to the negotiation makes its own demands, which jointly determine the socialization outcome. Within this framework, each specific action situation can be viewed as one in which both the individual actor and the situation make certain demands. One of the demands of the individuals is to act out—or to act in accordance with—their attitudes. To oversimplify, as a first approximation, the individuals' attitudes represent *their* contribution to the negotiated outcome. It is their preferred basis for action if the choice were entirely theirs. The attitudes have to compete with situational demands, which are essentially of two kinds: social-structural demands, that is, the requirements of the larger social system (the organization, the society) in whose context this episode occurs; and interaction demands, that is, the requirements of the immediate microsystem in which the individual participates.

These two kinds of situational demands are nicely illustrated in the classical study by LaPiere (1934), in which respondents to a mailed questionnaire indicated that they would not serve Chinese guests in their hotels or restaurants, even though they had actually served a Chinese couple who had presented themselves in their establishments earlier. Though this study is cited as a dramatic illustration of the lack of correspondence between attitudes and actions, it really contrasts two behavioral responses in two very differently structured social situations, one dominated by social-structural demands and the other by interaction demands (Kelman, 1978). In answering LaPiere's questionnaire, his respondents were acting primarily in their roles of representatives of their organizations facing the larger social system: they were expressing organizational policy in what was essentially a public, official context. In dealing with the Chinese couple in person they were also acting in part as representatives of their organizations: how they acted toward the couple would certainly affect the reputations of their organizations, especially if there were bystanders observing the interaction. Most important, however, they were enacting a role in the microsystem defined by their immediate interaction with the Chinese couple. It would appear that the situational demands—particularly the desire to avoid the embarrassment of turning away a respectable, pleasant, well-behaved couple, presenting themselves as clients expecting to be served—were so strong as to outweigh any other considerations.

LaPiere's striking finding suggests that both of his measurement situations were almost entirely controlled by structural or situa-

tional constraints. The questionnaire responses were constrained by organizational policy, which in turn was governed by national norms; the direct responses were constrained by the structure of the immediate situation, which in turn was governed by powerful norms of social interaction. Attitudes toward the Chinese, as an individual difference variable, clearly played no role in determining responses in either situation, as evidenced by the lack of variance in both sets of data. That is, virtually all respondents said they would not serve Chinese, and virtually all in fact did serve the Chinese couple. This finding has some interesting implications for the nature of these attitudes at the time, but they are quite different from the implications drawn in much of the work that took off from LaPiere.

Whatever may have happened in the LaPiere study, in a typical action situation we can postulate two sets of competing demands: those of the individual actors, as represented by their attitudes, and those of the situation, representing the requirements of the larger social system and of the immediate interaction. If the person's attitude is in some way incongruent with these situational requirements, it must negotiate with them in producing the action outcome. Clearly, under the circumstances, we can never expect literal correspondence between attitude and action. The degree of correspondence always depends on the relative strengths of the competing demands from the individual and from the situation.

So far, I have been treating attitude as the individual's contribution to the negotiated outcome. But, as I indicated above, this is merely an oversimplified first approximation, insofar as it implies that attitudes can be treated as strictly individual dispositions. In the view of attitudes I have presented, they always have a social referent, are products of social interaction, and are shared with other members of relevant collectivities. Thus, the attitude itself reflects a social as well as an individual contribution.[4]

Keeping in mind its socially shared character, how does a particular attitude function in an action situation? This depends on the

4. By the same token, it should be noted that the situational demands cannot be viewed as entirely structural in origin. They also reflect an individual contribution, since structural requirements are mediated by the individual's definition of the situation. Since definitions of the situation are often subject to considerable individual differences, our ability to predict behavior in a given situation—or, more precisely, the impact of situational requirements relative to the impact of the person's own attitude—is greatly enhanced by our knowledge of that person's definition of the situation (Kelman, 1978).

structure of that attitude within the relevant collectivity and within the individual, as described earlier. At the level of the collectivity, the domain to which an attitude belongs determines the way it functions. In a domain that is closely linked to group goals, group identity, and concern for group survival, action is likely to be controlled to a high degree by situational demands; individual attitudes, insofar as they deviate from the group norm, are often overpowered by these demands. On the other hand, attitudes in a domain defined as open to personal preference or subgroup interests are more likely to compete on an equal footing with situational demands. Similarly, at the individual level, the nature of the attitude (i.e., the type of relationship of the individual to the social system that it represents) determines the probability that it will be expressed—or translated into action—in a particular social situation. Compliance-based dispositions are by definition controlled by situational demands, whereas internalized attitudes offer the strongest competition to such demands. Attitudes based on identification are intermediate, in that they are likely to be expressed to the extent that situational demands and role requirements bring them into salience. In short, the likelihood that an attitude will be expressed in action varies with the degree of independence that the particular attitude has from the situational demands of the action situation.

In some cases, the situational constraints are so strong that personal attitudes toward the object play almost no part in the action. The two situations used in the LaPiere (1934) study seem to represent such cases. In other cases, action may be entirely determined by the attitude because the situational demands are very flexible, or because they are completely congruent with the attitude, or because the attitude is so powerful. In many cases, however, there is some degree of conflict between these two sets of demands, leading to negotiation between them. The action outcome of this negotiation may be predominantly determined by the attitude, or it may be predominantly determined by the situation, or—as frequently happens—it may represent some kind of compromise between the two.

These negotiations in the action situation lead up to and give form to the action that the person finally takes. The process and outcome of the negotiations, insofar as they involve some degree of conflict between attitudes and situational demands and yield some degree of compromise between the two, are bound to have an impact on the

person's initial attitudes. They are likely to introduce new information and motivation that may strengthen or weaken the attitude, constrict or expand it, crystallize it, qualify it, or modify it. Thus, the conduciveness of action to attitude change is directly related to the problem that the individual confronts in an action situation. It is now time to turn in detail to the dynamics of the action itself and the mechanisms of change that it potentially brings into play.

DYNAMICS OF ACTION AND MECHANISMS OF ATTITUDE CHANGE

How does action bring about attitude change? What happens in the course of action and as a consequence of action that creates forces toward change? Table 2 summarizes my attempt to answer these questions.

The columns of Table 2 distinguish between two kinds of processes generated by action—motivational and informational processes—that are potentially conducive to attitude change. The rows of the table describe some of the dynamic features of action, each of which in its own way may generate such motivational and informational processes. As indicated by the rows of the table, I am proposing that action has the potentiality of generating motivational and informational processes conducive to attitude change for the following reasons: (1) Action reduces the person's psychological distance from the attitude object; (2) Action requires the person to make a decision to act and then to perform the action; (3) The action in itself—that is, the fact that the person has taken this action—becomes a new datum in the person's life-space that must be taken into account in contemplating what has transpired; and (4) The action has real-life consequences for the actor with which she or he must contend.

All of these features of action are potentially conducive to attitude change because they help to create or bring into prominence the conditions for attitude change that I discussed earlier. That is, they expose us to new information in a context in which we are motivated to explore it and to consider its implications for our attitudes; they link us to relevant others through direct interaction or communication of social norms; and they bring to the fore a level of commitment

or a component of the attitude that has previously been latent. Let me proceed to show more specifically how each of the four dynamic features of action identified in Table 2 is potentially conducive to attitude change.[5]

Table 2*

Dynamics of action that generate motivational and informational processes potentially conducive to attitude change

| | Processes Generated by Action | |
Dynamics of Action	Motivational	Informational
Action reduces P's psychological distance from attitude object	Dealing with new and latent requirements and opportunities brought to the fore by closer association	Attending to newly salient features of object and of social environment
Action requires P to decide and perform	Meeting task and situational demands	Coding information about object and social expectations relevant to decision and performance
Action itself becomes a new datum entering P's life space	Explanation and justification of action	Definition of object and of self in terms of their interaction
Action has real-life consequences	Anticipation and fulfillment of new commitments and role requirements	Integration of new experiences and observations generated by action

*Adapted from Kelman, 1974a, p. 317.

5. The following discussion draws heavily on Kelman, 1974a, although the framework has been expanded and modified in a number of important ways.

Reduced Psychological Distance

Almost by definition, action requires closer association with the attitude object. I refer here essentially to psychological association, although often it may include physical association. It should be noted that action leads to closer association with the object regardless of whether that action is consistent or inconsistent with the initial attitude. Of course, the relationship of the action to the initial attitude has important implications for the nature and effects of the new association. Similarly, the degree to which the action conforms with or deviates from situational demands has implications for the nature and effects of the association.

The reduced psychological distance from the attitude object means that certain kinds of information about the object become more salient (see right-hand column of Table 2). When you are involved in closer association with an object you are forced to attend to characteristics of the object that you might otherwise ignore. The direct observation conveys these characteristics in a more powerful, emotionally more compelling way. When the object is another person or group, action and association typically take the form of social interaction, which provides a unique and particularly salient type of information about the object—namely information about how the other reacts to you and your input. Finally, when the association occurs in a social context, you can also observe the reaction of others to the object and the norms surrounding that object. Clearly, then, there is an array of new information that becomes available to the individual as a direct result of closer association with the object, and this information represents potential inputs for attitude change.

The fact that we are engaged in closer association with an object also creates special motivation to attend to and respond to confirmatory information, i.e., to information congruent with the nature and level of our association. For example, closer association with members of a group toward which we initially held negative or at least highly ambivalent attitudes creates motivation to attend to and process positive information about that group, so that our association can be more pleasant, more productive, and more capable of contributing to the achievement of our goals. Also, the reduced psychological distance may bring out positive components of our attitude that were in fact within our range of commitment but that had remained latent in the absence of direct association. An especially interesting example here comes from those situations in which

we may in fact have desired a closer positive relationship to the other, but have confronted strong barriers to the establishment of such a relationship. These barriers may take the form of lack of trust (as in the initial Israeli attitudes toward Egypt), status differences, shyness, pride, or cultural taboos about associating with certain outgroups. In such cases, the action may propel us (by virtue of situational demands, *fails accomplis*, or what-have-you) into the closer relationship that we had wanted but could not achieve. That is, the action has overcome the psychological barriers to closer association; and now already existing (though heretofore latent) motivations to continue the association, and to attend to and process confirmatory information, take over.

It should be noted that reduced psychological distance (as well as the other features of action to be discussed below) do not necessarily lead to attitude change. For example, there is no assurance that closer association with a negatively viewed other will engender positive attitudes. We may be propelled into a situation in which we feel even more threatened by the other than we did before. Or the newly salient information about the other that becomes available to us through our closer association may confirm our worst stereotypes. In short, closer association brought about by action may well produce boomerang effects. All that can be said is that the dynamics of action make it possible for the conditions for attitude change to manifest themselves, but they do not assure the occurrence of attitude change.

Requirement to Decide and Perform

When we find ourselves in a situation in which there are strong demands to take or consider taking an action to which we have varying degrees of resistance (e.g., to participate in a protest action), a decision-making process is set into motion. We assess the options available to us and their respective consequences; we decide whether or not to engage in the action; and, if the decision is positive, we determine the nature and extent of our participation and preview the content of what we will be doing. In the course of the decision-making, we are likely to think through the issues raised by the action, to consider appropriate information, and to review relevant arguments. These efforts, in turn, may involve us in an active process of reevaluating our position—of reconsidering our

original attitude from the point of view of its implications for our own values and for our relationship to important reference groups. The process of reexamination may provide attitudinal support for the action we have been asked to take and may thus lead to attitude change, in the form of internalization or identification or some combination of the two (Kelman, 1961). In other words, attitude change may emerge from the process of reexamining our attitudes that has been motivated by the situational requirements of the action.

A high degree of choice about the action is particularly conducive to attitude change. If we are undecided, then the greater the choice, the more likely we are—in the process of arriving at the necessary decision and firming it up—to reexamine our attitudes and to marshal forces in support of the action that we finally select. Of course, we may decide against taking the action, and this negative decision would now have considerable attitudinal support. But if we do take the action, it is likely to be accompanied by attitude change. A high degree of choice may facilitate attitude change even when the situational forces are so strong that we experience no indecision: the fact that we were given the choice may force us to find attitudinal support for the action we have already decided to take through a process of active self-persuasion (Kelman, 1962a). Once a decision to act has been made, our motivation to meet the demands of the task in which we have agreed to participate may bring a further process of reexamination of attitudes into play—depending, of course, on the specific nature of the action. For example, once we have agreed to participate in a protest action, preparation of the protest statement requires review of the issues and development of appropriate arguments. If the task is to be carried out effectively, we have to think up supporting arguments and to present them in a convincing way. In the course of engaging in this process, we may become aware of nuances and implications of the issues that we had not considered before and may thus succeed in persuading ourselves. This is one reason for the potential effectiveness of role playing in producing attitude change, particularly if it requires improvisation (King & Janis, 1956). Though the role playing may be a mere exercise, requiring no commitment on the part of the player, the demands of the task itself may lead us to reconsider our attitudes. In reverse role play among conflicting parties, for example, successful task performance requires each player to consider and present the other party's position from the other's point of view.

The parties may thus gain insights into their adversaries' positions that were not previously available to them, and modify their own views accordingly. In psychotherapy, corrective emotional experiences may be motivated by the patient's desire to do a good job, in keeping with the norms of the situation. In international exchanges, the requirement of effectively carrying out cooperative projects may motivate reexamination of attitudes toward the other group, in order to find positive characteristics congruent with a cooperative relationship.

The motivational processes generated in the action situation are accompanied by informational processes that are similarly conducive to attitude change. In the course of deciding to act and carrying out the action, we process various items of information that have attitudinal relevance. Some of this information is conveyed by the context of the action; some is deliberately sought out by us to help us decide and perform; some is generated by the action itself. We may thus acquire data about the characteristics of the object, about the value implications of various policies, about the distribution of opinions on the issue, and about the expectations held by relevant reference groups. These are the kinds of information that typically enter into the formation of attitudes. Exposure to new information of this variety—under the appropriate motivational circumstances—provides the raw material for attitude change.

Action as a New Datum

Once we have taken action, the action itself becomes a datum with which we have to contend. In other words, action creates a new psychological situation, in which the fact of our action represents a salient element. Contemplation of the action we have taken may raise questions about the meaning of the action, about its implications for our self-image, and about the nature of our ongoing relationship to the object of the action. These musings may generate motivational and informational processes conducive to attitude change. This feature of action, essentially, is the one on which both dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Brehm & Cohen, 1962) and attribution (Bem, 1967) interpretations of forced compliance focus.

On the motivational side, if the action violated certain norms or standards, then the fact that we have taken that action may have negative implications for our self-evaluation. Contemplation of the

action may arouse guilt, shame, or some other negative affect, which in turn would generate cognitive efforts to justify the action. The precise nature of the reaction would depend on the form that the action took, the norm that it violated, and the specific motivational system it has thrown out of balance—issues to which I shall return in the next section of this paper. Efforts to explain or justify a discrepant action may bring about attitude change, more or less along the lines proposed by dissonance theory. A morally dissonant act, for example, can be justified if we can convince ourselves that the object we harmed or the cause we betrayed was not worthy of our loyalty; a hedonically dissonant act can be justified if we can convince ourselves that the discrepant action was really enjoyable and profitable (Kelman & Baron, 1974; Kelman, Baron, Sheposh, & Lubalin, Note 1).

Discrepant action is particularly likely to generate justification processes conducive to attitude change to the extent that we have been personally involved in the action. Knowledge that we have acted in a certain way toward an object becomes an important datum in our self-evaluation and in our evaluation of the object if we regard the action as internally motivated and representative of the self. The sense of personal involvement—and hence the probability of attitude change—should be greater if the action is freely chosen, if it requires effort and initiative, and if it represents a complex of interrelated role behaviors within some social system rather than a specific, isolated act (Kelman, 1962a). Contemplation of the action also provides new information—relevant to the definition of the object and to our self-definition—on which attitude change may be based. I always cite, in this connection, the title of the classic collection of children's definitions, *A Hole is to Dig*, because it describes so elegantly our tendency to define objects in terms of the way in which we characteristically act toward them. The action we take toward an object tends to become a salient characteristic of that object. It influences our subsequent interactions with the object and our receptivity to further information about it and thus, eventually, our evaluation of the object. For example, if we have acted in support of a particular policy, we will be inclined to define it in part as a policy that we have supported. This new definition, in turn, may contribute to a new evaluation of it as a policy that is worthy of our support. Such an outcome can be understood in terms of the usual ways in which information is processed, without invoking a special need for consistency. I am simply proposing that our own

action toward an object represents one important datum about that object which enters into our evaluation of it.

When the object is another person or group, our own effect on the other—that is, what the other did in response to our actions and especially in response to our influence attempts—becomes a particularly salient item of information about the other. This is largely so because we know—or at least we think we know—what caused the other's actions when they are in response to our initiative. Similarly, the effect the other had on us is also a salient item of information about the other.

The information provided by contemplation of our action also has relevance for our self-definition. In line with a Bemian analysis, if we act toward an object in a certain way, we will (given the proper stimulus conditions) attribute to ourselves the corresponding attitude. Beyond that, if the action touches on central concerns, it will contribute to our more enduring definition of the self. Thus, repeated friendly association with another person will lead us to define ourselves as the other's friend; repeated participation in protests and demonstrations will lead us to define ourselves as activists or radicals. Our conception of the kinds of persons we are, in turn, plays a major role in determining our future actions and interactions. Thus, by being integrated into the person's self-definition, the action-generated attitude gains stability and generality.

Real-life Consequences

Most actions, at least outside of the laboratory, have consequences beyond the immediate situation. They create new realities; they change the social and often the physical environment in which we find ourselves. When taking action, therefore, we prepare ourselves psychologically for its anticipated consequences. At the very least, for example, we can anticipate having to explain and defend our action to others. In preparation for such an eventuality, we may review the issues involved in the action, rehearse the opposing arguments, and reassess our own attitudes toward the object of the action. Out of this process, attitude change may emerge, particularly since we are motivated to find arguments supportive of the action we have taken. If we not only know these arguments, but actually believe them, our ability to offer a comfortable and convincing defense of our action is further enhanced.

The motivation to bring our attitude into line with our action is especially strong if the action commits us to continuing association or public identification with the object and hence, at least implicitly, to future action in support of it. Many simple acts have this consequence—such as buying a product, making a pledge, or allowing our names to be placed on a mailing list. Of special interest, however, are those actions that involve commitment to a new role, such as the act of joining an organization, moving into a new neighborhood, starting a new job, or entering a training program. These actions represent long-term commitments which would be costly to break; they involve us in an extensive set of role relationships; and they often become salient features of our public identities. Under the circumstances, the development and strengthening of appropriate attitudes in preparation for the new role becomes particularly crucial. We are open to and actively search for new information that lends attitudinal support to our action and thus makes our anticipated role performance more effective, more comfortable, and more rewarding. In short, these preparatory processes are likely to facilitate attitude change in the direction of the action taken and of the future actions anticipated (Kelman, 1962a).

Not only the anticipated but also the actual consequences of action generate motivations for attitude change, particularly when the action takes the form of commitment to a new role. The requirements of the new role produce strong forces toward reexamining our attitudes and making them congruent with the expected role performance. Thus, for example, the workers in Lieberman's (1956) study who become foremen have to make choices and take actions in keeping with their new status; effective performance depends on the extent to which they develop the appropriate attitudes. Also, as an integral part of their new roles, they have to defend the position of management, which makes it necessary that they know it and probable that they will adopt it. Of equal importance is the fact that others tend to cast them into the role of spokespersons for management and expect them to take management-oriented positions; such role casting usually has the self-fulfilling effect of binding people into the role so that they become what others expect them to be. To take another example, the white housewives who moved into an interracial housing project in the Deutsch and Collins (1951) study were motivated to reexamine their racial attitudes because they were now involved in regular interaction with black neighbors, because they were called upon to defend their decisions to move

into the project, and because they were identified by others as residents in interracial housing. In short, as a consequence of action, we may find ourselves in new roles. Enactment of the role sets into motion various forces conducive to attitude change, not the least of which are the expectations conveyed by others and the tendency of others to attribute certain attitudes to us and to treat us accordingly.

On the informational side, a frequent consequence of action is to provide us with new experiences, which may expose us to new information. The experiences may be in the form of more extensive contact with the attitude object itself. Thus the workers-turned-foremen in Lieberman's study, by virtue of their new roles, have increased contact with management and hence access to new information about it. Since they are open to information supportive of their new roles, it is quite likely that the increased contact will provide them with raw material for attitude change in the direction of management. The white housewives in the Deutsch and Collins study have the opportunity to interact with their black counterparts in daily activities and around common concerns, which represents new experiences for them. Whether such contacts will produce more favorable attitudes depends on what happens in the course of the interaction and how motivated the participants are to receive favorable information. The literature on intergroup contact suggests that contact at least provides the potential for new experiences conducive to attitude change. Favorable change is most likely if the contact meets certain conditions—for example, if it involves equal-status interactions and if it is sanctioned by legitimate authorities (conditions, incidentally, that were met in the Deutsch and Collins study).

Action may also provide us with new social experiences that indirectly yield new information about the object. After taking action in support of a particular group or policy, for example, we may receive praise from others—or at least we may find that the anticipated disapproval is not forthcoming. We may discover that many more people than we expected—at least within our relevant reference groups—agree with the stand we have taken. These new items of information about group consensus and about the social acceptability of our action may contribute to attitude change via the process of identification. In short, as we integrate new experiences consequent to the action—whether these involve direct contact with the object or contact with social norms about it—forces toward attitude change may well be set into motion.

In sum, the analysis of the dynamics of action, as summarized in Table 2, suggests how action potentially creates the conditions necessary for attitude change. By reducing the person's psychological distance from the attitude object, by requiring the person to decide and perform, by entering as a new datum into the person's life-space, and by producing real-life consequences for the person, action brings together informational and motivational processes in ways that may be conducive to attitude change. In and of itself, however, this analysis does not tell us whether, in any given case, change will indeed occur and, if so, what form it will take. In order to make such predictions, we need a functional analysis of the particular case, which takes into account the nature of the attitude, the nature of the action, the nature of the situation in which the action takes place, and the nature of the experiences the person has in the course of the action and subsequent to it.

EFFECTS OF DISCREPANT ACTION

To illustrate the possibilities of a functional analysis of the effects of action on attitude, I shall turn to a special case of action—namely, what has been called discrepant or counterattitudinal action. So far, I have dealt with action broadly, without making any systematic distinctions between actions that are congruent with the person's original attitude and actions that are discrepant from them. In fact, at several points, I have referred to the possibility that an action may be discrepant from some components of the attitude and congruent with others. For the present purposes, however, I shall keep the discussion within the framework of discrepant action, since this has been the primary subject for experimental research in this field, particularly research in the dissonance tradition. The empirical efforts at developing a functional approach to these problems, in which my colleagues and I have been engaged (Kelman, Baron, Sheposh, & Lubalin, Note 1), have similarly concentrated on discrepant action.

The term discrepant action can be used to refer to any action toward an object that is out of keeping (from the actor's own point of view) with the actor's attitude toward that object. In speaking of discrepant action, we usually have in mind actions that in some way "fall short" of the attitude—that is, fail to live up to the level of

commitment that the attitude represents. Such failure may occur because actions in line with the attitude appear too costly and difficult, or because they are inhibited by situational pressures, or because their anticipated consequences are too negative, or because competing motives impel the person to follow a different course. Discrepant actions, however, may also take the form of actions that "surpass" the person's attitude—that are at a higher level of commitment than that implied by the attitude. Due to situational pressures or social facilitation, we may act in ways that are more generous, more courageous, or more tolerant than our attitude requires. I shall return to a brief discussion of such "surpassing" actions in a later section of this paper. For now, however, I shall limit the discussion to discrepant action in the more customary sense of action that falls short of the attitude—action that is in some respect "deficient."

Discrepant action is often the occasion for attitude change for the various reasons that have been discussed in the preceding sections. The dynamics of discrepant action (viewed here as a special case of action in general) help to create the conditions that are necessary if attitude change is to occur. Whether or not these conditions will actually lead to change depends on the specific motivational and informational processes that are generated by the action. The occurrence and specific nature of change must be understood, in functional terms, as the outcome of our efforts to process new information in the light of the various motivational forces that the discrepant action has brought into play. This functional view contrasts with the view of attitude change as a reaction to the discrepancy as such, that is, as a way of removing the inconsistency between the action and the initial attitude.

Although a functional analysis does not regard attitude change as merely a way of closing the gap between action and attitude that had been created by the discrepant action, it does concern itself with the existence of this gap as an element in the analysis. I have already alluded to this in my earlier discussion of the dynamics of action, particularly in the discussion of action as a new datum in the person's life-space. In a functional analysis, we would ask what it means to people when they find themselves engaged in (or having engaged in) a particular discrepant action. What are the perceived implications of that action for their various efforts to cope with environmental demands and to achieve their diverse goals? In particular, what implications does this action have for their self-

evaluation and for their ability to deal with future events and relationships? Only by knowing what specific dilemmas (if any) the discrepant action has created for individuals and what specific motivational systems it has thrown out of balance can we predict whether attitude change is likely to occur and what form it is likely to take.

Within this perspective, it is probably somewhat misleading to speak of discrepancy between action and *attitude*—i.e., to describe a discrepant action as one that falls short of the person's attitude. To be sure, we are dealing with situations in which the action is somehow inconsistent with the initial attitude (or at least with the person's modal level of commitment). But, given the nature of attitudes and the relationship between attitude and action that I have been expounding, such inconsistencies are not necessarily experienced as deficiencies. They may simply reflect fluctuations in the attitude across different situations or shifts in the attitude in response to new opportunities or necessities. What lends motivational significance to a discrepant act is not discrepancy between action and attitude as such, but discrepancy between action and some kind of *standard* or *expectation*. Thus, for the purposes of a functional analysis, a discrepant action is an action that falls short of social norms, moral values, role expectations, personal standards, or private interests.

The approach to discrepant action that has just been outlined is linked to a general conception of cognitive inconsistency that differs from dissonance theory and certain other consistency models. According to this conception, inconsistency serves primarily as a *signal* rather than as a motive (Kelman & Baron, 1968a). It alerts us to the possibility that our coping mechanisms may not be functioning at their best and that we may not be moving most effectively toward the achievement of our goals. In response, the individual may engage in an active searching process, designed to assess the functional implications of the inconsistency. Whether this process leads to attempts to reduce the inconsistency and what specific mechanisms of inconsistency reduction (or inconsistency maintenance)—including attitude change—are employed, depends on the *specific* functional implications that are revealed (Kelman & Baron, 1968b).

Starting with these assumptions, a functional analysis of discrepant action must focus on the specific content of that action in order to assess its functional implications from the actor's point of view. Thus, a functional approach is based on qualitative distinctions between discrepant actions in terms of the kinds of problems

or dilemmas they create for the individual. The nature of the dilemma determines the individual's reaction and hence, among other things, whether or not attitude change will be part of that reaction—and, if it is, what kind of change it will be.

Moral and Hedonic Dilemmas

In some of the research that my colleagues and I have carried out, we distinguish between two kinds of dilemmas that discrepant action might create for the individual: moral dilemmas and hedonic dilemmas (Kelman, Baron, Sheposh, & Lubalin, Note 1). A moral dilemma arises if the person performs an action that violates a moral precept or value. A hedonic dilemma arises if the person performs an action that turns out to be unrewarding, entailing costs that exceed the benefits. We assume that these two kinds of actions have very different motivational implications for the individual and confrontation with them is likely to produce rather different consequences.

Violation of a moral precept or of an important value carries direct implications for central aspects of the person's self-image. Morally discrepant action is likely to arouse guilt and to lead to efforts at expiation or reparation. If opportunities for such resolutions are unavailable to us, we may change our attitudes toward the object in a way that would justify our action. Alternatively, we may strengthen our original attitude as a way of reducing the likelihood of future lapses. In either event, changes are likely to be relatively persistent and to be accompanied by an active search for information in support of the new attitude.

In contrast, hedonically discrepant actions create more transitory and peripheral concerns. To some extent, they may affect our self-esteem, in that they may raise questions about our competence in protecting our own interests. The major reaction, however, is likely to be a sense of inequity due to insufficient rewards for our efforts. If this experience is part of an ongoing relationship or represents a repetitive pattern, then it may set an attitude change process into motion. If it is a relatively isolated event, however, then one way of dealing with the discomfort is by a memorial adjustment: we may remember the experience as more rewarding or less effortful than it was, thus justifying our action. Such a change is likely to be transitory and low in generality.

Variables that affect the arousal and reduction of dissonance, such as reward and effort, can be expected to have differential effects in the two types of situations. Thus, for example, it can be argued that the greater the reward we receive for a morally discrepant action, the greater our guilt and hence the greater the discomfort we experience. The greater the effort involved on our part, the less the psychological discomfort, since effort can serve as a form of expiation. These predictions of the effects of reward and effort are opposite to those made by dissonance theory. On the other hand, for hedonically discrepant actions, we would predict, along with dissonance theory, that discomfort would be greatest under low reward and high effort. Similarly, differential predictions for moral and hedonic dilemmas can be made about the variables that control different mechanisms of resolving these dilemmas, including attitude change.

We carried out several experiments to test the effects of different variables on arousal and resolution of moral and hedonic dilemmas. In one such experiment (Baron, Kelman, Sheposh, & Johnson, Note 2; for a briefer description, see Kelman & Baron, 1974), the independent variable of interest was the attractiveness of the inducing agent (i.e., of the experimenter, who in this case was responsible for inducing the subjects' discrepant action).

The basic design of the experiment can be seen readily from the column and row headings in Table 3. Two types of situations were created experimentally, one conducive to moral dissonance and the other to hedonic dissonance. In each of these, the degree of dissonance arousal and the attractivenenss of the inducing agent were varied. In both situations, the substantive attitude issue concerned government interference with speakers on state campuses—an issue that was a live topic at the time on the campus where the experiment was carried out.

In the moral dissonance situation, the subjects (female undergraduates) conducted an interview on state control over campus speakers with another subject (a male student), who was in fact a confederate giving standardized answers. Subjects were asked to reinforce statements by the interviewee that favored state control— a position contrary to their own. In the course of the interview, they were able to observe the interviewee shifting his statements in the direction of the reinforced position. Thus, the subjects were led to believe that they were actively supporting a position contrary to their own by reinforcing another subject's shift toward that position—a shift that would, presumably, maintain itself outside the

Table 3*

Attitudes toward issue, task, and experiment as a function of degree of dissonance arousal and attractiveness of the inducing agent in moral and hedonic situations

	Moral Dissonance		Hedonic Dissonance	
	A. Attitude toward Central Issue			
	High Arousal	Low Arousal	High Arousal	Low Arousal
Attractive E	4.16	2.67	3.18	2.74
Unattractive E	2.63	2.74	2.92	2.26
	B. Attitude toward Wider Issue			
	High Arousal	Low Arousal	High Arousal	Low Arousal
Attractive E	3.16	2.97	2.87	2.86
Unattractive E	2.71	2.85	2.77	2.85
	C. Attitude toward Task			
	High Arousal	Low Arousal	High Arousal	Low Arousal
Attractive E	4.90	4.32	4.32	4.35
Unattractive E	4.12	4.99	5.20	3.40
	D. Attitude toward Experiment			
	High Arousal	Low Arousal	High Arousal	Low Arousal
Attractive E	5.61	5.25	4.64	4.72
Unattractive E	4.77	5.49	5.54	4.05

Note: $N = 9$ Ss per cell. The higher the score, the more positive the evaluation.

* From Kelman and Baron, 1974, p. 568. Reprinted from S. Himmelfarb & A. H. Eagly (Eds.), *Readings in Attitude Change* (1974), by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

laboratory. In the high arousal condition, subjects were required to give more frequent and clearer reinforcements to the discrepant position than in the low arousal condition. We assumed, therefore, that subjects in the high arousal condition would feel greater personal responsibility for the effect they were observing and thus greater guilt for betraying their own attitudes.

In the hedonic dissonance situation, subjects were exposed to the identical substantive information as in the moral dissonance situation. They read each of the questions from the interview and then listened to a recording of the standardized answer given by the confederate in the moral dissonance situation. They were assigned the tedious and uninteresting task of counting and listing various categories of words. In the high arousal condition, this task was made even more unpleasant by including white noise on the tape without, however, interfering with reception of the message.

Attractiveness of the inducing agent was manipulated by two means. Subjects heard the confederate describe the experimenter in highly positive or highly negative terms. In addition, to strengthen the manipulation of the unattractive-agent condition, subjects heard the experimenter in that condition make gratuitously disparaging remarks about the student newspaper. To establish linkage between the inducing agent and the induced action, the experimenter in all conditions mentioned his membership in an organization known to favor state control of campus speakers. Thus, it was clear that he personally favored the action taken by the subjects and that it reflected his own attitudes.

It was hypothesized that under conditions of high arousal of hedonic dissonance, the more *unattractive* the inducing agent, the greater the probability of attitude change toward the *action* and the general *situation*. When confronted with a hedonic dilemma, subjects are concerned about the fact that they have engaged in an unrewarding or unpleasant action. The less justified the action, the greater this concern, and hence the greater the tendency to make up in memory for what was missing in fact. Since the unattractive agent makes for less justification and greater dissonance, he should produce greater attitude change. In other words, with respect to evaluation of the action and the situation, we made a straight dissonance prediction here. On the other hand, we expected no systematic relationship between attractiveness of the agent and attitude toward the object or issue in the hedonic-dilemma situation, since these attitudes are not particularly linked to the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the action.

Under conditions of high arousal of moral dissonance, we hypothesized that the more *attractive* the inducing agent, the greater the probability of attitude change toward the *object* or the *issue*. The assumption here is that, in a moral-dilemma situation, subjects are concerned about the fact that they have violated their values. If they can convince themselves that the issue is not as important as they once thought, or that the other side is really more reasonable than they had believed it to be, then they do not have to feel as guilty any more. This particular dilemma is not especially affected by the attractiveness of the agent. Guilt is not increased because the agent was unattractive, nor is it reduced because the agent was attractive. The agent becomes relevant, however, as a source of inputs into subjects' reexamination of their attitudes toward the issue. It should be recalled that the experimenter made clear that he personally favored the induced action. Thus, he served not only as an inducing agent, but also as a source of communication. The general relationship found in communication studies therefore becomes applicable here: attractive agents are more influential, more likely to produce change in attitude toward the issue in the direction they favor. In short, then, we propose that subjects in the moral-dilemma situation focus on the object of their action, on the issue with which the action was concerned; they are motivated to change their attitudes on this issue as a way of reducing guilt. This change, however, is more likely to occur when it has the support of an attractive rather than an unattractive agent. These considerations have no bearing on attitudes toward the action or the situation, which should therefore not be systematically affected by moral dissonance as such.

These hypotheses were generally borne out, as can be seen from the summary of the main data presented in Table 3. In the hedonic-dissonance situation, under conditions of high arousal, the unattractive agent produced more favorable attitudes toward the task (Table 3C) and toward the experiment (Table 3D) than did the attractive agent, as expected.[6] Attitudes toward the issue, however, were not significantly affected by the attractiveness of the agent under hedonic dissonance. By contrast, under conditions of high arousal of moral dissonance, the attractive agent produced signifi-

6. The reversal under conditions of low arousal of hedonic dissonance was unexpected, as was the reversal under conditions of high arousal of moral dissonance. In both cases, we had expected no systematic differences between the attractive and the unattractive agents. Possible explanations of these unexpected findings are offered in Kelman and Baron, 1974, pp. 571–572.

cantly more favorable attitudes toward the central issue than did the unattractive agent (Table 3A), as predicted. Results for attitude items less directly related to the central issue (Table 3B) show the same pattern, but fall short of statistical significance.

The data on attitudes toward the issue in the moral-dissonance situation (see the left-hand portion of Table 3A) are the most relevant to our general concern in this paper with the role of action in attitude change. Attitude toward the issue (i.e., the object of action) is, of course, what we generally have in mind when we speak of attitude change as a consequence of action. The moral-dissonance situation comes closest, in this experiment, to a situation involving action specifically directed to the attitude object (i.e., the issue of state control of campus speakers), and Table 3A presents the effects of the action on attitudes toward that object. The table shows a clear interaction effect: the upper-left cell, in which high arousal of moral dissonance is combined with an attractive agent, stands out in comparison to the other three cells of the sub-table. In fact, this is the only cell in which the mean value (4.16) represents agreement with a position favoring state control over campus speakers and in which there is evidence that attitude *change* has occurred at all. The means of the other three cells approximate very closely the baseline mean of 2.58 (representing a position against state control over campus speakers), obtained from a control group of 101 subjects drawn from the same population as the experimental subjects. Thus, it appears that only subjects in the high-arousal, attractive-agent condition changed their attitudes in the direction of the discrepant action and adopted a position in favor of state control.

The combination of high arousal of moral dissonance and an attractive source of communication represents a coming together of motivational and informational forces conducive to attitude change. The subjects in this particular condition are motivated to reexamine their attitudes because the guilt generated by their discrepant action leads to efforts to justify it; the information that an attractive source favors a different position on the issue helps them to resolve their moral dilemma by modifying their own attitudes. Thus, these findings are consistent with my earlier argument that action is conducive to attitude change insofar as it provides the context for the simultaneous presence of challenging information and the motivation to consider that information. I would not wish to claim, on the basis of the present findings, that high arousal of moral disso-

nance—even in combination with strong informational forces—
would necessarily lead to attitude change. A great deal depends on
the significance of the principles that have been violated and their
centrality in the person's daily life, as well as on the alternative
mechanisms for reducing guilt and justifying the discrepant action
that are available in the particular situation. What the findings do
suggest is that morally discrepant action creates motivations for
change in attitude toward the object of that action; understanding of
these motivations can provide a systematic basis for determining the
probability of attitude change, the nature of the change, and the
variables controlling the magnitude of change.

My colleagues and I have carried out several other experiments on
discrepant action, designed to explore the effects of such variables
as effort and incentive on the arousal and resolution of moral and
hedonic dissonance (Kelman, Baron, Sheposh, & Lubalin, Note 1).
The results have been mixed, confirming some of our hypotheses
while leaving others unconfirmed. On the whole, however, they
tend to support the logic of the distinction between moral and
hedonic dilemmas: specifying the nature of the discrepant action—
i.e., the particular standard or expectation from which it deviates
and hence the type of dilemma it creates for the individual—helps
us predict people's emotional reactions to their own discrepant act,
the modes of resolution they are likely to employ, the probability
that resolution will involve attitude change (and if it does, which
attitudes will be affected), and the variables controlling the strength
of arousal and resolution. Further indirect support for the moral-
hedonic distinction is suggested by Eagly and Himmelfarb (1978,
pp. 533–534) in their review of recent studies of counterattitudinal
behavior. A number of studies have shown that the increased atti-
tude change predicted by dissonance theory occurs only when the
counterattitudinal behavior leads to aversive or unwanted conse-
quences.[7] The evidence is inconsistent, however, with respect to the
reversibility of attitude change if the unwanted consequences are
later removed. Eagly and Himmelfarb propose that removal of the
unwanted consequences may remove personal responsibility and

7. The moral-dissonance situation in our experiment, described above, provides
an example of unwanted consequences of discrepant action: the subjects were led to
believe that their discrepant action (reinforcing statements by the confederate with
which they disagreed) actually had an impact on the confederate's attitudes.

hence reverse the attitude change in situations involving hedonic dissonance, but not in situations involving moral dissonance.

The distinction between moral and hedonic dilemmas was derived on an ad hoc basis rather than through a systematic effort to develop a typology of discrepant actions. We originally came up with it in attempting to reconcile conflicting findings from two parallel experiments (Kelman & Baron, 1974). It also seems to capture some of the central characteristics of various experimental situations created in dissonance studies. As we move from this empirical distinction to a more systematic typology, it may be useful to ask what kinds of standards people deviate from when they engage in morally discrepant as compared to hedonically discrepant actions. I proposed above that it is the discrepancy between action and some kind of standard or expectation that lends motivational significance to a discrepant act. Now, both moral and hedonic dilemmas arise from actions that deviate from certain standards— indeed, more specifically, from certain social norms—but the nature of these standards or norms differs in the two situations. Moral dilemmas arise from actions that violate standards for our *conduct*. These standards are based on social norms—shared, to varying degrees, by the actors themselves—that determine how we are expected to act in different situations. Failures to live up to such expectations usually imply personal shortcomings on the part of the actors, although they can of course be attributed to situational causes. By contrast, hedonic dilemmas involve deviations from standards for the *outcome* of our actions. These standards are based, essentially, on the norm of equity, which leads us to expect outcomes commensurate with our inputs. Discrepancies from such expectations are generally attributed to external circumstances; they do not imply shortcomings on the part of the actors, except insofar as they suggest insufficient wisdom or assertiveness to protect themselves against exploitation. Clearly, moral and hedonic dilemmas represent very different psychological situations: they are generated by actions that deviate from two very different kinds of standards, they have different implications for self-evaluation and future planning, and they set different psychological processes into motion.

Deviation from Standards of Conduct

The category of actions that is exemplified by moral dilemmas—i.e., actions discrepant from standards of conduct—is itself complex and varied. In this section, I shall briefly describe an attempt to develop a more systematic typology of discrepant actions, all of which involve deviations from societal standards of conduct.[8] This typology, then, does not include hedonic dilemmas as such, but it further differentiates the notion of moral dilemma and it introduces an additional variety of actions that deviate from societal standards of conduct.

The scheme, summarized in Table 4, classifies types of discrepant action in terms of the societal standards of conduct from which they depart. The columns of Table 4 distinguish two behavioral dimensions on which the deviation from standards has occurred (respon-

Table 4*

A classification of types of discrepant action in terms of the societal standards from which they depart

		Behavioral Dimenson on which P's Departure from Societal Standards has Occurred	
		Responsibility	Propriety
Source of Standards from which P's Action Has Departed	External rules or norms (compliance-based)	Social fear	Embarrassment
	Role expectations (identification-based)	Guilt	Shame
	Values (internalized)	Regret	Self-disappointment

Note: Cell entries refer to the dominant emotional reactions that each type of discrepant action is hypothesized to arouse.

* From Kelman, 1974b. Reprinted from J. T. Tedeschi (Ed.), *Perspectives on Social Power* (1974), by permission of Aldine Publishing Company.

8. For a fuller discussion of this scheme, see Kelman, 1974b, pp. 149–160.

sibility and propriety); the rows distinguish three sources of the standards of conduct from which the person's action has deviated (external rules, role expectations, and social values); and the cell entries suggest the dominant emotional reactions aroused in the person by each of the six types of deviations.

The two dimensions distinguished in the columns of the table refer to domains of individual conduct that are socially defined and monitored. They are not meant to constitute an inclusive list of such domains of conduct. They do, however, represent two dimensions that are probably of universal concern, although societies may differ in the relative emphasis they place on one or the other. Societies have a definite stake in how their members behave on each of these dimensions and take considerable interest in assuring that members adhere to the standards of conduct governing the domain in question. For each dimension, qualitatively different patterns of socialization and means of social control are utilized.

The left column identifies discrepant actions that deviate from societal standards of responsibility (or morality). Most characteristically, these involve actions that cause harm to others or to society in general (e.g., by wasting valuable resources or failing to do productive work). Actions that are seen as disloyal to a cause or to one's group and failures to stand up for one's principles or beliefs would also come under this rubric. Actions causing harm to one's self (e.g., by excessive use of drugs or alcohol, or by dissipating one's energies) also tend to be treated as departures from standards of responsibility, perhaps because they are seen as wasting human resources on which society might otherwise be able to draw. The domain of responsibility is one in which "society" insists on the right to make members answerable (i.e., responsible) for their actions. The social controls exercised in this area typically include punishment or the threat of punishment, exclusion from "responsible" roles in the society, and disapproval in the form of anger.

The right column identifies discrepant actions that deviate from societal standards of propriety. Typically, these are actions deemed inappropriate (i.e., not "one's own") for someone in the actor's position—or, in many cases, for any adult in the society. They represent a failure to live up to a particular personal image, whether it be a strictly public image, or a self-image, or a self-image dependent on public confirmation. Although people are not accountable for actions in the domain of propriety in the same formal sense as they are in the domain of responsibility, behavior in this domain

is also subject to social controls. "Society" has an interest in assuring that its members live up to their images, since the smoothness and predictability of social interaction depends on their doing so. The social controls typically exercised in this domain include ridicule, ostracism, and disapproval in the form of contempt.

The three sources of standards distinguished in the rows of Table 4 are linked to the three processes of social influence described in my earlier writings (Kelman, 1958, 1961). Thus, at the level of the individual, the source of standards refers to the particular influence process by which the person originally adopted the standard (or, to put it differently, by which the person acquired the attitudes) from which the discrepant action now deviates. The first row identifies actions that deviate from compliance-based expectations, the second row identifies actions that deviate from identification-based expectations, and the third row identifies actions that deviate from internalized expectations. At the level of the social system, the three sources of standards refer to three components of the system in which standards might be embedded: external rules, role expectations, and values. The three rows, then, indicate the level (compliance, identification, or internalization) at which the particular societal standards of responsibility or propriety are represented in a given individual's cognitive structure.[9]

Put in more general functional terms, Table 4 classifies discrepant actions according to the *nature of the action* and the *nature of the attitude* toward the object with which the person enters the action situation. Thus, the columns distinguish between actions that are perceived as irresponsible and those perceived as improper. The rows distinguish between actions that deviate from compliance-based, from identification-based, and from internalized attitudes. The latter distinction, as mentioned in earlier sections of this paper, represents differences in the degree to which the person's original attitudes toward the object are individualized and independent of situational demands.

9. I do not assume that a given individual operates only at one of these levels. At which level an individual operates in a particular situation may depend on the particular behavior involved. For example, the same person, within the domain of responsibility, may be complying to the rules of cheating, but may have internalized standards of loyalty to one's friends. Even with respect to the same specific behavior, a person may have adopted standards at different levels; all of these may be elicited at the same time, although one or the other may predominate, depending on the nature of the situation.

Each of the six types of discrepant action distinguished in Table 4 should present a distinct pattern of reaction, predictable from the particular interaction of row and column that it represents. First, a violation of societal standards should arouse qualitatively different concerns and emotional responses in people, depending on the socially defined domain whose standards they violated and the level at which they had originally adopted those standards. (Hypotheses about the different concerns likely to be aroused as a function of the level at which the violated standards had originally been adopted can be derived from the theoretical distinctions between compliance, identification, and internalization. Thus, in the first row of Table 4, one would expect people to be primarily concerned with the way others may react to their deviations; in the second row, with the implications of their deviations for their relationships to groups in which their self-definitions are anchored; and in the third row, with the intrinsic implications of their actions, matched against their personal value systems.) Second, depending on the type of discrepant action involved, people should go about handling the concerns and resolving the dilemmas aroused in different ways. For each cell, then, it should be possible to specify what people are likely to do when they find themselves deviating from societal standards—both to avoid or minimize the consequences of deviation, and to rectify the situation and come to grips with it psychologically.

The dominant emotional reactions aroused in the actor by actions that are socially defined as irresponsible can be described, respectively, as social fear, guilt, and regret (see left column of Table 4).

(1) When societal standards for responsible conduct have been adopted at the level of compliance, the concern created by deviation will focus primarily on the way others will react—i.e., on the social consequences of the discrepant action. People will seek to avoid or minimize punishment and disapproval by covering up, so as to evade discovery; or, if discovered, by denying responsibility for the action; or, failing that, by engaging in maneuvers designed to minimize the severity of the consequences—such as introducing extenuating circumstances in order to reduce their degree of responsibility, or ingratiating themselves with others (perhaps through apology or confession) in order to minimize the punishment to be administered to them.

(2) When standards for responsible conduct are identification-based, the emotional reaction to deviation can best be described as

guilt. The concern created by deviation in this case focuses not on the object that has been harmed or the value that has been violated (as it does in the case of regret, to be described below), but primarily on the actor's relationship to the social system and self-definition within it. The discrepant action has thrown this relationship into question and undermined the actor's self-concept as a well-integrated, securely positioned member of society. The core meaning of this reaction is very well conveyed by the German word *Schuld*, which means both guilt and debt. Through the discrepant action, the person has incurred a debt to those harmed and, most important, to society. However, the actor is not just concerned with being restored to the good graces of others, but with reestablishing his or her own self-definition as a worthy member of society. Though the standards violated are external, they have been introjected (in the Freudian sense) and guilt may therefore create a considerable amount of inner turmoil. One way of dealing with the consequences of deviation is to persuade ourselves that our action was in fact not out of keeping with social expectations. For example, we may conclude that the action was justified, because the person we harmed deserved to be harmed or the cause we abandoned was ill-conceived, or that the action—at least in this form and under these circumstances—is generally considered to be acceptable. To the extent that we can redefine the action along such lines—and especially, find social support for this redefinition—our "debt to society" is cancelled and our guilt reduced. Where such resolutions are unavailable, we must find ways of reinstating ourselves in the social order and reestablishing the desired relationship to it. This can be accomplished through compensation of the victim, by means that are socially defined and often publicly administered, or through other types of expiation and reparation that allow people to pay their "debt to society." In other words, guilt is often reduced through the use of an accounting system that enables people to make up for their deviations and regain their place in society. Confession can also serve as a way of dealing with guilt and restoring our position in society since it represents a form of expiation (in that we humble ourselves), a renewed commitment to the standards that we violated, and a way of separating the transgressing self from the normal self. If people despair of the possibility of reestablishing the desired relationship to the society, their guilt may express itself through varying degrees of self-punishment.

(3) When standards for responsible conduct are internalized and hence integral parts of a personal value system, the concern created by deviation will focus primarily on the object that we have harmed by our discrepant action. From a long-range point of view, we are also likely to be concerned about the implications of the action for our ability to live up to our values. One characteristic reaction in this case is to seek ways of correcting the wrong that has been done—not simply by compensating the injured party according to a socially established formula, but by exploring all necessary steps for counteracting and minimizing the harmful consequences of the action. Another type of reaction is repentance, involving not only remorse for the wrong that has been done, but also a resolution to avoid similar actions in the future. In making such a resolution, we may engage in a process of self-examination in order to understand why we failed to live up to our own values and to determine how we might want to change ourselves.

The dominant emotional reactions aroused in the actor by actions that are socially defined as improper can be described, respectively, as embarrassment, shame, and self-disappointment (see right column of Table 4).

(1) When societal standards for proper conduct are based on compliance, the emotional reaction to deviation can be described as embarrassment. The deviation takes the form of a failure to live up to our self-presentation, by publicly behaving in a way that falls short of the expectations that go with a specific role to which we lay claim or with the general role of an adult in the society (e.g., by showing ourselves to be incompetent, inadequate, clumsy, or socially maladroit). The concern caused by deviation in this case focuses not on our own sense of competence or adequacy, but on our public image—on the possibility that others will react negatively to our behavior and disapprove of us. We may be particularly concerned that others will draw conclusions about our general characteristics from our failure in this specific situation. People seek to minimize disapproval by covering up the discrepant action—by pretending that it did not happen or that it did not mean what it seemed to convey (e.g., they may pretend that they never seriously claimed competence in the task in which they fell short). If failure cannot be denied, they may try to minimize its implications by finding ways of demonstrating that they possess the competence

that has just been thrown into question. Another way of dealing with embarrassment is self-ridicule, which has the effect of disarming others, of showing our own control of the situation, and of communicating that we find the discrepant action funny because it is so uncharacteristic of us.

(2) When standards for proper conduct are identification-based, the emotional reaction to deviation can be described as shame. In this case, failure to live up to our self-presentation exposes what we regard as a possible underlying shortcoming. Concern focuses not merely on our public image—on the way others, in the immediate interaction situation, will react to the deviation—but on the implications of the deviation for a role in which our self-definition is anchored. Our failure raises questions about our embeddedness in the role, our ability to live up to its expectations, and thus our long-term place in the social system. As in the case of guilt, one way of dealing with the consequences of deviation is to persuade ourselves that our action was in fact not inconsistent with role expectations. For example, we may attribute our inadequate performance to external causes, or we may conclude that, under the prevailing circumstances, our performance was in fact acceptable. To the extent that we can redefine the action along such lines and find social support for this redefinition, we have nothing to be ashamed of and our place in the social system is secure. When such resolutions are unavailable, we must find ways of reestablishing our relationship to society, which has been threatened. This can be accomplished through some attempt to compensate for our failing— for example, by achieving success in other aspects of role performance. If people's demands on themselves are excessive and they find it impossible to reestablish the desired relationship to society, their reaction may take the form of self-contempt.

(3) When standards for proper conduct are internalized and rooted in a personal value system, the concern created by deviation will focus primarily on the performance of the task or enactment of the role in which we have fallen short. We are not so much concerned about our social standing or the solidity of our relationship to society as we are disappointed in ourselves—in our inability to live up to our own standards of quality and our own definition of what is required for proper task performance or role enactment. One characteristic reaction to such self-disappointment is to examine our

behavior with an eye to understanding where we have failed and how we might improve in the future. Another possible reaction is reexamination of our standards, in order to see whether we have imposed unrealistic expectations on ourselves, which may lead to a revision of those standards accompanied by a greater degree of self-acceptance.

Given the different dilemmas created by the six types of discrepant action that I have just described and the ways in which people characteristically cope with these dilemmas, what is the likelihood of attitude change in each case? Whether or not attitude change can be expected to occur, the precise nature of that change, and the particular attitudes that are likely to be affected can be derived from a functional analysis of these different situations. Such an analysis would reveal in what way attitude change might emerge from and contribute to people's efforts to deal with the consequences of their discrepant action. I have not developed a systematic set of hypotheses along these lines, but I can illustrate the general logic of the approach.

When the discrepant action involves violation of external rules or compliance-based standards, we would not expect attitude change as a coping mechanism per se, since the concern here is primarily with manipulating the reactions of others rather than with maintaining congruity between action and attitude. The experience itself and the concern it arouses may, however, produce certain changes in attitude toward relevant policies or practices. For example, marijuana users, concerned about discovery, may become more actively committed to the legalization of marijuana, both because their own experience has sensitized them to the issue and because such a policy would protect them from negative sanctions.

When the discrepant action involves violation of role expectations or identification-based standards, we are most likely to find attitude change as a form of retrospective justification for the action, as postulated by dissonance theory and qualified by our analysis of moral dilemmas. Change may occur in attitudes toward the object or the issue involved in the action; for example, to the extent that we can devalue the person harmed or the cause betrayed by our action, or the task on which our performance fell short, our level of guilt or shame would be reduced. Alternatively, we may change our attitude toward the action itself, persuading ourselves that it was in fact consistent with role requirements, at least under the prevailing circumstances. Such a change may be accompanied by a shift in

reference group, bringing a different set of standards into play. In some situations, the opportunity for such attitude changes—justifying the action or making it more acceptable—is not readily available and people must confront the discrepancy between their action and role expectations. In these cases, they may actually change their attitudes in the direction of more favorable evaluation of the object or issue involved in the action; by way of compensating for their deviation, they may develop attitudes marked by exaggerated praise, uncritical loyalty, and ritualized devotion.

When the discrepant action involves violation of values or internalized standards, attitude change may occur as part of a process of self-examination, oriented toward preventing similar deviations or failures in the future. This process may produce a strengthened commitment to the values that have been violated by the discrepant action and to the attitude objects (persons, groups, causes, policies, or activities) linked to those values. It may also produce changes in certain self-attitudes. For example, we may decide that we need to alter our way of life, increase our efforts, or improve our skills in order to avoid repetition of our flawed behavior. Alternatively, we may decide that we have been setting unrealistic standards for ourselves and come to accept our limitations.

Some suggestive evidence for this analysis can be found in a study by Nancy Adler (Note 3), who interviewed women before and after they underwent induced abortions. In the initial interviews, she presented her respondents with three issues, corresponding to the three sources of standards from which the action of having an abortion might deviate: a compliance-based issue ("whether people might think less of you or avoid you if they found out that you had had an abortion"), an identification-based issue ("whether having an abortion is something that a good member of your group—for example, your family, your church, the people you associate with— would do"), and an internalization-based issue ("whether having an abortion violates your beliefs or values"). Respondents were asked to rate the extent of their concern with each of these issues and to indicate on which of the issues their predominant concern about the abortion focused. Prior concerns were then related to the respondents' reactions to their experiences, as reported in the post-abortion interviews.

Hypotheses about emotional and behavioral responses as a function of the nature of prior concern were derived from the scheme described above. These hypotheses received partial support from

the data. Adler did not derive or test hypotheses about the amount or nature of attitude change as a function of prior concern. However, some indirect evidence on the different attitudinal effects of the abortion was provided by respondents' hypothetical policy choices, obtained in the post-abortion interviews. Respondents were asked to choose between three hypothetical programs that the State of Massachusetts might adopt: a program designed to increase the *availability of abortion*, a program designed to increase the *acceptance of abortion*, and a program designed to increase the availability and acceptance of *birth control*. Adler predicted that women predominantly concerned about the compliance-based issue would tend to choose the first program, since they would want to change the social environment so that abortion would no longer be negatively sanctioned; women predominantly concerned about the identification-based issue would tend to choose the second program, since they would want to change the acceptability of abortion so that their own relationships with others would not be jeopardized by their actions; and women predominantly concerned about the internalization-based issue would tend to choose the third program, since they would be interested in preventing similar occurrences (unwanted pregnancies necessitating abortion) in the future.

The results were generally consistent with these predictions, as can be seen in Table 5. Women predominantly concerned with the compliance-based issue were most likely to choose programs designed to increase the availability of abortion and they did so more often than women in the other two groups; the differences, however, are very small. For the other two groups, the results are much stronger. Women predominantly concerned with the identification-based issue were most likely to choose programs designed to increase the acceptance of abortion and they clearly picked this option more often than the other groups. By contrast, only one out of 36 women concerned with the internalization-based issue chose a program designed to increase the acceptance of abortion; most often—and clearly more often than the other two groups—these women chose programs designed to encourage the use of birth control and thus avoid resort to abortion. This pattern of findings corresponds nicely to the logic of the distinction between the three types of discrepant action and the different kinds of attitude change they can be expected to elicit.

Table 5*

Cross-tabulation of predominant prior concern and choices of hypothetical program

		Predominant Prior Concern		
		Compliance- Based Issue	Identification- Based Issue	Internalization- Based Issue
Hypo- thetical Program Chosen	Abortion— Availability	7 (41.2%)	4 (36.4%)	14 (38.9%)
	Abortion— Acceptance	4 (23.5%)	5 (45.5%)	1 (2.8%)
	Birth Control	6 (35.3%)	2 (18.2%)	21 (58.3%)
		17	11	36

$x^2 = 14.29$
$df = 4$
$p = .007$

* From Adler, Note 3. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Much more needs to be done to refine and test the present scheme, which attempts to classify the important subset of discrepant actions that involve deviations from societal standards of conduct. To summarize, the scheme distinguishes discrepant actions in terms of the behavioral domain in which standards of conduct were violated (the nature of the action) and the source of the standards from which the action has deviated (the nature of the attitude). The six types of discrepant action thus identified produce different dilemmas for the actor, each characterized by a distinct pattern of emotional reactions to the deviation and of efforts at resolution designed to deal with the consequences of the deviation. These different patterns of reaction, in turn, provide the framework for predicting whether attitude change is a likely mechanism for dealing with the particular dilemma that has been aroused and, if so, which attitudes are likely to be affected and what the nature and durability of the attitude change are likely to be.

Action in Relation to Conflicted Attitudes

Another framework for analyzing the relationship between discrepant action and attitude change, which my colleagues and I have utilized, also starts with distinctions in the nature of the attitude from which the action deviates. However, it further recognizes that our attitudes toward an object are often conflicted, comprising—as I have already emphasized earlier in this paper—both approach and avoidance tendencies. In such cases, of course, we cannot speak unambiguously of attitude-action discrepancy. An action in support of the object, for example, would be discrepant with respect to the avoidance component of the attitude, but congruent with the approach component. The degree to which the person experiences the action as discrepant would depend on the strength of the avoidance component relative to the approach component.

The framework (first described in Kelman, 1962a) focuses on situations of induced action, in which people are caused—through the manipulation of situational forces—to act toward an object in ways they would not otherwise have acted, given the nature of their attitudes toward the object. Specifically, conceiving of our relationships to objects as varying along a dimension of "degree of positive association" (i.e., the degree to which we engage in actions that bring us into contact with the object and that involve active support of it), the framework applies to those situations in which we are somehow induced to take a step further along the dimension of positive association with the object than we were prepared to go (see Figure 1). The question is: under what conditions is such induced action likely to lead to attitude change? The answer, according to the present framework, depends on the slopes of the approach and avoidance gradients with respect to degree of positive association.

Let us assume that the strength of both approach and avoidance tendencies toward the object increases as a direct function of degree of positive association with the object. If one of the gradients is steeper than the other, the two may cross at some point along the dimension of positive association, creating a situation of maximal conflict. There are two ways in which this can happen, with different implications for the probable effect of induced action on attitude change.

The first situation, depicted in Figure 2, is one in which the avoidance gradient is steeper than the approach gradient. In such a

Position
implied by
induced
action

Position con-
sistent with
existing
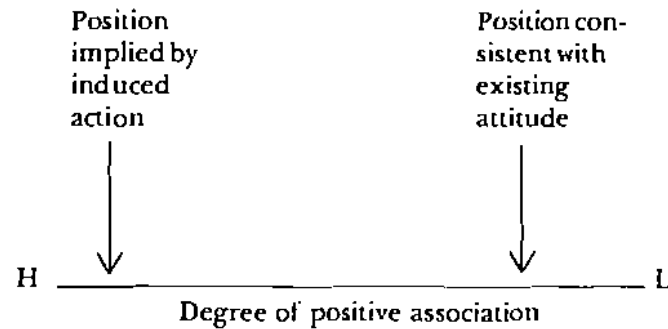attitude

H _____ L

Degree of positive association

Figure 1. Induced action as increase in the degree of positive association.

situation, we would normally move up to the point at which the two gradients cross (since approach tendencies outweigh avoidance tendencies in this region), but we would experience conflict once we reached this point. The crossover point represents a stable equilibrium (Miller, 1944): if for any reason we moved beyond this point, we would soon return to it because we would find ourselves in a region in which avoidance outweighed approach. Thus if we have been induced, through temporary situational forces, to take an action that brings us beyond the point of conflict into a region of closer association with the object in which avoidance tendencies come more strongly to the fore, we are not likely to continue the association once the momentary forces have been removed. In other words, induced action propels us into a situation that is increasingly uncomfortable and from which we will escape as soon as possible. Under these circumstances, opportunities for attitude change are likely to be minimal; induction of action, therefore, is not expected to lead to attitude change. Examples fitting this pattern might involve individuals who intellectually accept (or toy with) certain positions or practices that go counter to the norms of their early (now relatively latent) reference groups; once they are induced to act on their intellectual beliefs, however, the contrary norms become salient and cause them to retreat (for more detail, see Kelman, 1962a).

The second situation, depicted in Figure 3, is one in which the approach gradient is steeper than the avoidance gradient. In such a situation, we would normally avoid any association with the object and we would not voluntarily move to the point at which the two
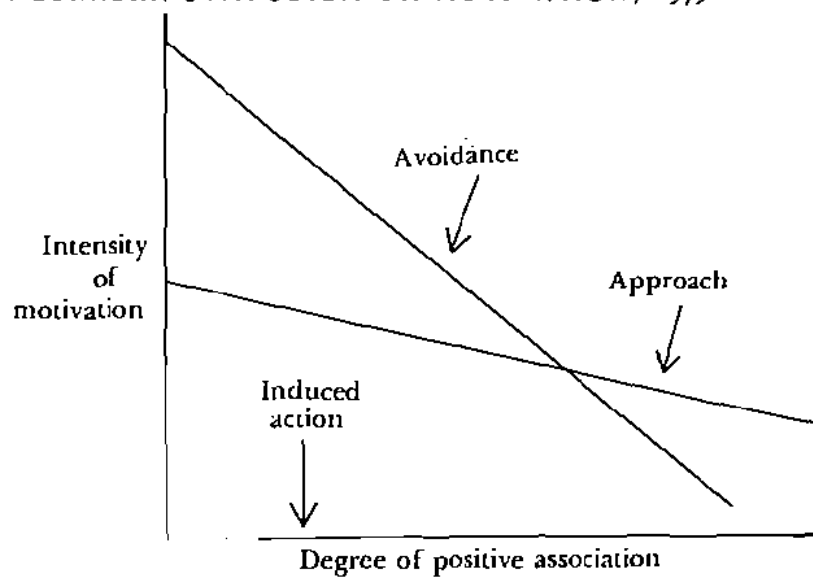
Figure 2. Attitude as a function of degree of positive association: avoidance steeper than approach.
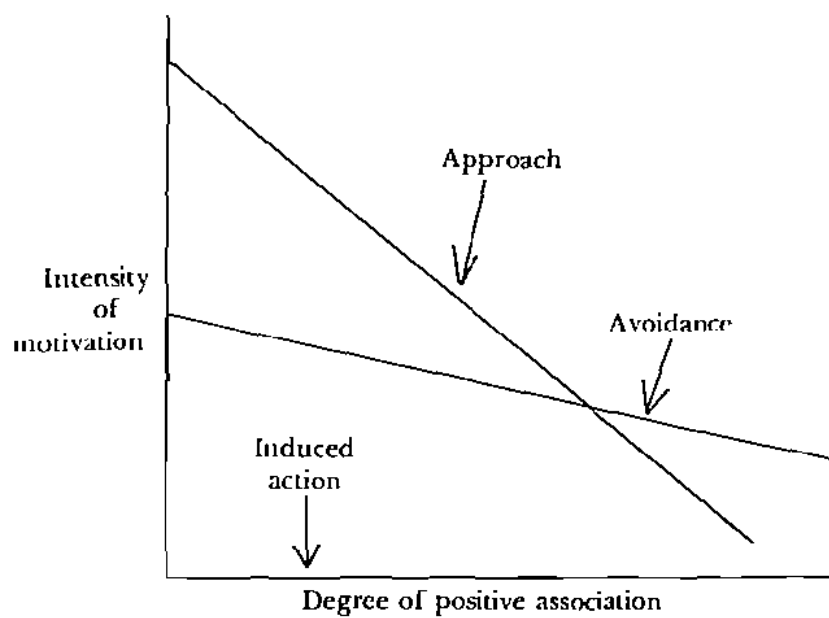

Figure 3. Attitude as a function of degree of positive association: approach steeper than avoidance.

gradients cross (since avoidance tendencies outweigh approach tendencies in this region). If, however, we have been induced by situational forces to take an action that brings us beyond the point of intersection, we find ourselves in a region in which approach tendencies outweigh avoidance tendencies. We should be inclined, therefore, to remain in the situation even after the temporary pressures have been removed, and to continue associating with the object, behaviorally and affectively, thus exposing ourselves to opportunities for attitude change. Induction of action may be more difficult in this situation because of the initial resistance to any degree of positive association; if it is successful, however, it can be expected to lead to attitude change. Examples fitting this pattern might involve individuals who are relatively estranged from certain reference groups and disinclined to enact group-related roles; once they are induced to act out these roles, however, their group identifications become salient and cause them to continue their heightened level of involvement (for more detail, see Kelman, 1962a).

In sum, I have proposed that induced action is more likely to lead to attitude change if the approach component of the attitude is steeper than the avoidance component (Figure 3); it is less likely to lead to attitude change if the avoidance component is steeper than the approach component (Figure 2). The important question then is: what variables determine the steepness of these gradients? One factor that might be involved here is whether the particular attitude (approach or avoidance) is based on identification or internalization (Kelman, 1958, 1961).

To the extent that an attitude is internalized, it can be argued that the gradient of approach or avoidance along the dimension of degree of association should be relatively flat. Since internalized attitudes are integrated with our value system, they should be relatively unaffected by such situational cues as degree of association with the object at the moment. Approach tendencies based on a view of the object as conducive to maximizing our values should remain more or less equal in strength at all levels of association, as should avoidance tendencies based on a view of the object as detrimental to value maximization.

On the other hand, for identification-based attitudes the gradient of approach or avoidance along the dimension of degree of association should be relatively steep. Since identification-based attitudes are tied to our being in the role (i.e., are aspects of role enactment),

they should vary considerably as a function of such situational cues as degree of association with the object. Approach or avoidance tendencies toward an object linked to the expectations that circumscribe one of our roles should manifest themselves more strongly under conditions of active association with the object. Both our awareness of role expectations with regard to the object, and the strength of these expectations themselves, increase as the degree of association with the object increases. In short, the manifestation of identification-based attitudes is more dependent on situational cues, and hence varies more sharply with the degree to which the situation brings role requirements into salience—which, in turn, varies with the degree of association with the object. In keeping with this logic, the types of cases I mentioned above as exemplifying the avoidance-steeper-than-approach situation (Figure 2) are ones in which avoidance is based on the person's relationship to important reference groups (i.e., identification-based). Similarly, the types of cases exemplifying the approach-steeper-than-avoidance situation (Figure 3) are ones in which approach is anchored in important reference groups. (In both instances, it should be noted, these attitudes—whether avoidance or approach—are anchored in relatively latent reference groups, i.e., groups that do not constitute the person's key membership groups at the moment.)

These considerations can be summed up in the following hypotheses: (1) Induction of action is more likely to lead to attitude change if the approach component of the person's relationship to the object is identification-based than if it is internalized. (2) Induction of action is more likely to lead to a reversion to the original level of association and less likely to lead to attitude change if the avoidance component of the person's relationship to the object is identification-based than if it is internalized.

Some years ago, we carried out a role-play experiment to test these hypotheses (to be published in Kelman, Baron, Sheposh, & Lubalin, Note 1).[10] The subjects were male and female students in a small denominational junior college, preparing for the ministry or religious instruction. In the first session of the experiment, our purpose was to create attitudes toward a hypothetical organization called the Association for Civic Education (ACE). We told the sub-

jects that we were simulating the process of attitude formation by giving them the kinds of information about ACE that people often find in the media when a new organization is established. Each subject then received a "fact sheet" containing two types of information: a series of brief statements about ACE's stand on issues related to several values important to this population (as ascertained in a preliminary study); and a series of nonsubstantive statements evaluating ACE attributed to several reference groups significant to this population (again as ascertained in the preliminary study). Two versions of the fact sheet were distributed, each designed to create a different conflict between values and reference groups (i.e., between internalization-based and identification-based components of the newly created attitudes). For one group of subjects, the items in the fact sheet indicated that ACE was positively evaluated by the relevant reference groups, but that its stands on the issues were negatively related to the subjects' values ($RG + / V -$). For the second group, the reverse information was provided, indicating negative evaluations by the reference groups, but positive stands with respect to the subjects' values ($RG - / V +$). Thus, according to our two hypotheses, the first condition was expected to maximize the probability of attitude change as a result of induced action, by creating attitudes with an identification-based approach component and an internalized avoidance component. The second condition was expected to minimize the probability of attitude change by creating attitudes with an identification-based avoidance component and an internalized approach component.

The second session, which was held between one and two weeks later, constituted the induced action situation for the subjects in the experimental conditions (30 males and 28 females).[11] The experimental subjects were assigned to small groups, each consisting of four or five members of the same sex and the same experimental condition. Each group was told that "we would like to study how the attitude formation process is influenced by a person's active involvement in an organization such as ACE." Subjects were asked to play the roles of local district directors of ACE chapters who were

11. About half of the subjects from the first session served as controls in this session. Like the experimental subjects, they were given a retention test and an opportunity to review the ACE fact sheet that they had read in the first session. They did not, however, engage in the induced action. Instead, they did their own reading or studying for fifty minutes and then filled out an attitude questionnaire about ACE. Data for control subjects will not be discussed here.

attending a strategy conference to counteract an anticipated concerted attack on ACE by its opponents. In defense of the organization, they were to formulate at least a dozen suggestions that would help give ACE a more favorable public image. The subjects were given thirty minutes to discuss ideas and plan strategies for this campaign. After the group discussion, subjects—still acting within their assigned roles—wrote individual proposals on how they would implement the recommendations of the conference in their home towns.

On completing the role-play session, subjects answered a questionnaire evaluating the conference (including their own contributions and those of other group members); an attitude questionnaire about ACE identical to one they had filled out at the end of the attitude-formation session; and an open-ended question explaining their attitude toward ACE. A measure of delayed attitude change was obtained about a month after the experimental sessions, when a little over half of the subjects returned to fill out ACE attitude questionnaires for a third time.

Some of the major findings of the study are summarized in Table 6. The mean scores of attitude change (measures 1 and 2), based on a 14-item semantic differential scale, reveal an unexpected sex difference. For the males, the pattern is entirely consistent with the theoretical predictions: those in the RG + /V − condition show significant attitude change immediately after the induced action, while those in the RG − /V + condition do not. Moreover, the change manifested by the males in the RG + /V − condition maintains itself on the delayed measure of attitude change. For the females, on the other hand, we find a reversal: significant immediate change in the RG − /V + condition, but none in the RG + /V − condition. The change manifested by the females in the RG − /V + condition, however, does not maintain itself; the delayed measure, in fact, shows a more negative evaluation of ACE than the questionnaire administered at the end of the first session.

To gain an understanding of the sex differences in attitude change, we examined the additional data that had been gathered from the experimental subjects. For each subject we had observer ratings of interactions during the group discussion, coder ratings of the written proposal and the open-ended explanation of attitude toward ACE, and self-ratings of the role-play session. In all, these different sources of data provided 52 separate scores per subject, which were subjected to a factor analysis that yielded ten factors.

Table 6

Conflict study: Comparison between males and females in each experimental condition

Conditions:	Reference Groups + Values −		Reference Groups − Values +	
Measures	Males	Females	Males	Females
1. Attitude change toward ACE immediately after action (Semantic Differential)	.73	− .11	.24	.63
2. Delayed attitude change (Semantic Differential)	.71	− .36	.15	− .45
3. Positive involvement in role (observation & self-rating)	2.41	−5.86	3.46	− .91
4. Satisfaction with conference (self-ratings)	.69	− .21	.44	−1.10
5. Active search for support of ACE (in proposal)	−5.37	−4.90	6.77	3.29
6. Attempt to minimize criticism of ACE (in proposal)	−1.06	− .95	− .01	2.26
7. Defensive assertion of closeness to ACE (proposal and ratings)	− .86	− .32	− .95	2.40
8. Perceived goodness of ACE ideals (in proposal)	− .55	−3.68	2.58	1.35
9. Perceived reference group support for ACE (in proposal)	2.19	1.01	− 1.60	−1.70
10. Indications of conflict toward ACE (in proposal and open-ended question)	1.23	.42	−1.98	.45

Table 6 (measures 3–10) presents mean scores for eight of these factors on which we obtained significant differences between sexes and/or between experimental conditions.

Looking first at the RG + /V − condition, we find a large and highly significant sex difference in positive involvement in the role (measure 3 in Table 6). Women were much more uncomfortable in the role playing and much more dissatisfied with their performance than men. In a similar vein, women expressed less satisfaction with the role-played conference in which they had just participated (measure 4). The difference seems to be related to the relative salience of the approach and avoidance components of the attitude toward ACE for the two sexes. As the men performed the induced action on behalf of ACE, they were cognizant of the reference group support for the organization (9), while they tended to minimize the disparity between ACE goals and their own values (8). By contrast, for the women the disparity between ACE goals and their own values was highly salient (8), while they paid relatively little attention to the reference group support for the organization (9). Thus it seems that the avoidance component loomed larger for the women as they were engaging in the induced action, which contributed to their discomfort and dissatisfaction, whereas the men found it easier to put the avoidance component aside and hence experienced little discomfort in performing their assigned roles. The difference can perhaps be understood in terms of traditional sex role distinctions. Conventional social expectations permit men (particularly in the occupational sphere) a certain amount of role playing, pretending, and cross-situational variability—even at the expense of their own values. Women, on the other hand, traditionally receive less social support for multiple role enactment and are expected to bring a stable and consistent set of values to their various interactions. The women in the experiment, therefore, may have found it difficult to play the assigned role, particularly when it required support for an organization whose goals were inconsistent with their values, while the men took such an assignment in their stride.

These findings suggest that, for the males, the RG + /V − manipulation produced, as expected, an approach-steeper-than-avoidance situation (Figure 3). According to the theoretical model, induced action under these circumstances should strengthen the positive component of the attitude and lead to a relatively stable attitude change. The attitude change data for the men (Table 6, measures 1 and 2) are consistent with the process postulated by the model. By

contrast, for the women, the RG +/V − manipulation seems to have produced an avoidance-steeper-than-approach situation (Figure 2). These findings suggest that, contrary to our original hypothesis, an internalized avoidance (or approach) tendency does not necessarily produce a flat gradient. We had assumed that the strength of internalized attitudes, because they are relatively independent of situational cues, would not be significantly affected by degree of association with the object, ignoring the possibility that different evaluations may be attached to different degrees or kinds of association with an attitude object. Thus, for example, if we consider an organization detrimental to our values, we may feel perfectly comfortable about listening to a lecture expounding its views, but we would feel very uncomfortable about publicly defending its programs. This would make for a steep avoidance gradient, not because the attitude is highly dependent on the strength of situational cues, but because the different degrees of association have qualitatively different meanings: listening to the lecture does not represent a betrayal of our values, while actively promoting the organization does. The absence of attitude change among the women in the RG +/V − condition (measures 1 and 2) is consistent with the assumption that they found themselves in an avoidance-steeper-than-approach situation. Induced action under these circumstances should create discomfort and a tendency to escape, thus minimizing the opportunities for attitude change.

In the RG −/V + condition, we again find significant sex differences in degree of comfort with the role-play performance: men showed more positive involvement in their roles (measure 3) and reported greater satisfaction with the conference (4). These differences must be understood, however, in terms of the particular form that the induced action took in this condition. The action gave subjects an excellent opportunity to counteract the lack of reference group support for ACE, since it called for suggestions of steps to improve the organization's public image. Both men and women proposed to undertake an active search for support of ACE, presumably aimed at persuading their reference groups that the organization was worthy of approval, but the men did so to a greater extent than the women (5). We might speculate that, in line with traditional sex role differences, the women felt less comfortable about active efforts to persuade the opposition and less confident that they would succeed in such efforts. Their proposals tended to be more defensive, aiming to minimize criticism of ACE (6). They experi-

enced greater conflict than the men in their attitudes toward ACE (10): they were less emphatic about the congruence of ACE goals with their own values (8) and probably less assured that they could neutralize reference group opposition by their own actions. The women also scored high on a factor that included both items expressing closeness to ACE and items indicating a preference for shortening the role-play session (7). Thus, their reaction seemed to combine a desire to escape from the situation with a recommitment to ACE—both apparent defenses against the pressures they felt in a situation that brought the conflict between values and reference groups into salience. The men gave no evidence of such a conflict, apparently because they felt confident that, through the active efforts spelled out in their proposals, they would be able to overcome the opposition of their reference groups.

These different reactions of the men and women are reflected in the attitude change data. In keeping with our prediction for the $RG - /V +$ condition, the men showed no significant attitude change—but clearly not because of discomfort generated by a steep avoidance gradient, as we had postulated. Rather, it would appear that the action provided no particular reason for them to change their attitudes toward ACE (which were already quite favorable); they chose instead to act on the environment. The women, on the other hand, did experience discomfort and sought to escape from the situation. Yet, unexpectedly, they manifested attitude change. The change, however, appears to have served primarily a defensive function in the action situation—allowing them to declare their commitment to ACE in the face of reference group pressure—as evidenced by the short-lived nature of the change.

In sum, the study suggests that we can gain a better understanding of the relationship between action and attitude change by separating the approach and avoidance components of the attitude and examining their relative salience in the action situation. At the same time, it appears that, contrary to our hypotheses, the steepness of the approach and avoidance gradients is not simply a function of the nature of the attitude (i.e., whether it is based on identification or internalization), nor is it necessarily true that an approach-steeper-than-avoidance situation is more conducive to attitude change than is its opposite. To understand what happens in a given situation, we must look at the way people react to the action itself—what it means to them, how they carry it out, what opportunities it offers them—and these reactions are not entirely predictable from the nature of

the initial attitudes. Other variables, including individual difference variables (such as the sex differences observed in the present study) seem to influence these reactions and hence the likelihood and nature of attitude change. Thus in the kind of situation exemplified by our RG+/V− condition, attitude change seems to depend on how comfortably individuals can enter into the action even though it is inconsistent with their values. Those who, for whatever reason, can do so (such as the males in our experiment) may, as a result, have both the motivation and the opportunity to reexamine their attitudes, which may lead to gradual and lasting change (as often happens when an individual adopts a new role; cf. Lieberman, 1956). In the kind of situation exemplified by our RG−/V+ condition, the relationship of attitude change to comfort in performing the action may be quite different. Those who feel comfortable because they see the action itself as an opportunity to overcome reference group opposition (such as the males in our experiment) may be able to resolve their conflict without resort to attitude change, while those for whom the action heightens the conflict between values and reference groups (such as the females in our experiment) may display a short-lived shift in attitude as a way of reasserting their values in the face of reference group pressures.

EFFECTS OF "SURPASSING" ACTION

The discussion of action in relation to conflicted attitudes helps to call attention to some of the ambiguities in the concept of discrepant action. Insofar as an attitude toward an object has both an approach and an avoidance component, actions vis-à-vis that object are never unambiguously discrepant. An action supportive of the object may be discrepant with respect to the avoidance component, but perfectly congruent with respect to the approach component. The action may, of course, be experienced as discrepant depending on the relative strength or salience of the two components. Nevertheless, the presence of the two components underlines the possibility that an action, though largely perceived as discrepant, may carry some positive implications from the actor's point of view.

Even an action that is unambiguously discrepant is not necessarily experienced by the individual as a totally negative occurrence, to be avoided, denied, or neutralized at all costs. A discrepant action

may provide the occasion for new learning and insight, leading to constructive changes in attitudes, behavior patterns, social relations, or standards. It is important to keep this in mind as a corrective to the tendency to view discrepant action as an aversive, undesirable state of affairs.

As a further corrective, it should be noted that discrepant action may not only have constructive consequences for the actor, but it may actually be viewed—by the actor and/or by observers—as a praiseworthy rather than a blameworthy event. So far I have used "discrepant action" in the customary sense of an action that is deficient, falling short of the person's attitude (or, more precisely, of certain standards). As I indicated at the beginning of the last section, however, discrepant actions may also take the form of actions that surpass the person's attitude. That is, people may act in ways that exceed expectation—that represent, for example, higher levels of generosity, courage, or tolerance than their attitudes require. Technically, such actions could be described as discrepant actions in the sense that they are out of keeping with what would be expected on the basis of the person's attitudes. But, of course, they have very different psychological and social meanings from actions that fall short of expectation. For example, "surpassing" actions should not bring into play such negative emotional reactions as guilt, shame, regret, or self-disappointment, which are aroused by deviations from societal standards of conduct.

Surpassing actions are conducive to attitude change for the same reasons and by the same means that action in general is conducive to attitude change, as discussed in earlier sections of this paper: they bring together motivational and informational processes in ways that create the conditions necessary for change to occur. Surpassing action is of special interest, however, because it provides a particularly clear illustration of an important phenomenon that has been largely ignored in research on the relation between action and attitude change: the role of action as a step in the attitude change process (Kelman, 1974a, pp. 321–324). I indicated at the beginning of the present paper (in the reference to "testing of new attitude" in Table 1 and the surrounding text) that this is one of the phenomena that my discussion is intended to encompass. Much of the discussion, however—particularly in the long section on discrepant action—has looked at the relationship between action and attitude change in a single direction only, focusing on action as instigator of the attitude change process. Let me correct for this imbalance by

pointing out, in these concluding paragraphs, that action does not merely precipitate attitude change, but may itself be an integral part of an ongoing attitude change process.

Closer examination of an apparently discrepant action, particularly one that surpasses expectations, may reveal that the action is not completely out of keeping with the actor's attitudes. The action may indeed occur in response to situational demands, to interpersonal pressures, to social facilitation, or to other extraneous influences. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the response is entirely passive and unrelated to the actor's preferences. Instead, the action may reflect an incipient attitude change. Prior to the action, we may already have been moving toward a new attitude, but this attitude had not yet been crystallized and we had not fully committed ourselves to it. Extraneous forces may thus precipitate an action for which we were already partly prepared. The action in turn contributes to attitude change, in the sense that it provides an occasion for us to sharpen the new attitude and commit ourselves to it. In short, as the phenomenon of surpassing action helps us recognize, attitude change in relation to discrepant action need not be an entirely *reactive* process, but may well be an *active* process in which action plays a catalytic role.

This process can be readily understood if we conceive of an attitude as representing a range of commitment, as I proposed earlier in this paper. Within such a framework, it becomes clear that an action can simultaneously flow from an attitude and mediate changes in that attitude. Let us take, for example, a situation in which we support a cause that we generally favor with a financial contribution that surpasses expectation. Using the notion of attitude as range of commitment, we can describe what happens as follows: We find ourselves in a setting (perhaps a rally organized in response to an emergency) that calls for action (in the form of financial contribution) at a level higher than our modal level of commitment, but still within our range. For one or another reason (perhaps because of a combination of high emotional arousal and social pressure), we decide to take the action called for, which thus involves us at least temporarily at a level of commitment higher than our usual level. Having taken the action, we become subject to the various action-generated forces conducive to attitude change, which were discussed earlier; as a result we may manifest change by raising our modal level and our entire range, as well as perhaps by narrowing or widening the range. Thus we have an action that flows from our

existing attitudes (even though it goes beyond what we and others would have expected, given our usual level of commitment), yet at the same time contributes to change in these attitudes.

An action situation may prompt us to take actions that surpass our modal level of commitment for a number of reasons, to which I have already alluded (p. 138). It may offer us an opportunity to adopt a new role that we have been anticipating for some time; it may confront us with a challenge to make a commitment that we have been considering but have avoided because of competing pressures or anxieties; or it may provide us with an occasion for deliberate efforts to mobilize internal and external supports for a new level of commitment that we have been seeking. Let me illustrate each of these possibilities and the ways in which they may generate attitude change.

The first possibility would be exemplified by members of an organization who have hitherto been relatively inactive but now accept an invitation to take on leadership roles. Their new roles commit them to actions that far surpass their previous level of commitment. Yet the fact that these particular individuals are selected for leadership is probably not a mere coincidence. Chances are that they were available for this higher level of commitment to the organization, that they had been moving in that direction for some time, that they had been building relevant attitudes in preparation for it—in short, that they had been undergoing a process of anticipatory socialization—but that the opportunity to act on these attitudes had not presented itself. Thus, the invitation to leadership represents an opportunity for them to adopt roles for which they were already prepared. Once they actually enter into the roles, significant further changes in attitude are likely to follow. Organizational leadership calls for a wide range of personally involving and publicly visible actions that generate a variety of new requirements, experiences, and social expectations. As a result, the new attitudes that were evolving before entry into the leadership roles are likely to become reorganized, sharpened, and stabilized at a higher level of commitment.

To exemplify an action situation that confronts a person with a challenge, let us visualize a student from a fairly conservative background whose political views and commitments have been moving in a new direction. She has settled into a generally liberal position, marked by support for various causes but not a high level of personal involvement in them. The possibility of a deeper commitment

to some of these causes is within her attitudinal range, but she is not quite ready for it because she is not willing to break entirely with her family and home community, or because she is not prepared to pay the price of higher commitment, or because she has not fully sorted out her ideas on the matter. As often happens, this student may find herself in a situation in which social facilitation or social pressure from her current associates induce her to participate in political action that surpasses her modal level of commitment. This action in turn generates motivational and informational processes that reinforce and facilitate further attitude change, leading to a higher level of commitment. Although situational forces played a major role in inducing the action, she was at least partly ready for it. In fact, she may have had a latent interest in trying out this higher level of commitment but needed the extra push that social pressure provided. Other examples of this process are provided by Allport (1954), in his discussion of conscience-stricken opponents of desegregation who welcomed external pressures, in the form of laws or *faits accomplis*, that constrained them to go along with integration; and by Pettigrew (1961), in his discussion of "latent liberals" in the South who were racially prejudiced for reasons of conformity but quite ready to change once the social norms pointed in the direction of greater tolerance.

The challenge provided by an action situation may be primarily social in nature, as in the above examples, or it may be primarily cognitive. In the latter case, a person's movement to a higher level of commitment is inhibited, not by the existence of cross-pressures, but by failure to make certain cognitive connections. For example, a young man may have serious moral compunctions about war and thus be a latent conscientious objector. He may never have considered taking this position, however, because he was unaware of the existence of this social category and because it never occurred to him that resistance to the draft law was within a person's domain of moral choice. Once confronted with the possibility of such a position, he may draw the implications of his own values and declare himself a conscientious objector. This action in turn is likely to change his perspective and identity in ways conducive to further attitude change.

The third way in which an action situation may prompt surpassing actions—namely, by providing us with an occasion for deliberate efforts to mobilize internal and external supports for a new level of commitment that we have been seeking—suggests

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