

KEY ISSUES IN WORK AND ORGANISATION *
CONTEMPORARY CHANGES IN WORKING LIFE *
UNDERSTANDING ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR:
ISSUES AND AGENDAS * THEORISING ORGANISATION

work organisations

a critical approach

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motivation: the drive for satisfaction

Why is it that when a company wants people to direct their purchasing behaviour in a particular direction, they turn to advertising agencies for their expertise in *persuasion*, but when they want to direct their own employees' behaviour in a particular direction they call it *motivation*? (Hershey, 1993: 10)

In this chapter we explore the journey from the notions of instinctual drives governing our behaviour, through the content and processes of our motivations, to a final consideration of issues of identity and commitment in modern organisations. We begin by introducing the motif we employ throughout the chapter: the question of whether the abstract conceptions of motivation theory as found in mainstream organisational behaviour (OB) literature can be distinguished from the more pragmatic processes of influence and coercion.

The aims of this chapter are to:

- give an account of how the understanding of 'motivation' has been appropriated in the search for greater productivity.
- explore the assumed relationship between job satisfaction and performance.
- locate influence, power and domination in the functional utility of motivation models.
- query the uncritical use in mainstream OB of the concept of goals.
- demonstrate the role of motivation theory in the mobilisation of consent and commitment.

Motivation or motivating?

William F. Whyte, writing in 1956 on economic incentives and human relations, spoke of the 'Five M's of factory life: men, money, machines, morale and motivation' (1956: 1). The last of these, coupled with the aspects of satisfaction contained in the notion of morale, has driven the primary interests of organisational management in psychological knowledge. Motivation, according to Dawson (1986: 7), 'refers to the mainspring of behaviour; it explains why individuals choose to expend a degree of effort towards achieving particular goals'. It is explained in terms of biologically-based *needs* and *drives* and the selection of *goals* (content theories) and cognitively-oriented notions of *information processing* on the rewards, costs and preferences for particular outcomes of action (process theories). Knowledge of human motivation is linked to the service of organisational 'needs', in that motivation is understood in terms of the process of *social influence*. Even though Herzberg (1968) pointed out that in attempting to influence someone to work harder it is the manager who is motivated and not the worker, it is still the case that one of the principal concerns of organisational behaviour is to increase 'motivation' in the search for greater productivity.

Motivations are viewed as perceived predispositions to particular behaviours and outcomes, reflecting the things we want and the strategies we choose to achieve or obtain them. Originally they were

explained in two ways. The first was in terms of instinctual drives which we are motivated to reduce: for example when we are thirsty we are driven to seek drink. Second, they were described in the mechanistic terminology of *stimulus-response*, when we seek out those things which satisfy or reward us and avoid those which punish or cost us. However, since motivation also concerns choice and hence intention, it is necessary to explain how such choices are made. This is explained within cognitively-oriented models that examine either the *content* of motivations, or the *process* through which they are expressed. The former examine what motivates people through concepts such as goals, needs and 'motivators', and is exemplified by the work of Maslow, Alderfer, McClelland and Herzberg. The latter examine how behaviours are selected, directed, initiated and maintained, as in the work of Porter and Lawler, Adams and also Vroom (see below).

Both types of theory are concerned with the notion that humans direct their behaviour towards goals. In the case of content theories the concern is with the source of the goals, while process theories focus on the decision-making process by which goals are selected and pursued. We must also consider motivation in terms of the process of social influence by which external agencies try to direct the selection and pursuit of desired goals by individuals. This aspect of motivation theory, into which both content and process theories are incorporated, is the practical focus of organisational behaviour as a whole, practitioners being concerned to understand the strengths and directions of human motivations in order to increase control over the performance of work-related behaviours.

An example of this is found in McGregor's (1960) conception of 'Theory X' and 'Theory Y', often presented as a need or content theory of motivation. Students, and some texts, often represent theories X and Y as showing that there are two types of people, those who dislike work and responsibility, focus on economic security and need to be coerced into effort (Theory X), and those who like work, will accept responsibility for their own effort and are capable of innovation (Theory Y). However, these theories are more properly understood as a continuum of managerial attitudes to workers, whereby Theory X views held by managers will produce an 'assumption trap' which leads to coercive behaviour on their part and thus a vicious circle leading to Theory X behaviour by employees. Likewise Theory Y assumptions should lead to Theory Y behaviour, though of course there would probably be no 'virtuous circle' here as it would eventually lead to the complete abdication of managerial control. The practical parallel here is in the fate of scientific management and the human relations movement. Both were assumed to increase motivation and performance, and both could be said to fail on the basis of ignoring the effects of the assumption traps they produced: scientific management via assumptions of coercion through economic rationality and the managerial appropriation of control and expertise, and human relations through the assumption that managers would give anything but lip-service to employee participation in decision-making.

Enriching the content

The goals to which we direct our behaviour constitute a formative influence in the identities we construct for ourselves. But this aspect of goal-related behaviour is not examined within organisational behaviour as a discipline, except to the extent that individual goals can be moulded or 'set' to fulfil organisational ends. The branch manager in an insurance company case provides relevant commentary:

“ I'm looking for someone who will work with me. So I look for some one who I think I can mould to my own ways, but they must already have the necessary spark and drive. (Knights and Collinson, 1987: 154)

Identity and related goals are thus treated as external to the position of workers in the productive process, in that goals are usually related not to intentions but to biologically-derived drives, or more often, needs such as those identified by Maslow (1954). Maslow's typology of human needs has been discredited to the extent that the 'prepotency' of 'lower order' physiological needs (in other words, these needs must be fulfilled before 'higher order' social and psychological needs) is not supported, yet 'Maslow's hierarchy' is still given prominence in most OB and management development texts. The probable reason for this is that theories which actually tell us something about motivation are too complex and too dependent on contingent factors to have any simple predictive application in management practice. These 'needs' for food, shelter, affection, self-respect and individual growth are more accurately seen these days as operating on the basis of either *intrinsic*, *social* or *extrinsic* stimuli or rewards. Intrinsically-motivated persons are assumed to be influenced through their attachment to their work itself, through the enhancement of skill, responsibility, status or authority; socially-motivated persons through their social relations in the workplace to peers, colleagues and group membership. It is assumed that extrinsically-motivated persons will be influenced only by aspects of their work that facilitate their 'outside' interests such as pay levels, perks and increased leisure time. Though particular motivations may be more forceful for an individual at any one time, positive feedback from all three types of factor will have some bearing on how they direct their goal-related behaviour. We should note though that according to social identity theory (see Haslam, 2002: 71-2) whether rewards are seen as intrinsic or extrinsic depends to an extent on self-categorisation, that is, what is extrinsic in terms of personal identity could become intrinsic where group values are more salient; in fact we might argue that this has to happen in order for people to actually be able to identify with groups.

Content theories

Organisational behaviour texts almost always refer to Maslow and his 'hierarchy of needs' but very seldom consider the satisfaction of needs within the organisational environment beyond the extent to which they can be manipulated to increase productivity. They are once again seen as external to the place of the worker in the productive process. Those in positions of control in work organisations do not see themselves as being in the business of comprehensively supplying the needs that Maslow hypothesises. They exchange financial and sometimes material benefits for the labour of employees, but beyond a minimal concern that workers should be sufficiently satisfied with the conditions and rewards of work to improve performance, or at least to not disrupt production, little else is provided. Indeed McClelland's (1961) typology of needs as *affiliation*, *power* and *achievement* does not take the lower order needs into account at all, these being supplied through the *wage-effort bargain* (see Chapter 3).

The hypothesised need for 'self-actualisation' (based on the work of the therapist Carl Rogers) and individual growth has repeatedly been incorporated into prescriptive packages such as Herzberg's (1968) notion of 'job enrichment', which seeks to improve the content of work to the point where workers will be self-motivated to improve their performance. However, such initiatives tend to fail on the basis that no real improvement is made in factors relating to the conditions of work and the job context or environment. For example, in Nichols and Beynon's (1977) study of job enrichment at Chemco, managers were motivated to pursue the 'New Working Agreement' on the basis that they were convinced that they would get at what makes workers 'tick' and thus be able to coax more work from them. For most of the workers involved, all that came out of this was an inadequate system of job rotation which was worse than the system they had evolved for themselves. Hence managers in this study were easier to 'motivate' because the context of their work was adequate.

Herzberg himself recognised this in saying that job rotation constituted 'job enlargement' rather than enrichment, and this could result in no more than short-term improvements in productivity as it represented 'adding nothing to nothing' (1968: 263-4). Such prescriptions are still offered by organisational consultants and still bought by organisational management, however, possibly because even short-term improvements in productivity offer some kind of competitive edge in the market. Motivation, in the above example, is reduced to the status of things or techniques that will motivate, a manipulative rather than an explanatory concept. The outgrowth of Herzberg's notions in Hackman and Oldham's (1980) *Job Characteristics Model* links job redesign and enrichment to a diagnostic scheme which analyses work in terms of four variables (*skill variety, task identity, task significance and feedback*) indicative of the extent to which a job could or should be redesigned. Although this scheme is widely cited in the literature, Hollway (1991: 107) reports that it was not popular with managers in that its focus on the job rather than the individual did not fit the managerial ideology of the day.

The drive for satisfaction

The key concerns in these theories and related applications are to a great extent those that relate task performance to the concept of *job satisfaction*, which is difficult to define or measure in the first place. Thus the application of techniques based on the assumed relation between satisfaction and performance tends to ignore the operation of social, cultural, organisational and environmental factors which will all intervene to make a simple 'more satisfaction, more performance' relationship less likely. Argyle (1974) examined the relations between satisfaction and productivity, absenteeism and turnover, concluding that while absenteeism and turnover did have a direct relationship to levels of satisfaction, productivity did so for only highly skilled or intrinsically motivated workers and that even in these cases, individual differences were highly significant. (See Figure 21.1.)

It appeared that while, on average, people did work harder when satisfied, some people worked harder when less satisfied and some less hard when more satisfied. Working hard to make the time go faster in an unsatisfying job or just to forget about one's troubles is a familiar experience to many of us, and 'skiving' or systematic soldiering is a classic response to fragmented or meaningless work. The only aspirational



Figure 21.1 *The relation between productivity and performance*

Source: M. Argyle (1974) *The Social Psychology of Work*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 239, with permission.

rewards available in such situations are those we can gain from controlling our own time and playing our own games (see discussion of Roy's work in 'Process theories', below).

Beyond these considerations, any meaningful view of the relation between job satisfaction and performance would have to recognise that alienated responses are rooted in the estrangement of workers from their creative capacities in the act of production, from ownership and control of the workplace, and from fellow workers. As the condition and responses derive, at least in part, from the basic structures of the capitalist labour process, changing them would require more than tinkering with peripheral aspects of work design. This does not mean that individuals will not report some sort of increased positive satisfactions. For example, Frese (1982) states that:

■ much of the work on job satisfaction has tapped an attitude which could be labelled resigned job satisfaction. Because of the unavailability of other jobs and ways to change the job situation, a worker has reduced his aspiration level over time and has become resigned to his job. (Frese, 1982: 212)

Such feelings are directly related to powerlessness and lack of control over the job situation. Reduction of aspiration levels does not necessarily imply a lack of aspiration, however; it could simply mean resignation to progression as defined by the rules and procedures of the organisation, an acceptance of bureaucratic methods of control and the ideologies which underlie them. In Knights and Collinson's case study, for example, one of the female clerks who was continually discouraged from applying for a position as a sales inspector decided not to risk her position as senior clerk, and redefined her aspirations in terms of 'a woman's idea of going higher up within the company on the inside' (1987: 166). By considering the idea of progression into office management rather than sales, she has started the process of redefining her goals in line with the gendered job segregation fostered by the company.

People experiencing passive satisfaction with their lot rather than active satisfaction with their work may still be open to the types of influence exemplified by attempts at job enrichment or similar schemes. Herzberg's (1968) two-factor theory of motivation suggests that the intrinsic 'motivator' factors associated with job *content* and satisfaction are separate from the extrinsic 'hygiene' factors associated with job *context* and dissatisfaction. The content factors, such as *growth, responsibility, recognition, achievement* and *variety*, are similar to those assumed to motivate people who value intrinsic rewards and the status and esteem components of social rewards. The context factors, such as *salary, conditions, security, relationships* and possibly *policy* and *status*, are similar in effect to extrinsic and social rewards in that they make work either easier or more rewarding as they improve. Techniques such as job enrichment assume that if content and context factors are adequately met for individuals in organisations, then the motivation to work will be maintained. More importantly, they rely on the notion that people are passive recipients of organisational influences. If people do construct for themselves a passively resigned workplace identity, then the chances will increase that they will accept the redesign of their jobs on the basis that it will eventually improve their lot. The developments in flexible working practices and unitarist industrial relations in the 1980s may indicate that what was identified as a 'new realism' was nothing more than the kind of coping engendered by having to adopt a passive workplace identity in response to environmental constraints such as high unemployment.

Job context and content factors are seldom, if ever, met adequately for everyone within the work environment, so attempts to influence individual motivation levels will always run foul of factors they do not take account of. Thus in addition to active attempts to 'motivate' individuals, organisations take advantage of the socialising pressures of work to create a climate where people are open to these kinds

of influence. However, attempts to motivate or socialise individuals into accepting the managerial direction tend to ignore the decision-making aspect of the process of becoming motivated. If motivation is indeed the 'mainspring of behaviour', then it refers not only to the selection of goals but also to the selection and development of the coping strategies and skills that individuals use to achieve those goals. Lee and Lawrence (1985) identify four factors that underpin all 'political' models of motivation that focus on decision-making:

- *Goals*: relating to values, interests and perceptions of individual opportunities and possibilities.
- *Strategies*: formulated to achieve goals or to react to threats to capacities to achieve them.
- *Coalitions*: exchanging commitment to group interests for support for goal strategies which cannot be achieved on an individual basis.
- *Power*: assessing success of goal strategies and membership of coalitions, arriving at estimates of personal power to affect events and revising goals in line with this.

The first three factors are dependent on the fourth, in that 'An individual's perception of his power will affect the goals he sets, the strategies he chooses and the nature of the coalitions he joins' (1985: 78). Likewise in the construction of identities, perceptions of a person's *situational power* (see Chapter 21) will determine the sources of meaning that are appropriate to the maintenance of a secure identity.

Motivation may be influenced by either interfering with, or facilitating, the individual's capacity to perceive, formulate or implement one or more of these factors. Organisational strategies that simply restrict the employees' capacity to act in these areas will, however, probably lead to individual and group attempts to circumvent them. Techniques aimed at the 'motivation' of groups and individuals may not in this sense achieve their aims. They may exacerbate the situations they were designed to ameliorate by reproducing or reinforcing existing areas of conflict, by reopening old issues or by introducing new topics of dispute.

Aimed at increasing production quality, overall productivity, workforce flexibility and job satisfaction, strategies aimed at enhancing group motivation depend on the production of workgroup identities consonant with the collective goals of management. These in the end can be sustained only to the extent that the organisation enables group members to maintain comparative material benefits and secure identities. This, however, has long-term implications for job security which are in direct contradiction to the aim of producing a flexible workforce responsive to the short-term demands for changes in product lines, working practices and manning levels. The threat of a reserve pool of unemployed labour is not sufficient to maintain the levels of commitment required by these programmes. Commitment based on the fear of losing one's job is only equivalent to the type of motivation achieved by holding a gun to someone's head. As soon as the threat is removed, so is the motivation. All that is achieved is an increase in the likelihood of retaliatory action.

In essence, then, the study of motivation in OB is the study of the processes of organisational influence and a study in the exercise of power and domination. No matter what the intent of consultants and practitioners in the area in terms of increasing job satisfaction and the elusive 'quality of working life', to management these techniques are effectively 'technologies of regulation' aimed at increasing control over behaviour and performance. Unfortunately, from a managerial point of view at least, in the long run such programmes cannot survive exposure to the contradictions inherent in trying to control subordinates who are actively attempting to control their own environment. Before moving on to consider process theories, we wish to reflect in more detail on the role of organisational behaviour and organisational

psychology in motivational technologies of regulation. To do this we will consider Herzberg's (1968) pragmatic critique of motivational practices, which is still germane in modern OB.

The 'kick in the ass' (KITA) life cycle

« The problem arises when managements come to believe so firmly in their so-called motivation techniques and theories that they incorrectly attribute the behaviour they see with the attitude ('highly motivated') they impute with the source behind that behaviour. The very term 'motivation' in its shop-floor context, implies that workers are not intrinsically inclined to behave in the way their managers would want. (R. Hershey, 1993: 10)

Herzberg in *One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?* (1968) addresses the strategies available to the manager who answers the question: 'How do I get an employee to do what I want him to?' with the age-old response of 'Kick him!' (1986: 256). Herzberg raises the fundamental question of whether it is actually possible to motivate someone else, that whatever the external stimulus, motivation must come from within the person. He further used his analysis to examine his notion that most attempts to 'motivate' workers produce nothing more than short-term movement towards a reward or away from a punishment, and through this to argue that to produce self-motivating workers, jobs must be enriched. More interesting for our present purposes, though, is his analysis of the development of the techniques available to achieve these objectives, the so-called, *KITAs*. Herzberg argued that the basic technique of the kick, or *negative physical KITA*, failed due to the problems of image and retaliation associated with a regime of punishment. Psychologists naturally came to the rescue by uncovering 'infinite sources of psychological vulnerabilities and the appropriate methods to play tunes on them', that is, *negative psychological KITA* (1986: 257). As Weissman (2001) notes re General Electric in the 1990s, the practice of management by KITA is analogous to what Parker and Slaughter (1988) called *Management by Stress* (see Chapter 23) in its focus on cutting slack and in constantly pushing upwards the standard of what constitutes hard work:

« In this case, it is time to turn to the KITA approach. 'Maintaining a high level of tension through the KITA approach does maintain acceptable productivity levels,' the memo notes. 'It requires constant time and attention of the leader, because productivity will fall without that false tension being maintained.' A companion 1991 document focuses on team manager training. It contains a series of modules to make managers more effective. Module Four instructs supervisors that they have five obligations: to appoint the right people for positions; to make sure employees know their responsibilities; to properly train employees; to 'set standards for professional pride;' and to 'weed the garden.' 'When you have met your obligations to an individual,' Module Four states, 'and they continue to fail to live up to the job description or the Team's expectations, they must be terminated, or replaced.' The KITA approach is designed not only to squeeze workers' physical labor, but their mental labor and ideas, says Chris Townsend, political director for the United Electrical Workers, which represents GE workers. (Weissman, 2001)

Herzberg rejected this form of KITA as still being coercion, rather than motivation and still liable to produce hostility and resistance and moved on to consider *positive KITA*, both physical and psychological.

Positive KITA were mainly associated with rewards and thus rejected by Herzberg as bribery rather than motivation and as with the traditional range of rewards employed by management they were, as with many OB-related variables, subject to diminishing returns, getting less from workers as you

give them more and more. Once again managers had to listen to the 'behavioural scientists who, more out of a humanist tradition than scientific study, criticised management for not knowing how to deal with people' (1986: 258). The self-replicating string of KITAs resulting from this collaboration gave us, according to Herzberg, *human relations, sensitivity training, communications and two-way communication, job participation and employee counselling*. If we extend the roll-call of positive KITAs we can include everything from Herzberg's own critical output in job enrichment to autonomous working, socio-technical systems, management by objectives and all the rest of the 'bag of schemes' routinely employed to increase motivation. That these offer no more than temporary influences towards greater commitment and goal consensus, rather than avenues towards self-generated motivation to work, is not important to management, as long as they give rise to short-term productivity gains. This reinforces the status of the products of OB as an integral part of the labour process itself. It is almost as if the techniques and approaches coming out of behavioural science have their own version of the marketing concept of the 'product life-cycle'. As soon as one KITA is reaching its diminishing level of marginal utility, the research and development process of critique and hypothesis testing gives rise to a new one. That all that is new about them is often only the name is unimportant, as long as the 'improved product' is sufficiently distinctive enough to carry out its function as an ideological cover story for yet another technology of regulation.

The attractions of KITAs to managers parallel their attitudes to new technologies. They have an intrinsic marketing advantage over their target audience in that if the competition has them, then they feel that they have to have them too. The similarity goes further, in that like new technologies, KITAs are often brought in by management who do not fully understand them or their possibly deleterious effects on cultures based on established procedures and working practices. Worse still, they only ever work effectively so long as management remain committed to resourcing them properly and do not use them as levers for unilaterally increasing levels of control and productivity.

Process theories

The content theories of motivation only ever really sought to explain motivation in terms of its directions, and lacked the sophistication to explain the strength of motivations. To be really useful in terms of selection or developmental training it is the relative force of motivation that needs to be measured; this being seen in 'process theories' such as exchange theory (Homans, 1961), equity theory (Adams, 1965) and expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Equity theory is based on notions of cognitive social comparison and exchange, expectancy theory on comparison of outcomes and preferences. These are reinforced by techniques that actively intervene in the selection and pursuit of goals and personal agendas such as goal-setting (see below), which are based on comparison and reinforcement of behavioural standards. All extend the basic notion of cognitive comparison to attempt greater levels of accuracy in prediction and control. Though in general empirical support for these theories is positive, expectancy theory in particular has been singled out for some criticism (see Arnold *et al.*, 1998: 252-4). Social information processing theory Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) manages to link aspects of content and process theories by incorporating the observational modelling of social learning theory (see Chapter 20) and focusing on how social cues taken from both others and ourselves inform self-attributions of our attitudes and behaviours. Social information-processing links learning and motivation to the social construction of needs and attitudes (including job satisfaction) and as such challenges the conception of needs as stable and hence predictable, but although at base a theory of job design, it is too complex for integration into straightforward managerial practices.

The effort to integrate 'human resources' more fully into the production process, typical of content theories, is similarly present in the usage of process theories of motivation. The difficulties in using motivation theories as a basis for 'people processing', can be seen in the application of the expectancy theory of Vroom (1964). This seeks to quantify and predict the strength of an individual's tendency to behave in a particular way as an assigned probability which is given by the *simplified expectancy equation* (see Thompson and McHugh, 1995: 301-4). On the surface, this appears to be a simple and powerful tool for predicting behaviour, but the assumptions made in such a measurement present a number of problems. The first is that expectancy theory provides a *rational-cognitive* explanation of individual behaviour. Can we assume that individuals make rational calculations based on their cognitive input in deciding whether to act in a particular way? Even assuming that this is the case, do these form the major determinant factor in their subsequent actions? These questions are sometimes posed in organisational behaviour texts, but no adequate account is generally given of whether such assumptions are warranted. The question is simply stated prior to a discussion of what can be done with expectancy theory in terms of understanding motivational goals, in order to influence and alter people's behaviour.

A further objection arises from those, including Langer (1981), who suggest that many of our behaviours, rather than being acted out in analytic, rational fashion, are carried out in what they term a 'mindless' manner. We follow unconscious 'scripts' analogous to sensorimotor learning (see Chapter 20) in much the same way as we do not consciously think of the complex series of actions we go through in making a cup of tea. Although we may consider the options open to us and the best way of going about a task, the underlying motivation may simply be that we are following the script which we have come to learn as appropriate to that situation. The work of Roy (1973) provides examples of how both labour and social interaction in the workplace can take on the attributes of ritual. Roy's monotonous and fatiguing work of 'mincing plastic sheets into small ovals, fingers and trapezoids' (1973: 208) was made 'relatively satisfying' in Baldamus' (1961) terms, by turning the production process into a series of 'games' which varied the colour, shape and ordering of the components turned out. The self-induced scripting of the work itself was accompanied by the breaking-up of the working day into 'times', such as 'peach', 'banana' and 'pickup time'. 'Times' were constructed around the ritualised social interactions and verbal interplay in the brief interruptions to production, which were repeated on a daily basis. Thus the behavioural scripts built up around eating, drinking and visits from outsiders reintroduced some level of meaning and interest for the machine operators into a deskilled labour process. Interest was further enhanced by the continuous repetition during work of 'serious' and 'kidding' verbal 'themes', centred around the characteristics and problems of the operators involved. In this sense, then, scripted behaviours become an effective, though not necessarily actively planned, mechanism for coping with the mundanity of working life.

A related problem for models of motivation is the narrow and over-deterministic series of accounts of experience that rational-cognitive theories of human behaviour produce. These accounts place the responsibility for action on individuals, rather than on the contexts in which they find themselves. By focusing on how information is embedded in social context, Salancik and Pfeffer's social information processing perspective goes some way to addressing the over-reliance on individual predispositions and rational decision-making processes. It can, for example, address the consequences of past choices and self-expectations but still tends to reinforce the view that the pathology of organisations is based on the irrational actions of individuals. In this view, the problems and uncertainties faced by organisations are caused by the self-serving behaviour of those who do not appreciate the 'big picture' of organisational life.

Even if the behaviour of individuals in organisations is largely carried out in the context of scripts which their socialisation into organisational life has taught them, they still bring to their working life

an actively constructed identity which has been transformed within the organisation into an appropriate image. These behaviours and scripts do not exist in isolation. Even considering the possible outcomes of working harder on one particular task, as is done in expectancy calculations, this would involve an almost endless series of ramifications and secondary consequences. Thus to obtain a realistic prediction about how motivated a single individual would be to behave in a particular way, we would have to provide a basis of comparison. This would involve taking into account not only most of the behaviours applicable to a person's work and home life, but also those of similar individuals inside and outside the organisation. The project of fully understanding how people are motivated would from this perspective necessitate identifying and explaining all of the subjective and structural influences on their lives and those of the others surrounding them.

The relative lack of success of process theories in managerial terms is due to the very complexity that makes them more powerful in explanatory terms than content theories. Most management development texts still present content theories in the main because they are simple, easier to demonstrate, and they sound powerful, whereas cognitive/process theories suffer from the very fact that they are multifactorial and multivariate, with the implications that:

- there are too many factors which can affect the relations between effort, performance and outcomes
- too many value associations have to be made in assessing outcomes
- it is too difficult to place accurate values on variables
- models require assumptions of complex mental calculations which are hard to reproduce and demonstrate.

We will return to this theme below in considering new developments in motivation such as control and self-concept theories. At present, however, we wish to summarise and reflect on some of the problem aspects of the account we have given of motivation so far. In doing this we especially wish to query the uncritical use in mainstream OB (and by ourselves!) of the ubiquitous concept of *goals*.

The goals of motivation

Motivation as presented above lies at the heart of the explanatory project of organisational psychology, and as such can be used to reflect on the limits and contradictions of mainstream theories and practices. At one level, motivation is a classic case of Adorno's concept of '*identity thinking*' (Rose, 1978), where a concept is used as if it denoted instances of something, when it does not. For example, individuals are not 'motivated' to perform well at a particular task or 'satisfied' with their job when the underlying goal of their performance is to maintain a reasonable level of subsistence and not to lose their job. In this sense, OB and organisational psychology assume an identity between being motivated to do something and being constrained to do it by physical and social necessity. In Adorno's terms one can only make proper use of a theoretical concept or construct in the context of the 'theory of society' through which it is itself constructed.

In taking the situational contexts in which behaviour in organisations takes place largely as given, concepts such as goals in mainstream analyses are often reified, involving 'the conversion of concrete social relations of production into abstracted, quantitative measures' (Wexler, 1983: 66). Reification in this sense can be viewed as a dual process, and is productive of entitative relationships as identified by Hosking and Morley (1991, see Chapter 14 and below). First, the products of human thought and activity are treated as things in themselves; and second, socially produced concepts are treated as being intrinsic to individuals

and organisations. In relation to the first part of this process, organisations are often treated as actual entities or organisms with their own needs, drives, goals and characteristics analogous to those of people, rather than as the continuously recreated products of human labour and organisational ingenuity. The second element of the reification process is illustrated by the content theories discussed above in their use of highly generalised typologies of needs such as that of Maslow (1954). These are developed into measurement packages that seek to typify the range of needs applying to individuals in order to establish the minimum conditions for their compliance with the goals of the organisation.

Thus the concept of motivation is applied to organisations themselves in that they are seen as having their own internally derived goals that can change to accommodate the environmental contingencies which the organisation is faced with. At the same time, individual goals are conceptualised as a subset of those organisational goals. For instance, the currently fashionable 'continuous development' programmes designed ostensibly to meet the 'training needs' of organisations, serve mainly to locate organisational problems at the individual rather than the structural level (see Chapters 15 and 18). Such systems could be seen simply as extensions of social facilitation through the medium of the technique of *goal-setting*.

Goal-setting

Goal-setting as a technique is said not only to be effective with scientists, managers, and blue-collar workers, and thus assumed to extend earlier techniques such as management by objectives in that it is claimed to work beyond supervisory and managerial grades; it is also claimed by Locke and Latham to be a core motivational technique (1984: 121) that can underpin job enrichment, behaviour modification or other processes. It operates through attention to levels of:

- commitment to goals
- acceptability of goals
- difficulty of goals
- specificity of goals
- participation in setting goals.

It is seen to affect the choice of goals, the effort put into them and the strategies selected in pursuing them. The outcomes are assumed to be thoroughly positive in managerial terms: human resources are fully utilised by directing attention and action; energy and effort are mobilised; persistence is increased and the development of appropriate task strategies are encouraged. It works by breaking down goal-related behaviour into simpler sub-routines in the way that scientific management does with physical operations, thereby reducing the stress of dealing with complex goals. Locke and Latham portray it as a tool which 'gets results', but when used improperly can result in 'conflict, feelings of failure, increased stress, dishonesty' (1984: 171).

Arnold *et al.* (1998: 259–620) give a useful account of the limits of goal-setting, noting that it 'could be criticised in its early days for being a technique rather than a theory' (1998: 261). Regardless of subsequent developments, goal-setting is still an example of the extension of technologies of regulation that replaces 'impractical models and theories' with 'a technological approach to using human resources effectively for the creation of industrial wealth' (Wellin, 1984: 4). These are essentially contingent strategies for increasing effectiveness, or 'a practical bag of tools for solving human problems in organisations' (1984: 183). However, it is probable that such strategies will probably never work as intended. Even if individual

subjectivity can act, as Knights and Willmott (1985) argue, to separate people and blind them to their collective interests, it will still operate to motivate and enable them to circumvent technologies of regulation for their own purposes. You can in no way guarantee that staff will develop the goals set for them, only that they will develop goals, just as you cannot guarantee what staff will learn, only that they will.

Goals versus identity projects

Goals themselves have been queried as a useful concept, especially in Hosking and Morley's (1991: chap. 2) comments on top-down, *entitative* approaches to persons (that is, the characteristics, traits and behaviours of individuals) and groups in organisations, through topics such as motivation, attitudes, job design, leadership and group dynamics. These are essentially reified approaches that depend on assumptions of the independence of person and organisation. Hosking and Morley identify (1991: 72) the focus on goals in such approaches as a major sticking-point that pervades the organisational literature, and argue for an emphasis on projects rather than goals to explain the interlocking nature of personal and social processes. They illustrate this with the following example:

“ Consider the projects of three academics. One has reached a certain point in his career and now actively is seeking promotion; another wishes to build a network of persons whose research interests are the same as hers; another wishes to get more favourable publicity for her subject. They join forces in organizing a conference; not one of them has resources sufficient for organizing the conference on their own; and each has different reasons (grounded in their different projects) for coordinating their actions in this way. (Hosking and Morley, 1991: 74, based on Weick, 1979)

The goals of these individuals may appear the same, but if something went wrong with the conference project, their differing personal agendas might make them respond quite differently. The important point here is that we need others to pursue our projects or *personal agendas* regardless of their congruence or divergence. This frees us somewhat from abstract concepts of goals and complex motivations, and may also help to explain why changing circumstances affect individual motivation differentially. Hosking and Morley (1991: 29–32) refer to personal projects as a series of *conversations*, which have aspects that are variously, but not exclusively, *pragmatic*, *structuring* and *semantic*. These are said to define culture for groups, and are the arena in which individual and group subjectivity are constructed and transformed in organisations.

Though Hosking and Morley produce a powerful critique of goals as a motivational concept, there is a sense in which it comes too late, since goals are thoroughly pervasive in the literature and more importantly are embedded in common usage. Even if the goals of individuals are divergent and/or incongruent with organisational 'goals', they are still assumed to be necessary for organisations to exist at all. In other words, we utilise at least some implicit sense of shared goals or values and some notion of how goals are developed in motivational terms in much the same way as we utilise implicit personality theories (see Chapter 19). Goals are perhaps best viewed in the end as a variable in the process of setting our personal agendas and pursuing our personal projects (see 'Control theories' and 'Self-concepts' below). We might perhaps view personal agendas as more action-oriented than goals, related more to what you are doing or need to do than aspirations or strategic objectives and in this sense at least personal agendas may be the very things which interfere with goal-directed behaviour. It may be that the more important distinction is our freedom or ability to pursue personal agendas or goals versus our burden of obligations or our *role set*.

Motivation as an artefact

It appears, then, that the functional utility of motivation models is in establishing the minimum conditions under which workers can be *mobilised* to consent to the nature of work that is demanded of them. This is achieved through a narrow conceptualisation of motivation which is useful in engaging consent for working practices by actively manipulating perceptions of expectations, preferences, social and material rewards, and threats. What is effectively happening here is that extrinsic factors largely outside the control of the individual, such as pay and conditions, are being translated into intrinsic factors. These include those processes assumed to be under individual control, for instance satisfaction and motivation, thus making employees personally responsible for their own objective situation, much as we argue is the case in the attribution of stress. Seivers (1986) goes further by arguing that motivation is not an intrinsic factor of individual personality, but an artefact produced by the science of organisational behaviour; which acts as a surrogate for the meaning that people have lost from fragmented and dehumanised work:

☐ Motivation only became an issue – for management and organisation theories as well as for the organisation of work itself – when meaning was either lost or disappeared from work. ... In consequence, motivation theories have become surrogates for the search for meaning. (Seivers, 1986: 338–9)

That management has become such a great consumer of theories and techniques of motivation is in itself an indication that in much work there is little which can in itself act as a source of meaning and the basis for a secure identity. Attempts to introduce greater levels of participation, to 'humanise' work, to 'enrich' jobs, are in part a recognition that at least some level of commitment from workers is necessary to valorise capital efficiently. Attempts to 'motivate' are founded on the assumption that workers need to be led, as in Theory X, but their theoretical bases do not examine the corollary that they need to be influenced to co-operate because of their essential alienation from the productive process. However, the use of motivation as a manipulative concept implies not a lesser but a greater unitarism of outlook from management. The integration of individual and organisational 'goals' not only binds people ever closer to the productive process, but creates the climate where programmes such as TQM make them responsible for monitoring their own performance. The 'motivations' served are the managerial aims of greater unit productivity; the drive for more work and less waste, operating under the cover story of a consensus-based participation provided by motivational techniques which have not moved on much since the days of Herzberg and McGregor.

Motivation from the view in this section is a chimera, a hybrid concept that owes more to science and organisational necessity than to nature, human or otherwise. It is often linked to that other organisational chimera, the so-called 'psychological contract' (see Guest's 1998 review and critique), though the latter in fact conflates any number of theories of motivation and commitment, as well as only being evident when the contract is violated. The question is why do we need the psychological contract when we already have concepts like trust and loyalty and we know that the wage-effort bargain and the various forms of organisational commitment are all mediated by the factors in exchange, equity, expectancy, goal-setting theory, etc.? As we will see below, organisational psychology has moved on to specify even further the factors involved in motivation. This could in fact be the real reason for the psychological contract as a concept, that the broader concerns of sociologists, business theorists and consultants need a simple umbrella explanation, or possibly that they simply do not want to deal with motivational variables, much like managers with process theories. The explanatory power of the psychological contract has suffered further from association with similarly suspect notions of 'organisational citizenship' (see Brotherton,

1999: 44). Like the psychological contract, motivation seems to be noted more in the breach than its observance, and managers often appear to be better at demotivating workers than at enthusing them with the spirit of the enterprise. From short-term productivity initiatives based mainly on social facilitation, influence or coercion, we now have a huge ramshackle edifice which constantly reshapes and renames itself to accommodate the changing contexts of work.

Control theories

Whether motivation theory can move on to a more considered view of the social relations of production will depend to a great extent on whether theories can begin to incorporate both the objective and subjective dimensions of work. One attempt to do this is found in what is probably the most powerful development in motivation theory to appear in the last 15 years: Klein's *Integrated Control Theory of Work Motivation* (1989). What this theory manages to do is to integrate cognitive motivation theories, theories of scripted response, theories of attribution and of causal perception, for example Powers' (1973) *perceptual control theory* and Wiener's (1948) *cybernetic hypothesis*. These latter, combining information processing and the control of action through feedback, are similar to Miller's notion of TOTE units given in Chapter 20. The main elements of behavioural control theories are given below:

- cognitive
 - internal goals
 - information on current state
 - comparison of goals and state
- affective
 - perceived discrepancies
 - behavioural resolutions.

Klein's model (see Figure 21.2) is essentially a meta-theory aimed at accounting for the hypotheses generated by the various approaches it incorporates, and according to Klein (1989) it is consistent with the propositions of social learning, equity, expectancy and satisfaction theories. However, it also claims to focus more on individuals' self-regulation in response to external influences than on the effects of those influences, such as in providing goals and incentives, as is the case with most motivation theories.

If we imagine that many of these processes, for example the continuation of previous behaviour (1989: 7), might themselves be organised into hierarchical systems of goal-directed action, the theory's potential explanatory power becomes enormous. Since the model does acknowledge the influence of individual and situational factors such as ability, past experience, social comparison processes, situational constraints and reward structures, this theory offers some hope of reconciling cognitive/rational theories with approaches emphasising subjectivity and its construction, notwithstanding our comments on goals above. However, the propositions that Klein derives from control theory are still to be tested in any detail. Even so, as Klein demonstrates with his extended example of a salesperson trying to meet a quota, it does offer considerable insight into the dynamic processes of self-regulation in individual action and of how 'automatic and conscious processes operate simultaneously to initiate and direct behaviour' (1989: 168).

On the basis that Klein's model represents an even more sophisticated and multivariate theory than previous accounts of motivation, any predictions would have to view practical applications as still a long way off. A similar view on control and integration to Klein's is advocated by Brotherton (1999: 38-43).

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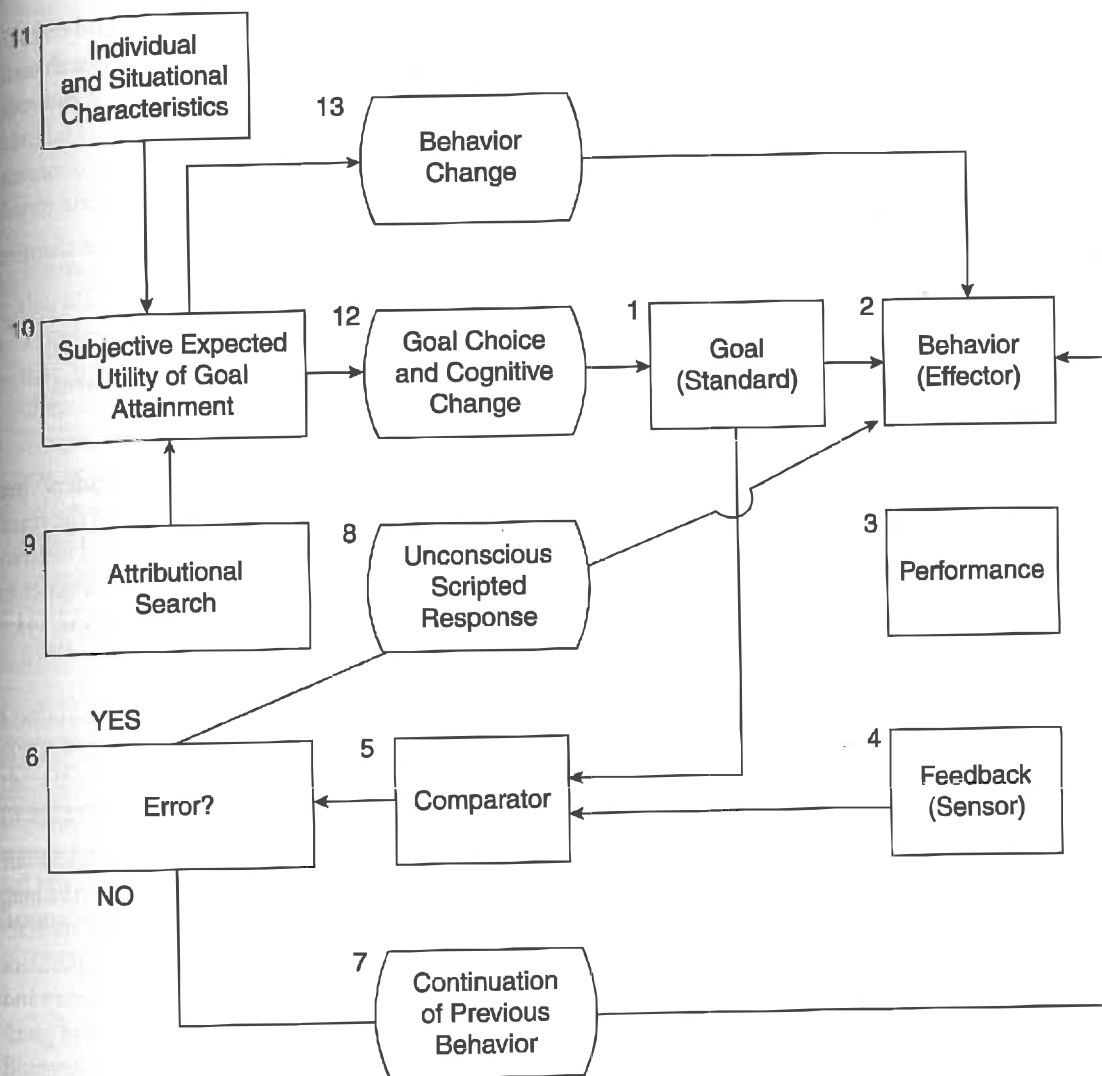


Figure 21.2 An integrated control theory model of work motivation

Source: H. J. Klein (1989) 'An Integrated Control Theory of Work Motivation', *Academy of Management Journal*, 14, 2: 1451, with permission.

This is Ford's *motivational systems theory* (1992), which seeks to integrate factors such as goals, emotions, personal agency and behavioural schemata in a fashion which, according to Brotherton, conceptualises motivation in a fashion that emphasises 'facilitation, not control, should be the guiding idea' (1999: 40). In support of Ford, Brotherton notes that 'Psychology makes a fundamental error if it adopts the proposition that managers need oversimple models of what are actually complex processes', but at the same time, 'there is too much pressure on managers already to have them accept the quick fix' (1999: 42-3). As such, it appears that managers are caught in a cleft stick, needing simple techniques to attempt continually to gain a competitive edge in motivational terms, but suffering the consequences of employing inadequate

conceptualisations of workplace motivation. Brotherton argues that future shifts in values and training are key factors in being able to utilise more complex approaches. In the meantime, it is probable that the blunt instruments of Herzberg's KITAs will remain the dominant techniques to be employed and redeployed in the process of mobilising commitment.

Self-concept theory

Though models such as Klein's make a comprehensive attempt to integrate content and process theories, they are still open to the kind of critique put forward by those such as Shamir, who claims that:

“ current motivational theories are restricted in certain respects due to their over reliance on individual-hedonistic assumptions and their over-emphasis on cognitive-calculative processes. (Shamir, 1991: 405)

According to Shamir, the kind of influence strategies employed by 'transformational leaders' (see Chapter 22), who try to 'persuade their followers to transcend their own interests for the sake of the team' (1991: 407), cannot be explained from the point of view of theories which highlight individual satisfaction. There have been past attempts to link content and process theories using self-concepts in order to give a more contingent appreciation of motivation. For example, *Self-discrepancy theory* (Higgins, 1987) takes notions of balance and examines how we negotiate between our

- actual self: how people believe they really are;
- ideal self: how people would ideally like themselves to be
- ought self: how people think they ought to be

to show how the struggle to maintain consistency between multiple selves in face of the vagaries of our beliefs, aspirations, self-perceptions and actual behaviours can produce dissonance effects and in the long term have negative effects on our self-esteem. However, self-discrepancy theory still focuses on satisfaction albeit in terms of delineating the possible constraints individuals face in being able to experience satisfaction. It is possible that the concept of *subjective expected utility*, as found in expectancy theory and incorporated by Klein, can go beyond a reliance on satisfaction through the mechanism of delayed gratification of rewards attached to superordinate goals. This could not, however, counter the second strand of Shamir's critique, in that process theories may have their greatest explanatory power in what Mischel (1973) characterised as strong situations where there are clear goals and expectancies tied to performance incentives. The inability to explain weak situations where there may be large variations in individual behaviour is tied to what Shamir argues is a tendency of content theories to 'emphasise easily and measurable and observable and relatively discrete behaviours' (1991: 408).

Shamir further asserts that motivation theories tend to embody limited concepts of intrinsic motivation and to exclude values and moral obligations. Such conceptions are said to ignore the fact that a task may have no intrinsically satisfying properties and yet might still be 'motivating due to its meaning for the individual, for instance in terms of the affirmation of his or her identity and collective affiliations' (1991: 409). Even where motivation theories do make strong distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, Shamir notes that the task-oriented focus tends to 'neglect the symbolic and expressive aspects of human beings' (1991: 409). This is especially true of the notion of denotative motivation, which examines the possibility of a drive towards discharging one's moral obligations (from Schwartz, 1983, and Etzioni, 1988).



Shamir's self-concept theory of motivation attempts to produce both a theory of general work motivation (investing effort in the work role) and general job motivation (investing effort in your current job). It does not attempt to explain the motivation to perform specific tasks but, like Klein, Shamir integrates material from a number of sources, notably Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, 'structural symbolic interactionism' from Stryker (1980), and Gecas' (1986) self-concept theory. The assumptions driving the theory are given below:

- 1 'Humans are not only goal oriented but also self expressive.' They 'choose to spend time in situations that allow them to express their dispositions, attitudes and self-conceptions'.
- 2 'People are motivated to maintain and enhance their self esteem and self-worth.' This is reflected in that 'both competence standards and cultural values are internalised into the self concept in the form of evaluative standards.'
- 3 'People are also motivated to retain and increase their sense of self-consistency.... In a sense, the self-concept is an ideology that people attempt to express and validate in their behaviour.'
- 4 Self-concepts are composed, in part, of identities. ... People derive meaning from being linked to social collectives through their identities', and may operate on an 'authenticity motive' (Gecas) to reflect their 'true identity' in their actions.
- 5 'Self-concept related behaviour is not always related to clear expectations or immediate and specific goals.' It may be motivated by faith and 'the imagined possibilities of the self'. (Shamir, 1991: 411-15)

Overall, general job motivation is seen as determined by the extent to which the person's self-concept is congruent with their current job and its situational context. Job-related identities are seen as central to the self-concept, though other identities (for example, national, ethnic and family) must be acknowledged (1991: 417). The theory is said to be most powerful in 'weak' situations (see above) where goals and the means for achieving them are unclear and there is no explicit linkage between performance and external rewards (1991: 416). However, Shamir does claim that the theory may be useful for explaining some 'strong' situations, for example, 'deviant, nonconforming behaviour such as whistle-blowing' (1991: 416), presumably on the basis that these activities have strong identity salience.

Control, self-concepts and identity

The need for such a synthesis of control and self-concept theories can be demonstrated through Jackson's (1994: 83) summary of the influence of cultural factors on motivation. Jackson argues that in international comparisons, process theories are more portable due to their focus on 'universals' of motivation and since 'static-content theories do not travel very well between cultures' (1994: 83). Self-concept theory might thus provide useful insights into how general work motivation is subject to cultural variation, while control theory can provide explanation of the 'universal' processes by which persons choose specific courses of action.

With self-concept theory, we can focus on the content and processes of motivation as inputs to situationally determined strategies that people adopt to enhance the identities they have constructed. People would not be 'intrinsically' or 'extrinsically' motivated, rather, they would take meaning from whatever sources are available and use it to enhance both the image they have of themselves and the images that others hold of them. In a work environment where possibilities for securing meaning were scarce, people might still be capable of taking meaning from the situation to the extent that they can gain some personal or collective control over their work. Strongly cohesive workgroup cultures might in this sense

actually identify with working practices to the extent of feeling that they, and not management, 'own' them. Attempting to redefine working practices in such situations might only detract from the sources of meaning available in the workplace, and in essence, attack whatever portion of identity resides there. If this is the case, then compensations, even assuming they are designed to satisfy both intrinsically and extrinsically derived motivations, would probably not overcome hostility to changes and would make them difficult to implement. Whatever the case, it appears debatable that motivational interventions can actually manage to mobilise any real *commitment* to organisations, a contention we wish to explore in our final section.

Mobilising commitment

As far as the practical use of motivation theory at present is concerned, individual identity is essentially an *intervening variable* acting to complicate applications that attempt to mobilise worker commitment and make motivations difficult to assess with standardised test inventories such as interest questionnaires. But it is already the case that social identity measures are being used almost as predictive personality traits. For example, James and colleagues (1994) use measures such as self- and collective esteem, value differences, expressiveness and perceived prejudice in assessing the health of minority workers. The relative degrees of prediction and attempted control actually available to managers are illustrated by the model proposed by Myers and Myers (1982, in Jackson, 1994: 73) in Table 21.1 below.

It is evident that the processes described in control and self-concept theory operate mainly at Myers' 'psycho-social' level, where the possible degree of managerial control is said to be only moderate to low. As with Herzberg's commentary on motivational techniques and the Hershey quote that opens the chapter, the problem is an imperfect control of intrinsic motivational impulses which can only partially be corrected by the deployment of extrinsic rewards. To achieve systematic control over commitment, were this even possible, would require that psychosocial factors be regulated through social and organisational processes. However these must be considered in relation to effects of environmental variables (politico-legal, socio-cultural, market-economic, and so on), which even in relation to Leavitt's (1978) basic model of the interaction between people, task, technology and structure could be seen to produce a welter of mediating variables. Thus, the main burden of change initiatives, for example, falls on people rather than systems, as they are the factor over which management has the least reliable control.

Such structural and cultural pressures, ideologically legitimated by the 'need' to change tasks and technologies, coupled with the long-term failure to control intrinsic motivation, have produced the whole panoply of modern-day KITAs. Ranging from desperate attempts to reassert control over rewards in performance-related pay and share schemes, through group-based initiatives, to the bludgeon-like tools of restructuring and corporate culture, what success these initiatives have is not in producing general job and work motivation. It is merely the production of short-term movement towards increased effort on specific tasks. The only routes that appear to be left for increasing general motivation are in the control of meaning and of group-based socialisation into work roles (see Chapter 20) as the main psychosocial factors subject to external manipulation.

Internalisation of commitment

To achieve this form of change requires that practices which have evolved into scripted behaviours be 'unfrozen' in Lewin's (1947) terms, so that re-socialisation can take place. As scripts are based on the kinds of flexible action patterns and sensorimotor learning discussed in Chapter 20, what would be sought here is the constant re-engagement of the intellectual level of learning. Behaviour would not

Table 21.1 Management control of motivating influences

Factors	Examples	Degree of management control
Organisational	Nature of jobs	High
	Physical/technical environment	
	Reward system	
	Supervision	
	Available information	
	Organisational goals	
Social	Reference groups	Moderate
	Peer groups	
	Work groups	
	Role-set	
Psycho-social	Needs	
	Perceived abilities	Moderate to low
	Aspirations	
	Personal objectives	
Psycho-biological	Genetics	Nil
	Nurture	

Source: M. T. Myers and G. E. Myers (1982) *Managing by Communication: An Organisational Approach*, New York: McGraw Hill, reproduced in T. Jackson (1994) *Organisational Behaviour in International Management*, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, p. 73, with permission.

be directed by learned patterns of experience, desire or collective obligation, but by adaptive behaviour in response to constant uncertainty. This situation is reflected in Hopwood's model (1974, cited in Johnson and Gill, 1993: 34-5) linking social and administrative controls. Social controls, such as group norms, aimed at regulating output, and administrative controls, such as reward systems, aimed at increasing productivity, require enactment through their internalisation as self-controls. Johnson and Gill (1993: 34-6) extend this by reference to Kelman's (1961) work on conformity and Kanter's (1968) comments on organisational identity. In Kelman's eyes, internalisation is one form of conformity whereby the individual adopts the norms and value structures of 'significant others' in the development of their 'internal moral imperatives'.

Compliance is conformity based on the motivation to gain rewards and avoid costs, which may be linked in organisational terms to Hopwood's administrative controls. Identification also involves 'significant others', but is conformity to the social influence they exert on the basis of our becoming emotionally attached to them, wishing to be like them or perhaps to be identified as one of the group or cultural community to which they belong. The role of compliance and identification is finally linked to the idea of internalised self-controls through Kanter's concepts of 'mortification' and 'surrender': the former involving the 'exchanging of a private identity for one provided by the organisation', and the latter the 'attachment of one's decision-making prerogative to a greater power' (Kanter, 1968, cited in Johnson and Gill, 1993: 35-6). The importance of this for Johnson and Gill is that:

“ it draws our attention to the processes that can disengage the individual from prior social and ideological attachments by redirecting his or her beliefs and norms towards those that predominate in any organisational context – whatever those might be. (Johnson and Gill, 1993: 36)

This is linked to the development of organisational commitment through reference to Brown (1965) on the nature of conformity and moral development. Individuals are seen to initially obey external demands and sanctions and then to develop emotional attachments in 'everyday social interactions' that produce identification and eventual internalisation (1965: 36).

The dilemma here is that the context within which internalisation takes place is as important to the outcomes as the process itself. As Hosking and Morley (1991: 5) note, 'people are both products of their contexts and participants in the creation of those contexts'. Beyond the modelling processes social information processing (see above) identifies in the social construction of attitudes and motivations the relation between person and context is one of 'assimilation' by changing the context and 'accommodation' by changing oneself. Relationships of this kind would make attempts to promote the internalisation of controls appear to be a one-sided process. Accommodation and compliance would be the normative valuation for those instituting control systems, whereas assimilation and identification would be the desired outcomes for those subject to control. Since the opportunities for assimilation of context are limited for most employees, it is likely that any accommodation that takes place is rather a case of resigned acceptance more analogous to mortification than 'empowerment'.

Institutional commitment?

The concern noted by Hershey at the start of the chapter essentially devolves to an appeal for line managers and HRM practitioners to employ the techniques of persuasive communication used by advertisers to compensate for the lack of success of motivation theory and the managerial practices which made motivation theory necessary. This reflects the focus within the Myers model above on the extent of managerial influence at the psychosocial level being limited to training and communication. Commitment, on the other hand, implies both a condition of personal commitment to courses of action or belief as aspired to in the mainstream literature, and one of 'being committed'. This latter, in the sense of being locked into a system which is somehow beyond our control, is more representative of the critical literature on management. It presents organisations as institutions to which we are committed against our will and where persuasive *therapeutic* techniques are used on us in order to produce a good 'organisation person'.

This view harks back to Goffman's notion of a total institution in his 1961 book *Asylums*. Such institutions – exemplified by prisons, mental hospitals and so on – were seen to have extensive if not

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complete control over their inmates' lives, backed by systems enforcing their formal rules. This does not imply that inmates are passive recipients of control; both Goffman and later Becker (1963) noted that these institutions also embody informal rule systems enacted by both inmates and staff, which can work against the formal rules but which are necessary to the continued performance of their respective roles. The picture here is of total compliance with control, but of resistance to, and lack of internalisation of, control systems – almost the opposite of Kanter's notions of mortification and surrender as outlined above.

Kunda (1992) addresses the extent to which modern work organisations can be likened to total institutions in his case study of control and commitment in 'Tech', a high-tech US engineering company. On the surface, the resemblance to a total institution is slight, employment at Tech being economically rewarding and desirable and members being continually involved in 'reflective discourses' that openly embody irony, cynicism and humour. But at the same time there is a pull towards an escalation of commitment to the corporation, towards corporate definitions of reality, and continual pressure on the boundaries of personal privacy. The outcome, according to Kunda, is that 'people over time are submerged in a community of meaning that is to some extent monopolised by management: a total institution of sorts' (1992: 224). The self is not surrendered or captured in Kanter's terms, but the foundations on which the self is built are continually undermined as the authenticity of experience is continually appropriated by corporate ideology.

The effect of such an appropriation of meaning overlays rules of belief onto the systems of rules regulating behaviour, imperfect articulation between the two giving rise to manufactured uncertainty and insecurity. This insecurity is a classic precondition for the exercise of power through self-discipline as exemplified in Grey's (1994) study of professional accountants. The uncertainty produced by exhortations on the superiority of accountants, coupled with a secretive employment and promotion policy, led to constant self-surveillance. This was characterised by a search for 'signs of grace' signalled by formal indications such as salary, job ratings and allocations and informal signs such as working and social relationships with superiors. Where 'grace' is found this reinforces the self-confidence of the individual and hopefully engenders a self-fulfilling prophecy of success. Thus to gain, in Whyte's (1957: 404) terms, 'the peace of mind offered by the organisation' and to reduce levels of manufactured uncertainty does not require abject surrender to the formal restrictions or beliefs of the total institution. At the same time, though, it will require the same types of tacit collaboration and 'tactful' behaviour that Goffman saw as necessary to the continuation of organisational 'performances' and which we explore further in Chapter 25.

Summary and key points

We have sought here to show what motivation is *not* – that coercion and bribery are not motivation and suffer like most other motivational 'techniques' from diminishing returns in the short term – that the over-simplified concepts still utilised by managers and trainers simply cannot account for individual variation and situational contingency. Even though motivation and goals may be socially constructed artefacts, OB and Org. Psych. still seek to further integrate motivation with other theories such as attribution and theories of the self, and this effort is not wasted if our objective is actually to understand why people do the things they do, that is, how, why and in support of what *they* mobilise their commitment and consent. The problem for motivation theory in the workplace is its success in specifying the range and scope of the variables involved and in the face of this complexity managers falling back on KITAs and social theorists on the psychological contract and the like.

In consultancy and management development work we often hear managers complain that 'my workers are not motivated' and the stock response has become: 'No, only dead people aren't motivated, they're just not motivated to do what you want them to'. To a great extent, in this era of short-term contracts and demands for continuous development, we are now expected to be responsible for our own motivation to work. Now that we are not supposed to have a comfortable progression up a job ladder to mobilise our commitment, and the diminishing returns of reward and autonomy are recognised everywhere except in the case of CEO remuneration, organisations have been turning elsewhere for inspiration. The phenomenon we move on to in the next chapter is one regularly diagnosed as the source and solution of many organisational problems – *leadership*.

Further reading

OB textbooks are much of a muchness on this topic with Arnold and colleagues providing a more up-to-date account than most and Johnson and Gill's (1993) text is still good for linking motivation to issues of control. A good historical account focusing on the theorists and the origins of theory is found in Latham (2006), but the seminal work remains Herzberg's 1968 article for *Harvard Business Review* which is available as an expanded reprint and an e-book.

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