

Reflections On The Field Of Organizational Behavior ¹

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ABSTRACT

Organizational Behavior often influences many modern management decisions. Managers and other human resource professionals are presented with analyses, proposals, etc. to help them improve their organizations. How can they judge the validity, accuracy and efficiency of these proposals? Perhaps one way they can evaluate them more accurately is to understand something of how the field of organizational behavior developed and the background of some of its major thinkers. This increased understanding might be heightened by knowing how the major contributors feel about their contributions and the sources of their seminal ideas. This discussion of the origins and development of the field of organizational behavior provides the background and understanding which can increase the accuracy with which today's managers and professionals judge the quality of the large mass of organizational behavior based information which they receive. Such increased accuracy may be of vital importance to the success of their organizations and of their own careers.

Because organizational behavior is such a young field with many of its earliest contributors continuing to do research, the strategy adopted for summarizing it was telephone interviews with about seventy of the leading experts in the field. The interviews were conducted by the authors of this paper. This data base was supplemented by an analysis of written documents about the field's development, and the development of a time line of important events based on scrutiny of Academy of Management activities over the years and on the environment as a whole (for example, the Gordon and Howell report, 1959).

The distillation of effort reported here is divided into six subsections and an appendix on methodology: origins and evolution of organizational behavior, definition of the field and its distinction from other fields, major influences on the way our respondents view the field, major themes that have emerged, major contributions of the field, and outsiders' perceptions of organizational behavior.

Origins And Evolution Of Organizational Behavior As Area Of Study

The Organizational Behavior Time Line (see Appendix II) is used here as an initial jumping off point to identify how the field developed and when it became separable from other disciplines.

The Academy of Management was founded in 1936 and in 1937 *Papers on the Science of Administration* was published by Gulick and Urwick. Barnard's (1938) seminal *The Functions of an Executive* appeared soon after. Neither of these very important contributions include in their title the term "organizational behavior." Can we conclude that this was the beginning? Probably not because writers have gone further back in time than 1936 in identifying the origins of the field.

Regardless of the field's beginnings the time map does show that the period from 1936 through the end of the 1940s was fairly fruitful in terms of original contributions. During that time, in addition to the works just discussed, Mooney's and Reilly's *Onward Industry: The Principles of Organization* (1939), Lewin, Lippitt and White's "Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created Social Climates" (1939), Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* (1941) and Holden, Fish, and Smith's *Top Management Organization and Control* (1941) appeared. Maslow (1943), Gardner (1945) and Drucker (1946) also began contributing to the literature on organizations. In 1947 another seminal work, Simon's *Administrative Behavior* was added to the literature, and Stogdill's and Coch and French's works on leadership were published. In 1941 Harvard University awarded the first doctoral degree in organizational behavior to George Lombard and in 1943 this same institution offered the first MBA level required course in organizational behavior. In 1941 the Society for Applied Anthropology began and in 1943 the Labor Management Center at Yale was founded. At the same time the Committee on Human Relations in Industry was established at the University of Chicago. William Foote Whyte was prominent in both the Society for Applied Anthropology and the Committee on Human Relations.

In addition to our own time line three other sources provided valuable information about the beginning of organizational behavior as a distinct field of study. William Foote Whyte (1965) addressed this issue, specifically tracing the field back to the Western Electric Research program begun about 1925. He placed the field's roots approximately one decade prior to the founding of the Academy. Whyte wrote that by 1945 academic recognition had already been given to the field as a legitimate focus of study and teaching.

Perrow (1973) discussed early efforts in scientific management and the consequent development of human relations research as two major forces in the early development of what he talks about as "organization theory." He also gave much credit to Barnard's work as significant in the development of the "new theory of organizations". In that respect, he placed our origins at the third item of our time map, Barnard's work having appeared in 1938. Further, he noted that Roethlisberger and Dickson's (1939) research was another important contributor to the development of the field. While Whyte concentrated solely on developments in the United States, Perrow indicated that the Tavistock Institute in England was at that time beginning to study the relationship of technology and behavior, and consequently its work contributed to the development of the field during the period shortly after the conclusion of World War II.

Lawrence (1987) presented his own time line going back to Kurt Lewin's work. Of course, Lawrence was one of the early contributors to the field and he placed his own initial contribution in the late 1940s.

All three of these scholars were interviewed as a part of our sample. We examined their interviews to see if significant events were mentioned after their publications when recollections may have changed. While we did not ask respondents to provide us with an indication of when they thought the field had begun, we did ask them when they began identifying themselves as organizational scientists. Whyte indicated that he began his first study in 1942 and at that time thought of himself as "committed to specializing in organizational studies".

Perrow indicated that he did not identify himself as "having a major interest in organizational theory until 1957." He attributes his identification with the field partly to the influence of his major professor and mentor, Philip Selznick. Lawrence stated that he was completing an MBA degree at Harvard when he was called into the Navy in 1946-47. During his stint in the Navy, he decided to go into organizational behavior and consequently returned to Harvard to finish his MBA and acquire the Ph.D. In passing, it is interesting to note the influence of Harvard University on two early contributors, Whyte and Lawrence, who both had connections with the institution during their formative years as organizational scientists. In addition to these authors, other writers have discussed contributions to the field, particularly those coming from industrial psychology. The first important work in industrial psychology appeared in approximately 1913 (Munsterberg, 1913). In a discussion of organizational development, French and Bell (1982) noted that Lippitt and Cartwright figured prominently in this evolution through their contributions to psychology, and, of course, cited Lewin as a major contributor.

Integrating the material from our time line with what other authors have said about the field's development fails to give us a clear date to observe as a birthday. It seems safe to conclude, however, that in the 25 years from 1925 to 1950 several events led to the final emergence of organizational behavior as a clear and separate discipline by the beginning of the 1950s.

The Definition And Distinctiveness Of Organizational Behavior

Recall that in the parable of the blind men and the elephant each man experienced a different part of the elephant, resulting in different descriptions of that mighty beast. To the man who touched the elephant's leg "this marvelous beast...is like a tree that has grown thick and tall." The man who touched the elephant's trunk described the creature as "long and flexible. In fact, it reminds me very much of a snake as it flexes and extends through the air." But the man who touched the elephant's ears saw both of his other companions as wrong, exclaiming that "an elephant is weathered canvas, that which has been exposed for years to the sun and rain".

We asked our survey respondents what, in their minds, is distinctive about organizational behavior. Much like the men in the parable their responses were quite varied, almost idiosyncratic, suggesting the existence of a very low paradigm (Kuhn, 1962) field. With few exceptions, the nature of the responses did not seem to be related systematically to the respondent's discipline, training, area of research interest, or age. It appears, however, to be related somewhat to how the term "distinctiveness" is interpreted.

Two Types of Distinctiveness

Respondents made two distinctions about distinctiveness and these seem to occur in about equal proportions. Some thought of distinctiveness in terms of essential or characteristic features. These people searched or identified what were felt to be hallmarks or operational tendencies at work in the field. Others responded with another mind set. They appeared to try to find unique characteristics or features that set organizational behavior apart from alternative perspectives in the social sciences. At times a single respondent referenced both perspectives in his or her answer.

The Seven Facets of Organizational Behavior

The distinctions just made notwithstanding, several themes or facets were readily identified from an analysis of responses to the interview protocol. These are:

1) *The unit of analysis.* A large proportion of responses (almost twenty-five percent) characterize organizational behavior as distinctive because of what it focuses on, its preferred unit of analysis. Ironically, however, there is not much consensus on just what this preferred unit of analysis is! Several respondents stated that the focus on behavior in organizations (BIO) is clearly a defining characteristic. Put simply, we want to understand why people behave as they do in organizations. Put more eloquently, we are concerned with formal and organizational social phenomena and how these relate to individuals.

Other respondents think the field's focus on organizations as the unit of analysis is what makes it distinctive. To phrase it differently, organizational behavior seeks to understand the behavior of organizations (BOO). This seems especially significant to some because work organizations are so central to United States society.

The co-existence of both perspectives was acknowledged by one respondent who said the term organizational behavior is distinctive precisely because of its ambiguity. For many, it refers to both BIO and BOO.

2) *Multiple levels of analysis.* Several answers to the interview (twelve percent) implied that the distinctiveness of organizational behavior stems from the fact that it makes use of multiple levels of analysis to explain phenomena. One made reference to "escalating" levels of analysis. Another characterized the field as studying the "interpenetration" of levels as they affect behavior. The concept of successive environments was used by a respondent to explain how we use dyads, groups, departments, and larger entities to explain individual and collective phenomena. Finally, one person observed that organizational behavior studies complete social systems which gives us an advantage from the standpoint of knowledge accumulation because we can get at somewhat causal networks and deal with complex interaction.

3) *Applications.* A cluster of responses conveyed the notion that the distinctiveness of organizational behavior stems from its emphasis on application and implementation. Some see its special strength as the ability to translate theory into practice. The field is characterized as more applied than sociology. Its concepts and theories have economic consequences. To another its distinctiveness lies in its focus on real problems in real organizations. Its linkage to application caused one respondent to point out that organizational behavior has to be more responsive to legal and social forces than do other scientific endeavors.

4) *It is interdisciplinary.* The field is distinctive because it represents an "integration" or the "intersection" of disciplines focused on organizations. Individuals trained in the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology, management, public administration, etc., have brought their theories, models, and methodologies to bear on a common set of research questions. One is encouraged to be eclectic and to seek out and use the best developments in relevant specialties. This interdisciplinary orientation is felt to contribute to the richness of the study of organizational phenomena.

5) *It is empirical.* While only three respondents took this perspective, it seems worth noting. The distinctiveness of organizational behavior for these individuals lies in its emphasis on measurement and on "reality testing" (empirical verification). Perhaps this is one consequence of its applied orientation (point 3). As such, our field has a deep concern for strong methodology. Our theories are regularly put to empirical test and are stronger for it.

Not everyone in our sample "bought" the premise that organizational behavior has legitimate claims to being distinctive. In fact, thirteen respondents did not. Some of these individuals are uncertain about their position. But most are clear in their view that there is little, if anything, that is distinctive about the field. Several see it as merely reflecting traditional disciplines, especially psychology. As put by one person, "organizational behavior is an artificial term, implying a field that has no real distinct properties." Table 1 presents the distribution of responses across the five facets and the statement that the field is not distinctive.

For the present, just as in the parable, there appears to be adequate justification for all the points of view provoked by the interview and summarized here. It seems we are indeed seeing different features of the elephant!

Major Influences On The Way Respondents View The Field

Isaac Newton (1757) observed that each succeeding generation of scholars rises on the shoulders of giants who went before. In analyzing our sample's responses to the query "Whose ideas were the major contributors to your way of thinking about research and theory development?" Newton's observation continues to ring true. Various patterns of intergenerational influence emerge from the data.

TABLE 1	
Seven (Plus One) Themes Generated From the Interview Question #8.	
Theme	% of Responses *
1. Distinctive Unit Of Analysis	26
2. Multiple Levels	12.5
3. Applications	15
4. It's Interdisciplinary	11
5. It's Multidisciplinary	10
6. Empiricism	4
7. Value Orientation	5
8. Not Distinctive	16
* A given person often supplied more than one idea.	

Perhaps the clearest pattern of influence is that between student and mentor. The reported influence, for example, of Ralph Stogdill on Bob House and Steve Kerr; or Fritz Roethlisberger on Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch; or Edwin Ghiselli on Lyman Porter, Ed Lawler, and Pat Smith; or, finally, that of Jim March on Bill Starbuck and Lou Pondy, are good examples of this. Such influence, of course, fits our preconceived notion of the general education process.

Another clear pattern of influences that emerges takes the form of a micro-macro split. The most evident bifurcation is between those influenced by Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn versus those influenced by James Thompson and Charles Perrow. The former group includes individuals like Bob House, Dan Ilgen, Ray Katzell, and Ed Lawler. The latter counts among its members Mike Hannan, Paul Lawrence, Bill McKelvey, and Lou Pondy. Adams was the only respondent who reported being influenced by both Katz and Kahn, and Thompson and Perrow.

A third clear pattern of influence is somewhat more difficult to classify. It appears to be an influence based on an intellectual transfer of ideas rather than personal interaction or research orientation. The impact of both Kurt Lewin and Herbert Simon most clearly exemplifies this pattern. Lewin's influence on Robert Kahn who, in turn, is acknowledged as a major micro reference point again underscores Newton's observation concerning the development of knowledge across generations. Others acknowledging a Lewinian influence include Ray Katzell, Paul Lawrence, Jim Naylor, and Vic Vroom. In contrast, a Simon influence is reported by Mike Hannan, Bob House, and, again, both Lawrence and Vroom. Of interest, Simon reports that Chester Barnard was the most important influence on his intellectual heritage. Only one other respondent, Bill Scott, cited a Barnardian influence.

Of further possible interest is the absence of certain patterns of influence that might be expected on the basis of citation analysis. For instance, such frequently cited contributors as Max Weber, Joan Woodward, Renis Likert, Abraham Maslow, and Douglas McGregor were mentioned by no more than one or two respondents. The inclusion of Weber and Woodward in this list together with the fact that Tom Burns and the "Tavistock Group" and the "Aston Group" were the only other non-United States based scholars cited, may reflect either an ethnocentric bias to the field or narrow training (or both). Also notably absent as a source of influence are the more "popular" purveyors of management thought. Of this group, only Peter Drucker received a single mention.

Sources of Ideas

The generation and transfer of scientific ideas as a means of information building in human society has been of interest to scholars for many years. In response to a related question, "where do you get your ideas?", a full forty percent of our respondents answered, "from the journals." As a source of ideas, journals seem to know no bounds. This is not to say that reference is made only to management and management-related journals. Respondents stress that their ideas come from reading journals in other fields, such as general science, education, and sociology.

"Colleagues" are the second most popular source of ideas. Indeed, they were only slightly less influential than journals. This, of course, stresses the importance of being in a collegiate setting which generates the critical mass necessary to generate new approaches to understanding.

Books, the third most popular source of ideas, are mentioned by twenty-five percent of our respondents. Of particular interest is the range of books cited. Works by prominent scholars were certainly mentioned, but also books by non-academics such as Chuck Yaeger and Lee Iaccoca. The role of students as a source of ideas is mentioned by twenty percent of our respondents. As one respondent remarked, "I get ideas from doctoral students, particularly those not in my area or department, and from those in the business department who do not agree with my perspectives." Conventions and consulting are two additional sources of ideas mentioned with frequency. One respondent, however, questioned the value of professional meetings. He states; "I stay away from all conventions except when a doctoral student early in his/her career gives a paper. Conventions are a waste of time. Most papers are not worth listening to. If they're good, they appear in the literature."

Of the sources of ideas infrequently given, a few surprises should be mentioned. For example, only three respondents report generating ideas from their own experience or from "life's problems." Likewise, only three respondents report "befuddlement", "frustration", and "desperation" as a source of ideas. Finally only one respondent was refreshingly honest in admitting that, "I've never had a truly novel idea. The contributions I've made had other sources, but often I've helped with the interweaving and merging of ideas into a new context, translating abstract ideas into concrete applications".

Major Themes

We expected that a synthesis of the views of acknowledged experts could provide a basis for a coherent history of the field that could be used by others to help them integrate and organize their knowledge about organizational behavior. The interview question designed to elicit this expected convergence was: "What do you see as the major themes in the field as a whole?"

The hope stated above cannot be realized by the data that emerged. Perhaps the responses obtained are useful precisely because they clarify the fundamental diversity of "cognitive maps of the field" held by respected researchers.

Because of the extreme variety of responses it was impossible to develop any meaningful content coding, despite numerous hours contributed by the Texas group to this job. Therefore, this discussion cannot be based on a statistical analysis, but must be based on "hands on" shuffling and compiling of the interviewees' verbatim responses to our question. This informal method of analysis indicates that the most prevalent answer to the question was "what field?"

Further complexity is added by the nature of the responses of those who did struggle to provide themes. Parenthetically, several people who responded "what field" then tried to provide themes. These appear to fall into two groups: themes that could reasonably be said to be confined to one's own specialty or subfield, and characterizations of the field as a whole.

Respondents in the group that provided themes for their subfields were explicit that they felt competent to speak only for this restricted discipline. Often this came in the form of an initial response to our question, "Do you consider yourself an organizational scientist?" Answers range from "No, I'm an industrial psychologist," to "Yes, I have specialized in the sociology of organizations since my graduate training in the 1930s". These interviewees (a considerable proportion of the sample) would then complete the rest of the interview on the basis of this narrowed framework. Alternatively, others who described themes in terms of their own subfield stated as a preface to their answer that they only felt competent to respond in terms of their own area. Examples of subfield themes are:

- 1) Job satisfaction, goal setting and knowledge of results.
- 2) Attempts to apply/import systems theory.
- 3) Concerns with organizations/environment relationships.
- 4) Network analyses of interorganizational relationships.
- 5) Population ecology perspective.
- 6) Efforts to marry OT and Strategy and OT and Economics.
- 7) Differentiation between organizations and environments.
- 8) Adaptation.
- 9) Expectancy theory and attribution theory.

Of those who attempted to provide a broad "description" of the field, a few distinguished between "micro" and "macro" subfields:

- 1) There are a set of people who are essentially micro. A second theme is more sociological and is macro organizational behavior. A third field is represented by the work of economists who are interested in organizations.
- 2) Concepts: motivation, group behavior, leadership, intergroup relations, conflict resolution, organizational structure and design, organizational change, organizational/environment, culture, inter-personal relations. Issues or problems; productivity, satisfaction, morale, innovation, adaptation.

It seems clear from these responses that the initial goal of providing a tidy, ordered set of theoretical themes for students and others interested in organizational behavior through a synthesis of senior scholars' views is simply impossible to achieve. Under these circumstances, it must be concluded that there is not, and quite possibly cannot be, a consensus on the themes of the field. The views are obviously too diverse.

It is easy in retrospect to suggest that, perhaps, we posed dumb questions, but the fact that so many individuals did attempt

to develop a thematic map of the field attests to the need to have one. It may be that one outcome of this effort is the recognition that all such neat encapsulations of "the field" should be recognized as the idiosyncratic perspectives that they are. Rather than viewing organizational behavior as a linear set of theoretical or practical themes, in which progress is or is not made, it appears as if another model is more appropriate. One alternative, independently mentioned by two respondents has a certain amount of face validity:

1. Individuals drive the field. That is individual interests drive the field, rather than the field determining individuals' interests.
2. The field is strongly affected by the styles or approaches of the researchers.

The view that there is nothing distinctive about the field combined with the difficulty in identifying major themes undoubtedly influences responses about major contributions and about outsiders' perceptions of the field.

Organizational Behavior's Major Contributions

One expects judgments regarding the major contributions of a young atheoretical field, such as organizational behavior, to be quite varied. Our survey bears out this expectation. Indeed, an informal grouping of responses produced over twenty categories, nearly one for every three respondents. These cover the entire spectrum of the field, from micro topics such as motivation, group dynamics, and personnel selection techniques, to more macro topics like organizational design, organization/environment relations, and organizational effectiveness.

In addition to the broad diversity of opinions, there are two other significant characteristics of the aggregate responses. First, nearly ten percent of the sample feels the field's greatest contributions are methodological. Upon closer examination these responses tend to fall into two categories. One group, presumably industrial organizational psychologists, thinks the field has made important contributions to psychometric theory in the process of developing personnel instrumentation. Another group, more mainstream organizational behavior, extols the development of organizational assessment tools. This group argues that these tools have fostered an accumulation of considerable knowledge regarding key organizational processes and features; for example, job design and employee satisfaction. They have also improved the practice of management by providing a systematic approach to collecting both diagnostic and evaluation data.

Second, and most disturbing, nearly one quarter of the sample thinks the field has made no significant contribution, whatsoever. Although optimistic statements regarding promising developments are appended to some of these negative assessments, the fact remains that a large portion of our senior statesmen are unable to identify a single noteworthy contribution stemming from several decades of research. Some attributed this lack of progress to the incipient nature of the field, but others laid blame on our misplaced emphasis on emulating the physical sciences.

Micro Contributions

On the micro side, five contributions were mentioned by at least ten percent of the sample. The most frequently mentioned topic is decision making. Seven respondents think the field has made major contributions in mapping the analytical problem solving process. They emphasize concepts like "bounded rationality", and "non-rational" in describing the field's contributions to the decision making literature. They also point to work on the impact of group dynamics on decision making outcomes. Others highlight the link between decision making and resource dependencies, as well as the use (and abuse) of power in organizations.

Six respondents focused on contributions to our understanding of motivation and commitment. Roughly half of these point to Vroom's (1964) book as a breakthrough in this area. Respondents feel research on these topics has demystified the individual-organizational attachment process. They also think organizations are better able to assess the impact of various incentives on members' involvement. They note several important spin-offs of this focus, for example the research on quality of working life.

A similar number of respondents emphasize contributions in the area of leadership theory, training, and development. They think research and practice in this area significantly enhanced our understanding of the impact of the leadership role, as well as the characteristics of effective leaders. Debunking the "great man" theory of leadership was hailed as an important milestone in

this area. Similarly, efforts to place the impact of leadership in a broader context of complex interdependencies between organizational and environmental influences, are viewed as a major contribution.

Several respondents cited a related contribution. They feel organizational behavior has had a major impact on the practice of management by raising the consciousness of managers regarding the importance of human resources. They point to the Hawthorne studies, as well as the early research by French and Raven (1959) on bases of power, and to Lewin's (1939) work on group behavior, as watersheds in establishing scientific credibility for the humanistic approach to management. Several think that while contemporary managers typically do not understand the scholarly underpinnings of modern management theory, they nonetheless follow as common practice many of the dicta of these early human relation pioneers. The final micro contribution cited by at least ten percent of the sample is personnel theory and practice. Several respondents see this area as an exemplar of what our field can contribute to the practice of management. Organizational behavior has a strong theoretical base in psychology and its methodology is rigorous. Further, the work in this area has fostered close professional ties between practitioners and academicians.

Macro Contributions

Macro and micro contributions received approximately the same number of nominations from our sample. However, there is much less consensus about macro topics. Indeed, only three topics were mentioned by at least ten percent of the respondents. Among topics mentioned by only one to three people, are organizational decline, strategy, innovation, effectiveness, and managing change.

Three topics receiving the most support are closely related. Seven respondents identified the emphasis on organization-environment relations as a major contribution. They think that the natural progression from an internal to an external focus represents a major transition in our field. They also point to the extensive work on contingency theory, despite its mixed results, as an important conceptual breakthrough. They further see this emphasis on open systems as a natural bridge to the field of sociology.

The second macro contribution is organizational design. Seven respondents feel the field has made major strides in understanding the dynamics undergirding effective intra-unit cooperation, communication, and coordination. Although some indicated it is not clear whether theory has lead to practice in this arena, they feel scholars have at least done much to codify and refine practice. Others are more charitable and point to specific contributions to the conceptualization of design principles; for example, the tension between integration and differentiation.

The final contribution is a better understanding of the complexities of organizational systems. Six respondents think organizational behavior matured as a field when it began examining the interdependencies among systems. (compared with examining systems in isolation). These interdependencies concern technology, structure, employees, management, and unions, as well as external social, political, an economic conditions. Some respondents feel the field's richest potential for significant contribution lies in aiding organizational and social policy makers to make sense of this tangled web of interdependence processes.

In conclusion, it is apparent from these responses that the field has made significant strides. Several key contributions are identified. It is, however, disturbing that a large percentage of respondents feel the field has contributed nothing of merit. Also, a wide diversity of opinion about what constitutes an important contribution is evident in these responses, especially in the macro area.

Outsiders' Perceptions Of Organizational Behavior

We asked respondents to comment on perceptions they thought people outside the field have of the field, particularly perceptions of business and government leaders. Their answers are grouped in five categories, each accounting for approximately twenty percent of the responses.

The first set of responses convey the feeling that the field has an extremely poor external reputation. The content area of the field, it is thought, is viewed by many outsiders as "intuitively obvious." Although the practice of management may have benefited from research on management, this group thinks that this outcome is not widely accepted by the general public. Others feel that our poor reputation is based on the fact that our work is viewed as esoteric and irrelevant. They view this as the natural

consequence of a field striving to gain scientific credibility, at the expense of losing credibility with practitioners. One person argues that our poor image is due to the fact that "we view our role as problem finders, but managers want us to be problem solvers. We feel comfortable pointing out what's wrong with their thinking but shy away from giving them better alternatives."

The second point of view is that our image in business is quite good, but it is very poor in government. Respondents think one reason for this bifurcated image is the simple fact that most organizational behavior groups are housed in business schools. Consequently, public administration students and practitioners are less likely to develop a strong identification with our field. Furthermore, some feel our lack of impact on social and political policy at the state and national levels reflects a perception among policy makers that our field addresses issues relevant for individual managers in specific organizations, but has little to say about broader social issues.

The theme of the third group of responses is that our image is improving overall. These respondents point to an expanding number of best sellers on management, as well as to the media's increased interest in management techniques. Part of this upsurge of interest in our field is attributed to poor performance of United States firms during the past decade. However, these respondents also point to evidence that more members of our field are making efforts to address the practical concerns of these firms, using highly visible means. In general, this group is very optimistic about the improvement of our external image, and feel this trend holds well for the future. Although several people express some misgiving about the quality of some of the recent high profile writings in our field, and question the prescriptions recommended by them, they acknowledge several benefits (in terms of increased external credibility) to the field as a whole from these entrepreneurial endeavors.

The next group of responses present a somewhat different view of our external image. This is characterized by one respondent as a "love-hate" relationship. Several people think our image varies widely, covering the spectrum from blind acceptance to total skepticism. They argue that this stems, in part, from the fact that practitioners are critical of the field in general, but aware of their dependence on its knowledge base. The final group of responses argues that for most practitioners our field is a non-entity, in the sense that they do not relate their work in organizations to the content of research on organizations. These respondents argue that although the field has a loyal band of camp followers, and an undoubtedly larger group of severe critics, the average manager has no opinion whatsoever about our field. While, in one sense this assessment can be viewed as an additional negative statement about our external image, these respondents staked out a more limited position; most practitioners are simply unaware of organizational behavior as a scholarly discipline.

The perceptions of respondents regarding our external image is troubling. Only about twenty percent think our reputation among practitioners is generally positive. Another twenty percent feel we have a positive image among business managers but a poor image among public administrators. The remainder of the sample basically feels practitioners, in general, do not relate to our scholarly work at all, or that their attitude toward us is quite negative. The explanation for this poor image is a perceived lack of utility of our work, which stems from the competing objectives of science and practice.

Conclusions

Many may not have expected to find the lack of agreement we found among leading scientists working in the areas of organizational theory and behavior. Such disagreement may well dishearten the student thinking about a career in this field or the practitioner hoping to use some of its findings to improve his or her business. We take a less gloomy view. The fact that the field is characterized by lack of an agreed upon model and of major themes is positive in the sense that it little constrains the new researcher in terms of topics of interest and, to a lesser degree, the way that topic should be investigated. The excitement of being the generation that places boundaries on the field should attract the inquisitive to the field.

The picture is less optimistic for the practitioner, though not as pessimistic as these findings might suggest. Indeed a number of viewpoints have developed in the field and their diversity is driven by the diversity of the field. We have given practitioners the means to screen potential employees, to train them, to motivate and lead them, to design jobs suited to them, and ways to design organizational forms suited to the goals of the organization, which can be assessed using the tools of the trade. All in all, a wealth of strategies are available to help practitioners improve their organizations' operations.

We feel one thing needs to be done by way of meshing the needs of organizations with those strategies available to meet these needs. Researchers and practitioners should come together more frequently in institutionalized or formal ways to define together those organizational facets most in need of research and the "how to" of doing that research. The communities of

scholars and practitioners stand too far apart and because of this practitioners cannot adequately apply what is available and researchers fail to turn the questions of their research in such a way that the products can be more easily used.

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APPENDIX I: Methodology

To develop a standardized interview format and a list of interviewees who would represent the diversity of the field, University of California Ph.D. students in Organizational Behavior and Industrial Relations devoted a semester seminar to teasing out major themes of historical interest and identifying key contributors to those research themes. They developed a questionnaire format and tested it on twelve of the scholars who would ultimately be a part of our sample.

Based on distillation of the data from the initial twelve scholars the interview format was revised and sent with a list of people to be interviewed to each of the authors of this paper. Over the course of three months, scholars completed their phone interviews and returned the data to the University of Texas, where graduate students in Organizational Behavior began to summarize the data. While this was being done a subgroup examined the Academy of Management Proceedings from its first year to the present (1985) and searched existing papers, book chapters, etc., to round out our primary data base with existing materials.

An interim "conversation hour" was held at the 1984 national Academy of Management meetings to present the limited findings then available and to seek counsel from our Academy colleagues about activities and events we failed to consider. In addition several of the authors participated in a colloquium to develop the outline of the final presentation which was sponsored by the Faculty of Business Studies of Rutgers University.

APPENDIX II: OB Time Map: 1937-1981

Year	Individual/Group/Event
1937	L.Gulick and L.F. Urwick(eds.), <i>Papers on the Science of Administration</i> (New York: Institute of Public Administration, Columbia University, 1937).
1938	C.I.Barnard, <i>The Functions of the Executive</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938).
1939	J.D.Mooney and A.L. Reiley, <i>The Principles of Organizations</i> (New York: Harper, 1939), F.J. Roethlisberger and W.J. Dickson, <i>Management and the Worker</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,
1939)	K. Lewin, R. Lippitt, and R.K. White, "Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created Social Climates", <i>Journal of Social Psychology</i> 10 (1939): 271-299.
1941	J. Burnham, <i>Managerial Revolution</i> , (New York: John Day, 1941). P.E. Holden, L.S. Fish, and H.I. Smith, <i>Top Management Organization and Control</i> (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), 1st OB doctoral degree, George F. F. Lombard, Harvard University Society for Applied Anthropology founded Labor-Management Center founded at Yale University, Committee on Human Relations in Industry founded at University of Chicago 1st Required MBA-level OB course, Harvard University A.H. Maslow, "Theory of Human Motivation," <i>Psychological Review</i> 50 (1943) 370-396.
1945	B. B. Gardner, <i>Human Relations in Industry</i> (Chicago: Illinois, 1945). Personnel Research Board founded at Ohio State University Research Center for Group Dynamics founded at M.I.T.
1946	P. F. Drucker, <i>Concept of the Corporation</i> (New York: John Day, 1946). Survey Research Center founded at University of Michigan New Britain Workshop (later National Training Laboratory)
1948	H. A.Simon, <i>Administrative Behavior</i> (New York MacMillan, 1948). R. M. Stogdill, "Personal Factors Associated with Leadership: A Survey of the Literature," <i>Journal of Psychol-</i>

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- 1980 *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 1, 1980.

APPENDIX III: Academy of Management *Proceedings* Highlights: 1937-1971

- 1937 Ralph C. Davis, "The Theory of Organization Morale"
- 1939 Alan C. Reiley, "Structural and Operating Problems of Organization"
- 1940 *Roundtable*: "The Economy of Line Organization Structure," Ralph C. Davis, presiding
- 1949 Alvin Brown "Organization as A Separate Branch of Management"
- 1950 James C. Worthy, "Organization Structure and the Development of Management Leadership"
- 1951 Harold Smiddy, "Line and Staff Relationships"
- 1953 L. H. Burk, "Some Principles of Organization"
- 1954 Jackson Martindell, "Our Lack of Leaders"
- 1955 Frank Brown, "The Chrysler Divisionalism Story"
- 1959 Harold F. Simiddy, "Research -- and Shaping the Future of Management"
- 1960 Albert H. Rubenstein, "Recent Breakthroughs in Methods of Research on Organizations"
- William E. Schlender, "Some Current Concepts in Organization Theory"
- 1961 Bernard H. Baum, "Decentralization of Authority in a Bureaucracy"
- 1962 *General Session*: "Organization", William G. Scott, Chair
- 1963 *General Session*: "Management Research", Robert J. House, Chair
- 1964 Martin K. Evans, "Impact of Information Technology on Organization"
- 1965 Arlyn Melcher, "Organization Structure: A Framework for Analysis and Integration"
- 1966 William B. Wolf, "Prediction of Organization Behavior"
- Fred Massarik, "Small Groups and the Prediction of Behavior"
- Abraham Zaleznik, "Psychological Aspects of Executive Leadership"
- 1967 Hans B. Thorelli, "Organization Theory: An Ecological View"
- William H. Starbuck, "Organizational Metamorphosis"
- 1968 Three sessions - Paul Lawrence, Jay Lorsch, Jay Galbraith, Larry Cummings
- 1969 *Workshop* - "The Measurement of Organizational Climate: Some Interdisciplinary Perspectives", Robert J. House, Chair
- Workshop* - "Organizational Design", Fremont E. Kast, Chair
- 1970 *Ad Hoc Committee*: "Organizational Studies", Lyman W. Porter, Chair
- Plus numerous other sessions*
- 1971 *General Session* - "Contributions of Systems Analysis to Organizational Design", Jay Galbraith, Chair
- General Session* - "Current Work on Managerial Motivation", L. L. Cummings, Chair
- General Session* - "Problems of Research Methodology in Empirically Studying Organizational Behavior", Walter Hill, Chair

Footnotes

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