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## Democratic Technologies of Speech: From WWII America to Postcolonial Delhi

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*This article traces putatively democratic speech and interactional techniques from their development during WWII to their translation into postindependence Delhi community development projects led by Ford Foundation consultants. Moving beyond a focus on high-level development discourse, this article describes the techniques of speech through which development was brought to ground and the ways of speaking that community development promoted in its target populations. The deployment of these techniques in Delhi shows how the promotion of democracy aggressively attacked existing forms of sociality within the city. [speech genres, democracy, technology, development, India]*

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The drains are no longer choked,  
The lanes are not dirty,  
The people no longer remain isolated  
And do not have any fear complex.  
The community is full of group activities.

Translation of a Hindi poem by a Delhi resident  
c. 1960 (Clinard 1966:284).

The now-anonymous author of this poem was a member of a community group formed by the community development project begun in 1959 by the Delhi Municipal Corporation with the significant guidance of an American Ford Foundation sociologist. The poem mingles the themes of hygiene, overcoming fear and isolation, and flourishing of group life. Such sentiments were the result of two years of dedicated work by community organizers in the slums of Delhi. But the history of this effort takes us back to the late 1930s, to the response of the American social scientific community to WWII.

In 1947, Kurt Lewin, a foundational figure in social psychology, opened his programmatic essay for the inaugural issue of the journal *Human Relations* with the following statement:

ONE of the byproducts of World War II of which society is hardly aware is the new stage of development which the social sciences have reached. This development indeed may prove to be as revolutionary as the atom bomb. Applying cultural anthropology to modern rather than "primitive" cultures, experimentation with groups inside and outside the laboratory, the measurement of sociopsychological aspects of large social bodies, the combination of economic, cultural, and psychological fact-finding, all of these developments started before the war. But, by providing unprecedented facilities and by demanding realistic and workable solutions to scientific problems, the war has accelerated greatly the change of social sciences to a new development level. [1947:5]

In addition to providing the impetus for the practical social scientific interventions, what Lewin called “action research,” WWII also dramatically sharpened the problematic at the heart of social psychology and the newly emerging field of human relations: how to govern people’s behavior in a democratic way, that is, not by denying but by working with people’s desires, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs (Rose 1996). During the war, the U.S. government strove for unprecedented levels of control over individual behavior—from the consumption of sweet breads to factory work. The challenge for social scientists was to develop scientific methods to shape the wartime attitudes and behavior of Americans in ways they considered compatible with democratic values. Following the war, these social scientists and what they called their new “social technology” (Cartwright 1948:333) were repurposed for projects of change at home and redeployed in the projects of occupation and development abroad.

The historiography of development usually begins with Truman’s 1949 announcement of the Point Four Program to use U.S. technical expertise to manage the decolonization of the world and increase material well-being (Escobar 1994). But, as Lewin observed, much of the social science technology for carrying out the project was developed in the US during the late 1930s and WWII. The conceptual architecture of these technologies was social-psychological, but the framework was built upon empirical analyses of speech, particularly the formalization of genres of speech such as the interview. The deployment of genres of speech was a central component of practical interventions to generate change.

Today, we know quite a bit about discourses of development with their division of the world (Pletsch 1981) and denotational content (Escobar 1994). Much less examined are the speech genres (Bakhtin 1986; Briggs and Bauman 1992) through which development was brought to ground and those which development intentionally promoted in its target populations, either as an end in itself or as a means to other ends (though see Cody 2009). This article highlights the centrality of these genres of speech for development and traces a natural history of these discourses (Silverstein and Urban 1996) from WWII social science engagements with the projects of democratic control at home and the transformation of autocratic Germans and Japanese abroad. My account differs from treatments of participatory democracy that subsume it under the complex of neoliberalism, ignoring its roots in the mid-twentieth-century problem of social control. This article will concentrate on a two technologies of speech: leadership speech and interviews. I trace their development in wartime America, their generalization in postwar America, and their translation into urban community development in Delhi in the late 1950s and early 1960s as part of a Ford Foundation-led pilot project.

Following World War II, the Allied administrators and lawyers of occupied Germany and Japan established new democratic legal systems and government institutions. However, the American framers of occupation policy also considered it essential to transform individuals subjected to centuries of authoritarian tradition and more recently the distortions of fascism, to engender in them a natural human appreciation for freedom and democracy (Dower 1999:203–267). Social scientists had been working on this problem since before the war began.

The rise of the Nazis had provoked a crisis in democratic theory in the U.S. in the late 1930s (Purcell 1973). A complex debate among political philosophers and social scientists generated a simple opposition between democracy and autocracy. Most social scientists agreed that democracies were populated by “relativists” who valued freedom and were enterprising and open to change. In contrast, autocratic states were populated by “absolutists” who were servile before authority and unwilling to revise their views or the conduct of their lives on their own. Such absolutism was used to explain the rise of militarism in Germany and Japan. National character studies found that strong authoritarian tendencies generated and were reinforced by autocratic government and raised strong doubts about the fitness of the target populations of Germany and Japan to embrace democratic government. Supporting these concerns, other studies showed that American democracy depended as much on the person-

alities of Americans as on formal institutions. Democratic institutions could be imposed, but how could the U.S. transform individual personalities?

The great number of social scientists swept into government service by the war saw the solution in new social scientific technologies. If modern industrial technology could quickly manufacture goods that had formerly required years of patient apprenticeship and long labor, new social scientific technologies could quickly generate the democratic character that had grown organically over centuries in the Anglo-American world. Anticipating an Allied victory, social scientists worked throughout the war to invent these social technologies.

We can understand this effort to technologize democracy as akin to entextualization (Briggs and Bauman 1992). As Latour (1999:174–193) argues, technology is not sociologically or philosophically definable but rather an idea that guides efforts to demarcate and isolate some sociomaterial process or entity from its myriad connections, especially with humans, in order to make it transferable and usable across different social boundaries. The concept of technology can be compared to that of text as analyzed, by Silverstein and Urban, an “idea [that] allows the analyst of culture to extract a portion of ongoing social action . . . from its infinitely rich, exquisitely detailed context, and draw a boundary around it, inquiring into its structure and meaning”(1996:1). In this analogy between text and technology, meaning is the equivalent of efficacy. To technologize speech is to attempt to stabilize a sociomaterial process (speaking practices), to “blackbox” (Latour 1999:199) it in texts, procedures, inscriptions and so forth, so it can be said to have determinative effects independent from the actual situations in which it occurs.

Nikolas Rose (1996) has shown that both democracy making abroad and control at home had their ideological and practical complications. Coercion (the defining feature of autocracy) could not make democratic personalities. How could people be forced to have initiative and autonomy? While denouncing enemies of the U.S. for crushing individual freedom, social scientists working on the home front had to come up with ways of shaping behavior that were consonant with democratic values. Planners self-consciously attempted to develop democratic technologies both for generating democracy and for what they called “social control.” The focus of this article is on how these efforts targeted speech as a means of change.

In the postwar period social scientists began to apply these technologies to the challenge of democracy in the decolonizing world, whose new citizens they saw as sharing some of the characteristics of the subjects of autocratic states. This article examines the use of speech technologies in one such project in India, which a wide spectrum of American opinion considered a major demonstration site for the viability of democracy in the decolonizing world. In the late 1950s, the Ford Foundation joined the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to establish an urban community development program for Delhi. The project was to generate “democratic group life” among a population ostensibly fresh from the village and fractured by loyalties to caste, religious, regional, and partisan political groups. Planners considered democratic group life, generated by neighborhood layouts and territory-based organizations, a key to the reduction of social conflict, the material improvement of the urban environment, and social change more generally. These convictions were based on conceptions of the relations among democracy, group solidarity, interaction, and space shared by a wide range of American planners, sociologists, and social workers. In the views of the planners, democracy requires identification with place rather than kind, that is, neighborhoods rather than others of one's own caste, religion, language, region, or political party. The use of democratic genres of speech were both a means for community organizers and trained local leaders to bring about this identification and an end in itself, a fundamental component of a democratic citizen concerned about one's own collective life and material circumstances. The transformation of ways of talking, therefore, was a central component of efforts to eliminate the predominant forms of attachment in order to generate place-based community.

### Planned Social Change in Postwar America

In 1947, shortly before his death, Lewin launched the journal *Human Relations: A Quarterly Journal of Studies Toward the Integration of the Social Sciences*. The objective of this new journal was twofold: first, nothing less than a comprehensive unification of the social sciences through the systematic study of interpersonal relations; and second, the promotion of direct stimulation of group-centered processes of social change by social scientists and trained professionals (Capps 1999: 189–198). Though contributors came from a wide variety of social science fields, the approach was broadly social-psychological. The journal was a voice for the group of social scientists galvanized and established by the war and eager to play a role in insuring international peace and promoting domestic harmony and prosperity. Articles documented research that combined systematic study of groups and programs for changing them. To these social scientists and professionals, expert-assisted change began to look like something almost everyone could use. In a 1951 article reviewing postwar human relations research with the remarkably unqualified title “Achieving Change in People,” Dorwin Cartwright echoed the convictions of the journal’s contributors: “We hear all around us today the assertion that the problems of the twentieth century are problems of human relations” (1951:381). He called for the development of “some basic principles that promise to apply to all types of modifications in people” (Cartwright 1951:382).

The great success of the human relations program for expert-directed change was due in no small part to its convergence with the existing goals and practices of various American social reformers. Reformers and sociologists of the early-20th century had already reconceptualized democracy in psycho-social terms (Addams 1913; Cooley 1909): Government institutions that represent the interests of individuals are merely formal; the real content of democracy is group solidarity, which generates consensus and individual initiative for common ends. However, the attempts of such reformers to create group solidarity were never standardized or systematized. The achievement of the human relations movement during the war and particularly in the postwar period was the formulation of generalized, standard, and systematic technical concepts and procedures for use by trained specialists to understand and change the functioning of small-scale social systems and individuals. In addition to changes of specific attitudes, values, and behavior, a fundamental goal of expert intervention was to bring about a functional group state and an individual psychology conceptualized as democratic—and therefore more ethical, harmonious, productive, and fulfilling. Human relations was successful because it articulated and unified the divergent efforts of people who were trying to bring about democratic change in many areas, putting their projects on a scientific basis and giving them concrete techniques to achieve them.

As important as the development of these theories and practices was the growth of a professional class of change experts, promoted by its role in shaping wartime social processes, scientific rigor, and technical expertise. During the war most social psychologists along with like-minded anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists left the universities for service in a variety of government departments.<sup>1</sup> Out of this experience emerged a group of social psychologists who, according to a leading social psychologist, Dorwin Cartwright, viewed “their field and their place in society in new and radically different terms” (1948:333). The result of these wartime interdisciplinary study and action programs was a clear shift in many areas of the social sciences from analyzing social processes to the directing them through the deployment of what they considered a democratic American form of what Cartwright called “social technology” (1948:333). The social scientists who were demobilized following the war marshaled themselves again and proceeded with this multifaceted project within the traditional social science disciplines and at institutes outside the regular departmental structures of universities.

There were two primary requirements for the formulation of concepts and procedures of this scientific social technology. The first was the development of objective, specified dimensions in which to describe group processes that would support generalization. The second, and more significant, was the development of experimental methods that would support generalizations about not only the functioning of social systems, but also the effects of different kinds of expert interventions in them. It was hoped that scientific experiments in social change could be developed that would provide specifiable and reproducible techniques with which group leaders could change social processes in predictable ways: "the experimental method implies the ability to produce change" (Cartwright 1948:349).

By the late 1950s there was a substantial literature on social action which described the principles and techniques of stimulating change. At the core of these models of expert directed change was a specific model of democracy, conceived in terms of group solidarity, individual initiative, and identification with collective objectives. The small group was identified as the social domain of participation as well as the anchor of values, attitudes, and beliefs and social change programs aimed to engender strong feelings of "belongingness" among members of a group. Studies showed that democratic group life in general engendered in individuals initiative, openness to change, and a future-oriented outlook, and further would make social systems of all kinds more productive.<sup>2</sup> Increased social control would also result, as members sought to conform to the expectations of the group with which they identified.

A psycho-social conception of democracy thus defined the unit of social change programs as the relatively-small, bounded group; and it also limited the scope of social change programs to problems tractable by the efforts of the group itself with the limited aid of specialists. This conception of democracy also generated a basic contradiction between the determining effect of actions of the expert outside the group and the development of collective and individual initiative and self-determination. By contrast with this psycho-social model of democracy, legal and formal political structures of democracy found a place in social change conceptions and techniques merely as an ultimate limit on the ability of social scientists to bring coercive means to bear in altering attitudes and behavior.<sup>3</sup>

### The Process of Planned Change

In the 1957 *Dynamics of Planned Change* (Lippitt, Watson, and Westley 1957), dedicated to Lewin, we can see a fully developed version of the program for social change that was translated into Delhi community development. According to its authors, the book elaborates a much-needed "general theory of change, one which can be used to assist in understanding such diverse situations of planned change as are met in psychotherapy, childrearing, industrial management, race relations, and community development" (Lippitt, Watson, and Westley 1957:vii). Nikolas Rose (1996) has described the conceptual content of the social change discourse found in works like this, but my focus is on the concrete linguistic practices through which these discourses about change were made "operational."

One of the most striking aspects of the book is that it goes beyond merely a generalization of the methods and theory of change, to the generalization of the need for expert-directed change in "the very rapidly changing conditions of our world today" (Lippitt et al. 1957:11). The link between the need for change and some rather vaguely defined modern condition is significant, for it broadened considerably the field of operations of the change expert. Besides the familiar targets of social reform and correction operations—delinquent children, unassimilated ethnic groups, insufficiently urbanized blacks, stubborn workers, and autocratic Germans—equally in need of professional change help are apathetic and isolated middle-class residents of small towns and cities, dictatorial military officers, and overbearing midlevel managers (and even executives) of government bureaus, factories, and other kinds of business organizations. In addition, while the book was aimed at experts working in

the U.S., its problematic also converged with that of modernization theory targeting the decolonizing world, thereby expanding the professional purview of change experts globally.

The work lays out a change process guided by a "change agent" or "professional helper" whose relationship to the "change client" or "client system" is at once that of a psychological therapist to his patient and that of a democratic leader to those he or she leads. Phased transformations of group states are brought about by different genres of discourse. First, interviews make respondents consider the group's problems and generate self-awareness or self-consciousness in the client regarding its real problems, thereby "inducing" the need for change. The process is closer to Gestalt therapy than psychoanalysis: the new self-consciousness often comes suddenly, through the rapid cognitive reorganization of the world. First you see the bunny, then you see the duck.

The groups encounter "forces of resistance" that keep it from moving from the recognition of the need for change to the desire for change. All these forces of resistance are psychologically characterized in terms of pleasure and fear. "Tradition" produces resistance because individuals are unwilling to give up the "familiar satisfaction and pleasure" that come from "modeling present behavior on past traditions" (Lippitt et al. 1957:212). The resistance of "vested interests" is described as "clinging to existing satisfactions" (1957:84). To overcome such resistance, change agents try to find or engender a new group, a "new center of self-awareness" (1957:84). To this end the agent tries to identify and cultivate "natural leaders," those "indigenous leaders" who are more "representative" of group or community than official leaders. This conception puts ordinary speech at the center of leadership. The influence of "formal leaders" is grounded in sources beyond discourse within the group (in wealth, education, religion, etc.) and is therefore intrinsically undemocratic. By contrast, the influence of natural leaders emerges from discourse within the group. Natural leaders, lacking other sources of authority, lead through their words (cf. Caton 1987). To lead effectively, natural leaders must generate intensive interaction among members of a group or community. Such group interaction provides the contexts for open, collective declarations of commitment to standards and actions, which makes their acceptance more likely.<sup>4</sup>

I have argued that the speech of change agents (both professionals and natural leaders) was central to democratic change techniques, but how exactly were they supposed to talk and how were these ways of talking understood to be efficacious? In the next sections, I address these questions through a look at genres of leadership speech and interviewing.

### Speech Techniques of Democratic Leaders

Lewin (who had left Germany in 1933 in the face of rising anti-Semitism) and his students pioneered the scientific treatment of democratic speech in innovative experimental studies of democracy and autocracy in the late 1930s and 1940s. The first of these experiments was conducted with 10- and 11-year-old children at the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station. The children were divided into two groups for a series of nine weekly sessions. Lewin's "social space" was hardly the theater world of Goffman's face work, but the sessions were, ironically, devoted to making theatrical masks.

The project aimed at a formal mathematical description of each group. Lewin declared that formalization and mathematicization "will have to be achieved if psychology is to become an acceptable science" (Lewin 1940:12). He expressed many of his arguments in mathematical equations, such as perhaps his simplest and most fundamental one: " $B=F(P,E)$ ," behavior (B) is a function (F) of the person (P) and his or her environment (E) (Cartwright 1964:239-240).<sup>5</sup> Lewin and his students adapted electromagnetic field dynamics to the analysis of groups, employing terms like "force field," "position," "velocity," and "topology"; a leader "induces" goals in the group as

a wire moved in a magnetic field induces a current. Although the experimenters were attentive to nonverbal behavior, these psychological characterizations of group life were based largely on analyses of utterances. The goal of the experiment was to determine if the “method of leader induction of goals” (Lippitt 1940:112), that is, the kinds of speech used by the “leader” (Lippitt himself) would generate democratic and autocratic group “atmospheres.” The activities of the “democratic group” were “a matter of group determination, encouraged and drawn out” by an adult “democratic leader.” The democratic leader guided his simulated citizens with suggestive, “objective, matter-of-fact” statements. The next day, to insure “activity equation” (Lippitt 1940:76), the activities chosen by the democratic group were forced upon the juvenile unfortunates of the “autocratic group” by an adult “authoritarian leader” who aggressively and arbitrarily commanded activities and assigned tasks one at a time, explicitly invoking his will rather than presenting facts. If there was any doubt as to the models for these leaders, Cartwright later made it explicit, “One way was essentially the German autocrat and the other the American democrat” (Patnoe 1988:30). Here are Lippitt’s examples of the “method” each used (1940:112):

	Autocratic Group		Democratic Group
Sarah:	“I think that one would be the easiest to make, huh?”	Dick:	“Shall we work separately?”
Leader:	“This is the one we’ll do. I’ll bring the clay next time and we’ll get started.”	Leader:	“There are quite a few things to be done on a mask. Don’t you think it would be a good idea if we tackled one at a time?” (Nods)

This was not a deliberative democracy in which discussion was used to discover the best possible course of action, to persuade through reason. Rather, the statements of the democratic leader, at once objective and suggestive, were designed to blend two forms of speech that have been opposed since classical Greek thought: on the one hand, dialectic or conversation used to uncover truth and, other other, oratory, intended to persuade interlocutors to act in a particular way (Fontana, Nederman, and Remer 2004:16–17). Like law school as analyzed by Mertz (1996), the speech of the leaders mirrored the (democratic and autocratic) personalities and forms of sociality it aimed to engender. The experimental leaders were using the pragmatic structure of discourse that may work at a level of which interlocutors “are unaware [in order] to render certain social outcomes ‘natural’ or inevitable” (Mertz 1996:231).

The goings-on of each meeting were recorded by a stenographer who transcribed conversations and three observers, one recording “social interactions,” another “group structures,” and a third the “individual behavior” of each child (Fig. 1). The social interactions observer recorded actions of the leaders and children, mainly utterances but physical interactions too. Each action was technically characterized according to its political quality: “ascendant” (“directing the behavior of another”), “submissive” (asking for direction from another or “compliant to ascendant approaches”), or “objective, matter-of-fact,” which Lippitt cast in psychological rather than epistemological terms (“non-ego-involved”). Every act was also coded as either an “initiation” or a “response” (Lippitt 1940:305). All three observers also wrote qualitative observations from time to time (“Sarah is very aggressive today” [Fig. 1]). Lippitt was also innovative in his qualitative documentation, keeping what he called a “leader’s diary”: “After the club meeting the experimenter wrote up his ‘group-as-a-whole’ impressions and added an interpretation of special incidents which had attracted his attention” (Lippitt 1940:70).

The effect of the different types of leadership on the atmosphere of the groups was determined through statistical analysis of the number and frequency of submissive, ascendant, and objective utterances. Since the goal was to determine how leaders shape the character of the groups, the utterances of leaders were analyzed as well as those of the children. Indeed, nearly one third of interpretation of results is devoted to the actions of the leaders. The much greater use of “ascendant” utterances by the

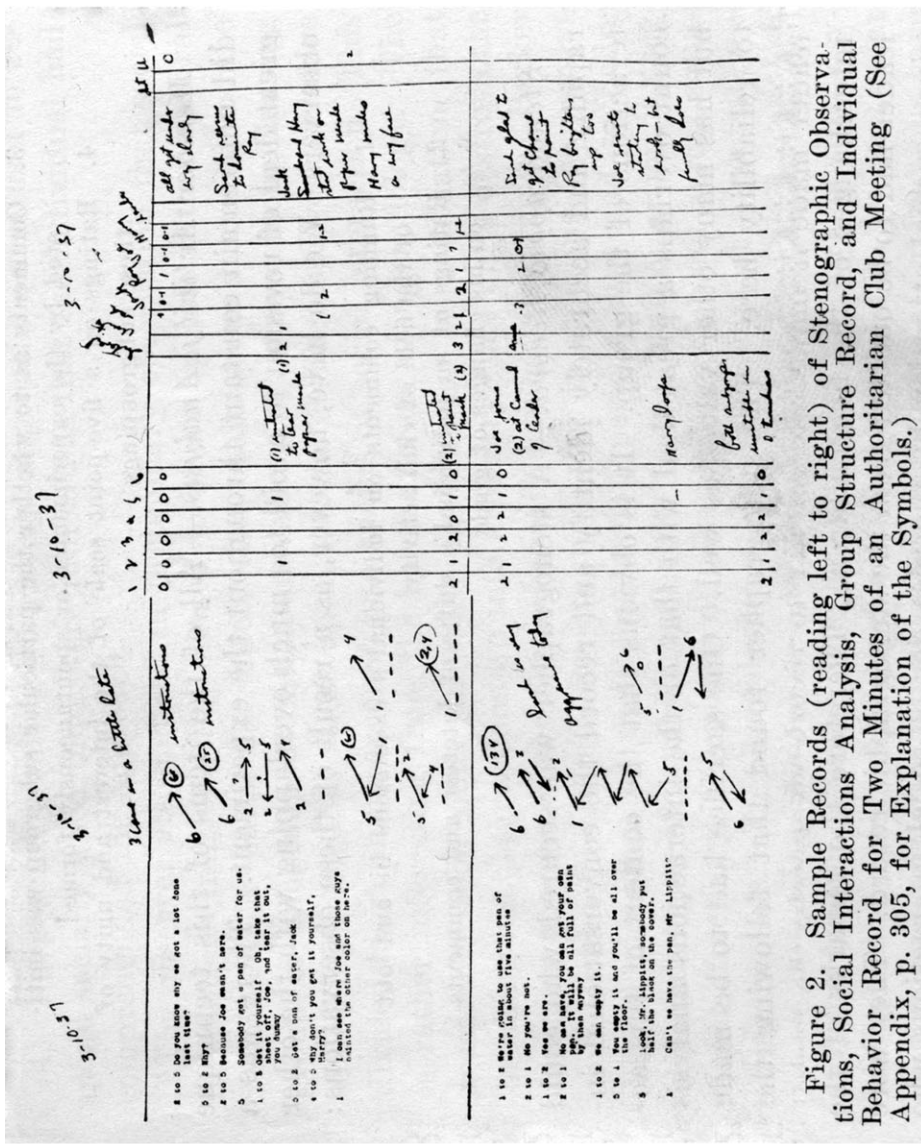


Figure 1

Figure 2. Sample Records (reading left to right) of Stenographic Observations, Social Interactions Analysis, Group Structure Record, and Individual Behavior Record for Two Minutes of an Authoritarian Club Meeting (See Appendix, p. 305, for Explanation of the Symbols.)

Transcript of two minutes of observation (above right) from Lippitt 1940:70; my transcription of utterances (above left) Arrow up (↗) indicates an "ascendant action," arrow down (↘) a "submissive action," and level arrow (→) an "objective, matter-of-fact action." An arrow pointing right-left indicates an "initiated" action, left-right a response.



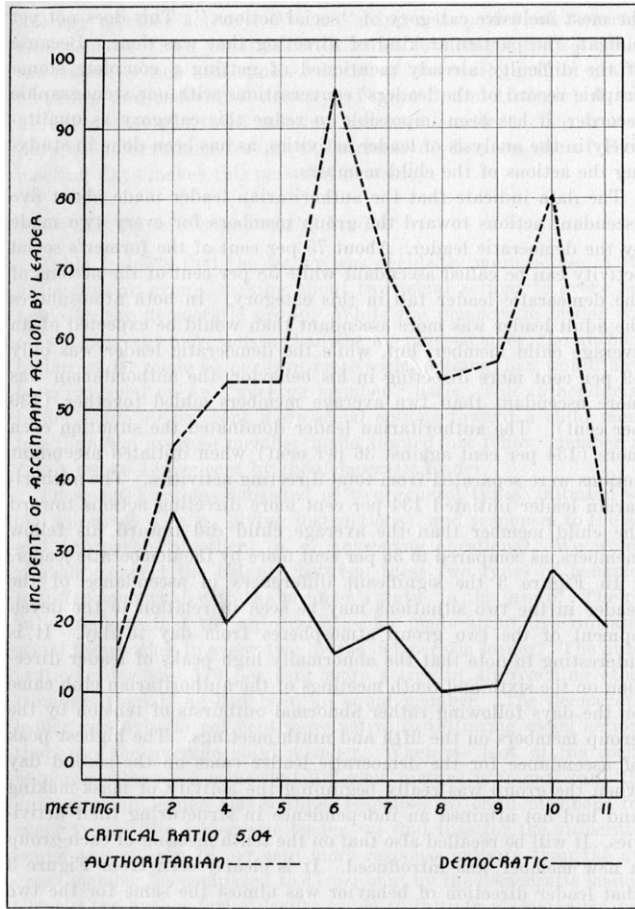


Figure 3. Leader Direction of Group Behavior

Figure 2

Graph showing incidents of the leaders' "ascendant actions" (Lippitt 1940:106)

authoritarian leader (Fig. 2) was found to generate in the autocracy nearly “two submissive acts toward their leader to every one made by democratic group members” (Lippitt 1940:127). By contrast, the children of autocracy were twice as likely to use dominating ascendant expressions directed at other children as those in the democracy. The children in the democracy used “objective, matter-of-fact” expression twice as often as those in the autocracy.<sup>6</sup>

Lippitt also analyzed the children’s use of so-called we-centered and I-centered expressions, for example in the following exchange concerning which mask idea the group should use (Lippitt 1940:70):

Leader: “Well, shall we decide which one to work on next time?”  
 Dick (laughing): “Mine is best.”  
 Helen: “You mean *ours*.”

We-centered expression indicated democratic cooperation with the group; I-centered expressions an undemocratic competition and lack of group integration. Analysis showed that in the democracy the we-centered expressions were twice as numerous as in the autocracy and I-centered expressions were barely three fourths as numerous (Lippitt 1940:156). Lewin explained the greater concurrent growth of individuality and “we”-feeling in the democracy by the fact that the autocratic leader

kept everyone from acquiring social status, reducing all to a state of isolated and equal subordination.

Another measure of democratic atmosphere was the number of spontaneously formed groups. Here again, analysis showed these were common in the democratic group while almost absent in the autocratic one. Completing the experimental allegory of Nazi Germany and democratic America, Lippitt also reported "scapegoating" in the autocracy group. Two years later the Office of Strategic Services began similar group experiments with German Americans and Japanese Americans (Cartwright 1948:340).<sup>7</sup> Lewin cited such studies to argue that creating a democratic Germany was "a process which has to reach deep into family action and everyday group life" (Lewin 1948 [1939]:41). Lewin recommended a "group work" project to feed Europe involving groups of Germans led by democratic American leaders: "the cooperative work for reconstruction would offer a real experience in democratic group life" (1948 [1939]:41).

Lewin cautioned that this experiment neither duplicated any given democracy or autocracy nor even their "ideal" forms but his expansive claim for the experiment became widely accepted: these experiments revealed the "underlying group dynamics" of democracy and autocracy, which are based on two fundamental forms of human relations, democratic and autocratic, an interpersonal parallel of the distinction between relativists and absolutists (Lewin 1939). Lippitt's work was seen to demonstrate that the essential aspects of democracy and other complex social phenomena could be studied through controlled scientific experiments and redescribed in terms of the statistically measurable indicators of the functioning of groups and the psychologies of their members. Second, and more significant, it showed what techniques can bring about such functioning.

The development of change techniques in the postwar period was in many respects an effort to technically specify the genres of speech that could democratically generate and transform group life. This orientation to speech effectively politicized even the most ordinary forms of speech. For example, Lippitt later argued for the political significance of even everyday interrupting: "to wait until another person has had his say is not mere good manners, it implies an attitude that is basic to democracy" (White and Lippitt 1960:226).

### **The Effects of the Interview**

The techniques and purposes of social research interviews were also reshaped by the exigencies of the war and the developments in social psychology (Igo 2007). Surveys were increasingly used to gather relatively inaccessible opinions and psychological facts, rather than physical conditions and more objective and accessible facts such as income, occupation, and education. Such information was seen as a crucial means of ascertaining American morale and shaping democratic social programs that accorded with the desires of the people affected. Additionally, in line with a more interventionist social science, interviews became not simply a means to discover attitudes, beliefs, and opinions, but to influence them as well. It was only during the war and the postwar period when the interview came to be seen as a significant form of social interaction which defined the professional status of the researcher, articulated relations between the institutions sponsoring research and the target group, and itself shaped social processes within the group surveyed. The research interview was recognized as a complex social technology basic to effective democratic policy making.

First of all, the interview defines and confers status upon a specific group, social researchers, who engage in that practice. Goode and Hatt observed in 1952, "The social researcher is rapidly becoming a definite status in the society" (188). While this status depended in large part on social scientists' class and formal training, publications, and the increasingly important positions they held within governmental structures, we should not underestimate the role of their research practices—particularly

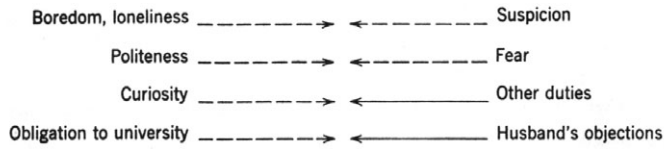


Figure 5. Housewife's psychological field at beginning of survey interview.

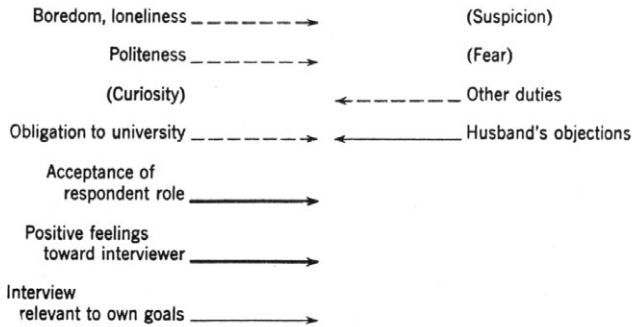


Figure 6. Housewife's psychological field restructured following interviewer's introduction.

Figure 3

Figures using Lewin's "force field diagram" showing the restructuring of a housewife's psychological field for a successful interview (Kahn and Cannell 1957:50-51)

their comportment in interviews—in the creation of this status. Goode and Hatt, for example, prescribe a variety of behaviors and speech forms and styles that will convey the researcher's goodwill and competence, and the purpose and importance of social research; they prescribe others that will "make known that [the researcher] is engaged in a quite ordinary activity"(1952:189). The objectives of these prescriptions went beyond merely the success of the immediate research of which the interview was a part but amounted to the creation of a general fund of goodwill for the whole enterprise. Goode and Hatt place the individual interviewer to which the text is addressed in an ongoing series of research projects on the same groups and classes and emphasize that "for the later study the good impression made by the interviewer will aid the next researcher"(1952:191). The Survey Research Center even conducted a survey to study the effects of surveys by surveying those the Center had surveyed before. According to the study, when asked about the survey, respondents frequently focused on the "relationship they established with the interviewers"(Kahn and Cannell 1957:47).

Secondly, the social role of interviewee needed to be created. During the war and postwar periods, social science faced the basic problem that the research interview was not yet a conventional "social interaction." Today, few Americans are likely to have the "curiosity about what the interview process is like" that was widely reported by postwar researchers (Kahn and Cannell 1957:51). But through the early postwar period American respondents needed to be taught the conventions and purposes of the interview during the interview interaction itself. As one treatise on survey methodology observed, a major "function of the interviewer is teaching the respondent what his role involves" (1957:63), how to be what we might call a surveyable citizen. Researchers were careful to avoid influencing the cognitive or psychological facts they were trying to elicit, but successful interviewing involved the "restructuring" of the "psychological field" of the respondent, for example a housewife reluctant to participate in an interview (Fig. 3) (1957:50-60). The "techniques for motivating the respondent"(1957:65-91) were modeled on those used by psychiatrists and clinical psychologists in therapeutic interviews. The reluctant respondent had to be taught to

take part in a novel speech genre, with its orienting frameworks, interests, role relations, settings, and interpretive procedures, and sets of expectations regarding behavior and language (Hanks 1987).

Misunderstandings about the nature of the genre, apparently, were many. Some of the respondents seemed to have thought that they were mistakenly chosen on the basis of their knowledge on the stated research topic and would typically refer researchers to those in the community whom they considered far more knowledgeable or defer to the researchers themselves. Other respondents seemed to view the interview as a version of a school exam designed to test their knowledge and had to be assured that the questions would not be difficult and that they concerned not the respondent's knowledge but his or her opinions, feelings, and attitudes (questions to which there is no correct or incorrect answer). Furthermore, the interviewer had to assure them that they had been selected as social types or members of a group or class rather than as specific individuals. Interviewers frequently had to explain that responses would be "confidential" and spell out what confidential meant in terms of who would have access to the information and what they would do with it. In particular, they had to convince the respondent that responses would not lead to actions of the researcher's institution directed specifically toward the respondent.

Respondents often could not grasp the radically individual and even interior nature of the information interviewers typically sought—information that, ideally, "springs from the soul of the respondent to the notebook of the interviewer" (Kahn and Cannell 1957:59). They would often begin to give their answers in the presence of others, or even enlist others' help in answering. But these researchers were concerned neither with opinions, attitudes, and feelings individuals would express in the presence of others, nor the norms for such "public" expression. The salient information was the opinions, attitudes, and feelings the respondent "held." Such information might only be elicited in a confidential dialogue with the interviewer, with whom the respondent had no specific relation for which such information was consequential. Only in a private dialogue could interviewer and respondent relate to one another strictly in terms of their roles as such, a condition of the respondent's frank and truthful discourse. Interviewers thus contrived to get respondents alone or at least out of the earshot of others.

Despite the conventions and purposes peculiar to the social research interview, researchers attempted as far as possible to model the interaction between interviewer and respondent as a warm and friendly conversation. Like a Miss Manners for social researchers, Goode and Hatt recommend to the interviewer smiles, respectful but familiar greetings and introductions, conventional leave-takings rather than brusque departures, and expressions of trivial anxieties or incompetence to create a sense of equality with the respondent, assumed to be absent in fact. Rapport was thus another interactional condition considered essential to the respondent's frank and truthful discourse. "A state of rapport exists between interviewer and respondent when the latter has accepted the research goals of the interviewer, and actively seeks to help him in obtaining the necessary information" (Kahn and Cannell 1957:190).

Finally, researchers conceptualized the social research interview as a form of participation in the policy-making process the research was a part of, a substitute for direct civic involvement.<sup>8</sup> Consider the exemplary pitch to an unwilling respondent that Goode and Hatt suggested: "You know, a lot of people are too busy to take part in community affairs. But by giving their opinions to a scientific survey like this, they help just the same, and they can have the satisfaction of knowing that someone will actually listen to what they have to say" (1952:194) This appears to be the way many respondents saw it too. During World War II, respondents to government surveys frequently prefaced their answers with, "You tell those people in Washington that" (Kahn and Cannell 1957:46). The interview, therefore, was seen as technique for engendering in respondents the complementary views of the government as democratically responsive and themselves as politically potent, however misguided or ill informed their beliefs and opinions.

### Translations to Delhi

As we have seen, postwar American change agents targeted virtually every sort of person domestically. The social-psychological approach to democracy also offered an understanding of communism. However, more than either America or the Soviet Union, to the legions of social scientists decommissioned following the war, the newly decolonized world more exactly fit into the project of creating democratic individuals and group life formulated during the war to deal with Germany and especially Japan. As Carl Pletsch observed, the three-world scheme had a place for two kinds of modern persons: free (democratic) and ideological (communist) (1981). While most inhabitants of the third world were seen as traditional and not modern, tradition was freighted with some of the ideological and psychological aspects of totalitarianism in order to incorporate them within this binary model. For example, in the view of Marshall Clinard, the Ford Foundation sociologist on the Delhi urban community project, timeless tradition, "autocratic governments," and colonial rule replaced totalitarian government as the main impediments to democratic governance and social change more generally (1966:118). Individuals in the third world were absolutists of a different kind, in thrall to religious and political authorities and timeless tradition. As one observer put it, "They have been exploited, lied to, and imposed upon for so many centuries that they seem unable to grasp the possibility that anyone honestly intends that they should participate in making any of the real decisions about their future" (Witte 1962:2). Similar problems called for similar solutions. As the economic reconstruction strategies of the Marshall Plan were translated into programs of economic development, so social scientists translated for the decolonized world the technologies of democracy developed to rehabilitate fascists and shape the behavior of Americans.

In July 1956 the Ford Foundation awarded the Indian government a small grant for a four-year pilot project in urban community development. The fit with Ford was good: In the immediate postwar period, the Ford Foundation had transformed from a wealthy but local philanthropic organization to a foundation with national and international prominence, whose new purpose was to "advance human welfare" (Gaither 1949:21), which as Sutton observes, "was seen as virtually synonymous with democratic ideals" (1987:48). The Foundation saw democracy "on challenge in the world today" and argued that "man now stands uncertain and confused at a critical point in human history," compelled to take the democratic or the authoritarian path (Gaither 1949:21). The Ford Foundation, which had already been extensively involved in community development projects in rural India, saw India, as the world's most populous democracy, as an important site to demonstrate that democracy can work.

Douglas Ensminger, the powerful country representative for Ford in India, was nicknamed "The Viceroy," but his mission was not to rule India but to change it. He characterized the Ford Foundation itself as a "change-agent" that had to speak in the right way:

my orientation to the Foundation's role in India was [that] the Ford Foundation should function as a change-agent . . . In playing an active change agent role the Foundation consultants had to restrain themselves in not taking credit. The role of a change-agent is difficult when it is openly and visibly played . . . The change-agent role I found I could play and a role fully acceptable in India was that of a silent partner. The silent partner role was to keep the public relations emphasis on what India was doing, and not on what the Foundation had done for India. [Ensminger 1972:1-3]

Ford was not to be at the apex of a hierarchy, but the initial link of a chain of change agents, leading from government officials, to community organizers, to local leaders. Ensminger wrote, "It is in this role of a foreigner functioning as a change-agent [that] India's psychosis and scars of having been under colonial rule so long shows up persistently" (1972:2). As in Cartwright's account, Ensminger casts reservations about foreign involvement in psychological terms. But Ensminger was right that the Indian

government was wary of the involvement of foreigners in major projects. The technical character of the project defused this concern to a great degree.

At this time, the Indian government was responding to a near tripling of the Delhi population since 1941 to well over 2 million, which had overwhelmed even a massively expanded infrastructure and aggravated the already acute housing shortage (Delhi Development Authority 1960:22). Not only the number but also the characteristics of the residents posed a problem. Both recent in-migrants and descendants of families who had lived in Delhi for generations were described as incompletely “urbanized” in a cultural sense. Their social relations and individual attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior were not those normatively associated with the city by American sociologists. According to the leading sociologist for the Ford team, Bert Hoselitz, “the urban population in India is made up of several layers of differentially ‘urbanized’ persons. In particular, there exist within the confines of large cities considerable sectors of persons who culturally—i.e., in attitudes, values, and behavior—are villagers” (1962:172). A major goal of urban community development was to generate a “city consciousness” or “sense of community” among these urban villagers.

At the initiative of the Home Ministry, in 1958 Ford began working with the Delhi Municipal Corporation on an urban community development project. The Commissioner of Delhi described the objective of the project as that of “giving form to an urban community, which has been drawn from backgrounds varying from one another and trying to achieve a homogeneity” (Municipal Corporation of Delhi 1965:foreword). Additionally, planners targeted caste, religious, and regional groups because their leadership was paternalistic—antidemocratic and resistant to change—a charge planners also leveled at political leaders. The twin objectives of the Delhi urban community development program were to make immigrants feel that they belong to the city and to each other through the “stimulation and development of ‘community feeling’ among people who merely live in an area without feeling any ties or pride in their surroundings” (Clinard 1966:82). Ensminger observed, “through emphasizing citizen participation, urban community development is a democratic notion” (1959). He argued that community development methods developed in the US could be successful in India, despite the great differences between the two countries, because these methods had proven successful in cities large and small in different regions of the US among different ethnic, religious, and racial groups, and in areas of rich and poor.

Community development planners identified a range of severe problems among major portions of Delhi’s population: poverty, inadequate housing, poor health, deplorable sanitation, illiteracy, and a lack of cultural and recreational activities. They frankly acknowledged that community development could do little about the economic factors contributing to such conditions. Community development was to be no substitute for regional and national development programs that addressed the main economic problems, housing shortages and unemployment.<sup>9</sup> Still, in their view, the physical and social conditions prevailing in much of the city were due in large part “to a general lack of unity among city dwellers” and its concomitant apathy (Clinard 1966:73). Program planners identified two main sources of this disunity, both of which could be tackled by community development methods: first, the low level of cultural urbanization which exacerbated the alienating effects of the urban environment; and second, the continuing influence of “traditional” groups and patronage politics.

### The Transformative Interview

The community development work began with interviews (Fig. 4). Male and female community organizers were hired from the ranks of Indian social workers and trained in the American community development and interview techniques. A male and a female community developer were assigned to each *vikas mandal* (development council) area and they began their work by interviewing all the male heads of families



Systematic door to door contacts : A male community Organizer in action

Figure 4

A promotional report for the urban community development project highlighted interviews by community organizers with this image and another depicting a “Lady community Organizer” (Municipal Corporation of Delhi 1961)

and their wives, respectively. (Though the mothers of the male heads of households were conventionally the dominant female figure in families, wives were interviewed because they were considered a better lever for change.<sup>10</sup>) The interview was also essential in establishing the social position of the community organizer and distinguishing them from politicians and Municipal Corporation welfare workers who were widely perceived as not caring genuinely about the problems of residents. This antagonism was so strong that the manual recommended that organizers not use the word *Corporation* in their introduction but let it be assumed (DUCD 1961a:18). The respondent, “must feel that the organizer is interested in him as a person, shares his point of view and problems and finds what he has to say of value” (DUCD 1961a:19). Despite the practice of distancing themselves from the city government, a “warm personal feeling between the organizer and the respondent” (DUCD 1961a:18) was expected to change hostile attitudes toward the city government and outside authorities more generally.

Organizers completed forms recording occupation, family composition, previous experience with co-operatives or mutual aid organizations, local problems capable of being solved by residents, and their enthusiasm for doing so. Although program administrators considered the information gathered in the surveys important, they stressed the greater importance of the “interview situation” itself (DUCD 1961a:13)—specifically its interactional conventions.

Primarily it represents to the interviewees a situation in which, perhaps for the first time, a person is asked some questions about how he or she feels about the problems of the area and what people could themselves do to solve them. This is a significant situation and should have a considerable effect in generating a feeling of hope among many that their views mean something and that a new approach to their problems is being tried. Typically people have relied on others for decision making, the government, politicians, caste, religious, and regional group leaders or some self-appointed leader in the local community occasion even of bad reputation. [DUCD 1961a:13–14]

By participating “properly” in the interview the respondent would be made to realize, for the first time, that his or her individual opinion on local affairs mattered and that he or she need not rely on government or “traditional” leaders for judgments and

decision making. Furthermore, asking residents individually what they thought they could change through common efforts was the first step toward making them "development conscious" (DUCD 1961a:31). Like a therapist's questions, these interviews were to begin to generate a new awareness among residents of the possibility of change in their environment and themselves: "an important first step in the redefinition of self was to present the initial interview questions in such a way as to replace age-old dependence with ideas of a new independence from government and charity" (Clinard 1966:301). According to Clinard, "even asking the question, 'What problems do you think the people in this area could solve for themselves?' helped them to shake off some feelings of subordination" (1966:302) and "to stir [them] from [their] apathy" (1966:289). The interviews were also the start of efforts to reform particular practices: "During the interviews the residents were made conscious of the unsanitary condition of their lane and the necessity for avoiding urinating in the drains" (Clinard 1966:305).

Just as Lippitt, as both leader and experimenter, kept a diary of his observations, organizers were "participant-observers," and as such each kept daily and monthly reports of progress and observations in his or her area. Unlike the file notes made by bureaucrats which had implications for the evaluation of their performance, the notes "were to be completely frank, and the workers were urged to be objective because of the experimental nature of the project" (Clinard 1966:284). Clinard, also considering himself part of the experiment, likewise kept a diary. These reports and the monthly summaries of them are extraordinary documents within the Indian bureaucracy, where bureaucratic prose, particularly when describing the writer's activities, is usually passive voice and matter-of-fact with almost no expression of emotion (Hull 2003). The reports, by contrast, are closer to Lippitt's style. These daily reports were extremely detailed, including names, dates, and events, and also extended quotations of verbal exchanges as well as the organizer's emotional reaction to them. In a convergence of Lippitt's scientific convention and Indian bureaucratic convention, organizers represented themselves in the third person, ("the community organizer," "the C.O.," "the worker," "the lady community organizer," "the L.C.O.") in the key of dedication and hard work. But this third-person self-representation was combined with an almost jarring expression of the gamut of emotions about their experiences: hope, pride, satisfaction, pique, anger, frustration, contempt, pity, and despair.

From these reports and the instructions given in various manuals, we can get a sense of the difficulties organizers encountered, which were similar to those faced by interviewers in the U.S. Organizers were often unable to convey what they meant by "confidential" and even less often able to convince respondents that their responses would in fact be kept so. Organizers were instructed to fill out the forms outside the presence of the respondent as the forms raised additional doubts about the confidentiality of responses, but circumstances often did not allow this.<sup>11</sup> Many respondents apparently did not understand the insistence on interviewing them alone. Wrote one frustrated organizer, "people are quite innocent about the value of privacy. They take every private affair as a common affair and would not mind to creep into anybody's discussions. It is very difficult to have a single man separately for an interview" (DUCD 1960:23). Not comprehending that the interviewers were angling for their personal opinions rather than well-accepted or authoritative answers, respondents frequently recommended the organizer see religious, caste, and political leaders or invited their friends to help. In such cases, "the interviewer should point out that it is the individual's personal opinion which is desired" (DUCD 1961a:18).

Reactions to requests for interviews were often hostile. Many residents thought the survey was being conducted for policies of food rationing, eviction of residents, increased taxation, military conscription, or coercive family planning. One lady community organizer wrote, during one interview "an old lady came in and in a jovial mood remarked, 'Are you counting the children because the government is going to fine all those who have more than three?'" (DUCD 1961a:28). Another wrote,



Then the community organizer, unfortunately, confronted an inhospitable and inhuman group of people. It was the second time that she had visited, on their assurances that they would let her know their views regarding the *vikas mandal*. But even in their second meeting they were uncooperative, amusingly asked irrelevant questions, and tried to provoke the organizer's anger. [Clinard 1966:287]

Sometimes the approach of residents was more direct. One woman, "After listening to the C.O. . . . answered, 'I do not have anything to tell you. You go back' " (DUCD 1961a:29).

The question about what local problems might be solved through self-help often generated "tirades against the government or landlords for not solving their problem . . . or simply apathetic looks" (Clinard 1966:288). Some of those who were willing to be interviewed still "had doubts about the worker not being from a political field and that the worker might set up an organization which may lead to the decay of an existing welfare organization" (DUCD 1961a:27).

But as the main goal of the interviews was to stimulate transformation rather than gather information, such responses did not signal failure because "usually the community organizers left behind them a trail of people thinking over the questions that had been asked and discussing the entire matter with family members and neighbors" (Clinard 1966:289).

### Leadership Speech and Discussion

The frontispiece of the 1959 edition of the *Manual for Urban Community Development* (DUCD 1959a) articulated the ideal of leadership that community organizers should strive for with a capitalized quote from Laotse:

A LEADER IS BEST WHEN PEOPLE BARELY KNOW THAT HE EXISTS. . . . BUT OF A GOOD LEADER, WHO TALKS LITTLE, WHEN HIS WORK IS DONE, HIS AIM FULFILLED, THEY WILL SAY, 'WE DID THIS OURSELVES.'

This kind of leadership was seen not just as a matter of maintaining a democratic façade but rather as a way to insure that the changes the leader "stimulated" were steadfastly anchored in the group so that they remained permanent.

Change which is desired in a community and is self imposed has a meaning and consequently a permanence which changes imposed from without, no matter how well meaning, can never have. An outsider can often make quick changes or do a lot for a community but the persistent questions are 'How long will it last?' 'Will the community return to old practices?' Self imposed plans are indigenous. What is accomplished becomes something the participants did. [DUCD 1959a:60]

One community organizer reported with delight how she had managed to completely efface her contribution to neighborhood improvements. When she told some residents that her replacement would do the same work she had done, she received the reply, "But you have done nothing . . . It is the people who paved their lane, it is they who paid for the water tap, and what did you do?" (Clinard 1966:306).

But if Laotse articulated the ideal of leadership, it was the likes of Lewin and Lippitt who supplied the speech techniques. Community organizers were trained, like Lippitt's democratic leader, to make suggestive, matter-of-fact comments. They should "never condemn existing practices" but only "suggest there is a another one, which may be explained and discussed" (DUCD 1961a:80). Community organizers in Delhi were told that "where needs are not recognized, they may have to be 'induced' " (DUCD 1961a:81). The term *induce*, with its complex agent-patient relation was in common use. As in the preceding citations, quotation marks often surrounded such formulations, which uncomfortably pointed to the contradiction of directing such social change processes by democratic means. When organizers "deliberately fostered or induced the recognition of needs" (Clinard 1966:204) they were careful to do this through a gentle process of questioning and stating facts.

The following text is an excerpt from a daily report of a one of the women organizers and was included in several versions of the instructional manuals as an exemplar of the technique by which organizers could bring people to recognize and act upon their needs. It is an exchange between a woman community organizer and some residents concerning the unhinged doors of the neighborhood latrine.

The chairman of the mohalla [neighborhood] committee . . . began a harangue against the landlord and the municipal committee. The worker patiently heard him, and when he had finished she asked the resident how long this condition had existed. When he said the doors had been that way for two or three months, the worker suggested that it would require only a few nails to repair the hinges. "You are right," was the reply. When the worker asked how much it would cost to buy the nails, the man replied that it would probably cost about four annas (5 cents). The worker asked how many families used the latrines, and, when the resident said about 100 or more, she said, "Don't you think this much money can be contributed by the people of the lane to get each door repaired, or should we wait for the landlord or the city government to come and repair them?"

The chairman of the neighborhood committee was listening to the discussion and he at once became angry and pushed his hands into his pockets, saying: "I would pay three annas, four annas, or any amount from my pocket, but, sister, do you think we should start fixing latrine doors? We would be working in filth and dirt." The worker then politely said she was simply asking about the possibilities because it was inconvenient for the people and not the landlord, and, in addition, the cost was meager. If they could find a professional blacksmith or the like, he could help fix the doors. Furthermore, it was only an idea, and it could be dropped.

The other members of the group were already thinking about the matter, however, and remained silent. At least, the emphasis had been put on the over-all responsibility of the residents and not on the city government. [DUCD 1961a:38-9]

The success of this exchange was the "stimulation of the idea of self-help" (DUCD 1961a:38). Instead of simply telling the residents that they should just fix the latrines themselves rather than waiting passively for the city government or the landlord to do it, the organizer led them to this conclusion through a series of polite questions and factual statements, finally explicitly retreating from the conclusion itself so that it might be embraced by the residents wholly as their own.

Community organizers were also trained to obscure their role by mediating their efforts by "working through" so-called natural leaders. The natural leader was a central element in American change technologies. In the U.S., change experts opposed the natural leader to the formal political or business leader. In Delhi, reflecting the community organizers' image of Indian society as status rather than class oriented, "natural" or "indigenous" leaders were contrasted with "formal or traditional leaders, who usually held their positions through appointment, inheritance, or social status or caste" (Clinard 1966:299). Elected political leaders and employees of the municipal government had a more ambiguous place in this "tradition"-based typology, but they too were assimilated to the category of traditional leader on political grounds. All such formal or traditional leaders were not "typical" or "representative of the community" and would "resist change" (Clinard 1966:184) and "stifle the average person's efforts to participate in changes" (DUCD 1960:23). In contrast, natural leaders were of the same social class as those they led and wanted improvement and change. Clinard adopted a phrase from Cartwright in observing that indigenous leaders "effectively 'spoke the same language'" (Clinard 1966:291) as those they led. There is virtually no urban ethnography of India from this period to help us understand how "traditional" leaders spoke or what were the prevailing linguistic ideologies concerning how they should.<sup>12</sup> But from the extensive work on leadership in rural India (Hitchcock 1959; Park and Tinker 1959; Wood 1959) we might conclude that even "traditional" leaders used "persuasive" (Caton 1987) speech of the sort promoted by community developers.

Ironically, those who were excluded would have been those whom the British considered "natural leaders" of their "communities" (also defined by "tradition") and, through the early-20th century, recruited as intermediaries between the govern-

ment and the populace.<sup>13</sup> Community development planners regarded the natural leader as a definite personality and social type, and it was "a major assumption" of the project that "every local community has some natural leaders" (DUCD 1960:31). Reports of community organizers regularly referred to specific individuals they designated as natural leaders as if the natural leader were a determinate social identity, even a titled role: for example, "The male community organizer discussed the whole idea of developing the lane with the natural leader Mr. A. A. again" (DUCD 1960:34).

Male or female natural leaders could be identified through personal qualities such as resourcefulness, tolerance of others' opinions, articulateness, and "a strong sense of belonging" to the area. Another identifier of a natural leader was "pride in house," manifest by cleanliness, whitewash, and flowers (one organizer excitedly reported, "the worker saw a house of pride today"; DUCD 1961a:35). Additionally, natural leaders refrained from speaking in an authoritative manner or explicitly claiming leadership. In identifying a natural leader, one organizer wrote, "He is a modest, unassuming person, who does not claim to be a leader of the *katra* [area enclosed by one or more buildings]. This role was revealed to the worker by the *katra* residents when they were being interviewed" (Clinard 1966:292). Another exemplar of the natural leader was described as follows: "He has a complete hold on the community not like a dictator, but like a democratic leader. When he speaks, he does not speak as an individual, but always speaks in terms of the community. In fact, he does not assume leadership, but guides the community from behind" (DUCD 1961a:35). Democratic speech was engendered in natural leaders through the regular exhortations of organizers and weekend training camps. At one such camp for women leaders, they were instructed that a good leader is one "Who talks little . . . Who does not thoughtlessly impose own thoughts on people (others) . . . Who indulges less in debate and is patient" (DUCD 1961b:17).

Community organizers trained natural leaders in the same technique they had been taught, that is, to pose questions and speak suggestively so that people feel they are themselves originating the ideas or plans covertly advocated by the leader. "If the members, rather than the officers [of the *vikas mandal*], make the suggestions or give answers that are eventually used, members will be more interested in carrying out 'their ideas.' A good president 'draws' the answers from members" (DUCD 1960:79). Community organizers actively discouraged leaders from making speeches at meetings, a staple of electoral political practice.

The administrators of Delhi's community development program thought that "social change can best be achieved by working with groups of people rather than with individuals . . . any change must come from the group" (Clinard 1966:148). Despite his recognition of the continuing significance of caste, religious, and regional solidarities in Indian urban social life, Clinard saw "the decline in effective intimate communication" and "the effect of this decline on social control of behavior" as basic to the problem of urbanism and urbanization in India as elsewhere (1966:56). Intimate communication and social control were to be increased through the group activities sponsored by the *vikas mandals*, for a "better and organized way of life" (Clinard 1966:96).

In addition to the regular meetings of the *vikas mandal* councils and its committees, community organizers also encouraged "citizen discussion groups" to bring residents together to discuss affairs of the area. Common recreation was also a priority: studies noted that women spend most of their "spare time" in household work, taking rests, sewing, and visits; community organizers were to encourage them to spend their time instead involved in group activities such as craft classes, picnics, and group outings to historic places in the city. Organizers were instructed to make "troublemakers" feel a part of community development groups, "for only by becoming part of an organized group can they have their views changed and be persuaded to want to conform to the standards acceptable to the majority of the group" (DUCD 1960:13). In addition to shaping groups, Delhi's urban community development program was to create the forward-looking, achievement-oriented individual. For the

planners of the program, the emphasis on the group rather than the individual was not inconsistent with this objective. Program planners agreed with Lewin that even individuals are best made in groups, that in democratically functioning groups, individual initiative grows along with strong collective sentiment.

In accordance with the social-psychological conception of democracy, discussions in meetings were less for rational deliberation than for producing group identity and psychological unanimity with regard to a course of action. One community organizer wrote approvingly of how a meeting had overcome occupational and caste divisions in the area.

Further more [sic], the people have been helped to visualize the significance of such meetings for the fact that in many cases members formed as heterogenous [sic] groups as the professions & vocations they followed. From Washerman to college professors all were sitting together. During the self introductions it came to light in certain cases that the persons had been residing in quite close to [sic] one another for almost two decades and yet they did not know one another. Invariably such revelations induced keenness amongst the members to get together. [DUCD 1959b]

A meeting of women prevailed over neighborhood quarrels.

The lady who did not want to come to this house was discussing things in a nice way . . . The lady who had told the L.C.O. that she would simply come to the meeting and keep mum was expressing her opinion on every topic. All the fights and quarrels were forgotten there. Like a big family they were evincing keen interest in every difficult problem and were showing a sense of belonging to one another. [DUCD 1961a:51]

In meetings organizers emphasized group discussion and consensus rather than individual decision making. The organizations, *vikas mandals*, adopted formal constitutions modeled on American community organizations, which were supplied by the Department of Community Development. These included provisions for the election of officers and use of parliamentary rules of order. However, the formal provisions were submerged within the practices of consensus-making discussion. The simplified parliamentary procedures were used to ensure everyone felt a part of the group by having a turn at talk rather than to guarantee the representation of every individual in the decisions of the organization. Community organizers actively discouraged voting on issues, a direct expression of individual will.

A residence requirement, division of the *vikas mandal* areas into small zones, and what organizers themselves referred to frankly as "gerrymandering" insured that representatives to the executive council would be local "natural leaders," rather than traditional leaders with broader support (Clinard 1966:174). On the other hand, organizers tried to blunt the potentially divisive effects of formal democratic procedures by encouraging consensus on the choice of candidates, usually the individuals cultivated by the community organizers, often within the election meetings themselves. Organizers were instructed that, "While others will participate, the emphasis placed on the opinions of certain persons by the organizer may mean that they will be elected to the Executive Committee." This practice, however, was circumscribed by the more fundamental commitment to democratic leadership. The manual declared that, "Under no circumstances should he try to dictate such selection, however" (DUCD 1961a:48). Nevertheless, elections were usually little more than formal endorsements. Regarding a meeting to elect office holders, one organizer wrote "the most significant part of this meeting as that there is no contest for any office bearer's post" (DUCD 1961a:64). When elections were contested, the organizers suggested that "the person with the highest number of votes be made unanimous" (DUCD 1961a:48). The combination of organizer-led consensus and the "formal organization pattern" of *vikas mandal* was a means by which traditional leaders "were bypassed for new, more representative leaders" (Clinard 1966:292) in order to create a "new social structure within the *vikas mandal* area" (Clinard 1966:299).

Using a simplified version of the statistical methods of measuring group processes pioneered by Lewin and his students, evaluators judged the success of community

development projects in terms of “the intensification of group life” in project areas (DUCD 1962). Group life was narrowly construed: a statistical measure of it was the number of activities of groups operating under the community development organizations, excluding the activities of all other sorts of groups. Evaluators reviewed reports of community organizers and “each time the organizer recorded that the people were in the process of acting directly on some problem or meeting their own desires through common effort an activity was coded with one check . . . The total volume of activities was considered the most effective measure” of the success of the projects in generating community unity and identification with the area (Clinard 1966:285). Regression analysis was used to correlate this statistical measure of group life, “total activity level,” with various aspects of the preexisting social life of the area (such as apathy and homogeneity) and the organizational process to determine the most effective change techniques.<sup>14</sup>

### Conclusion

It is unclear to me the extent to which the urban community development project transformed the ways residents spoke. However, the evidence regarding the intensification of group life was convincing to the Government of India. In 1965 the technologies to engender democratic speech were institutionalized and extended in scope when the Department of Urban Community Development was made a permanent agency within Department of Community Services and expanded to a national program. The Delhi School of Social Work took over the training of community organizers and their course adopted the Manichean distinction between autocratic and democratic leadership (Delhi School of Social Work 1965:61–66). The history of the technologies of speech I have sketched here suggest, first, that we go beyond a focus on the denotational content of development discourse and its local appropriations to examine the genres of speech and writing through which development programs are implemented and which they attempt to engender in their target populations. And second, that we examine the role of scientific practices, however entangled with the state, NGOs, religion, and ethnonationalisms, in transforming ways of speaking. For example, Miyako Inoue has suggested that familiar interactional genres in public settings in contemporary Japan such as *hanashiai* (“talking with each other”), *taiwā* (“dialogue”) or *disukasshon* (“discussion”), often assumed to be quintessential expressions of a Japanese ethos of cooperation and consensus-orientedness, might be connected to the scientific practices I have described as mediated by the US postwar occupation (personal communication).

The Delhi projects show the complex articulation of social technologies of speech and democracy. Both the technologies and ends to which they were put translated democratic ideals. As a matter of effectiveness as much as ethics, American and Indian change professionals tried to make their change efforts appear to originate or at least be consonant with individual and group desires. Democratic ideology and institutions, thus, did not merely place ethical, political, or legal limits on the means by which professionals could intervene to change people’s attitudes, values, and behavior; nor did democratic ideology simply set the objective of change efforts. Rather, the peculiar requirements of creating democratic individuals and groups shaped theoretical conceptions of how people can be made to change and the technologies for doing so. A democratic anthropology was built into the social change technologies. The framers of urban community development recognized the contradiction of an aggressive democratization program, yet the project never escaped what Lewin called the paradox of producing a “change to democracy”: democratic personalities and group relations are based upon and developed through collective self-determination, and yet the change to democracy must be brought about by someone outside the group. In Delhi, this problem transformed democratic technologies of speech into aggressive instruments to undermine forms of sociality valued by many

people targeted by the programs, to disempower leaders and groups seen to be undemocratic, not least because of the ways their leaders were assumed to talk.

Within the study of colonialism, there is a tension between approaches that see it primarily as a matter of discourses and practices targeting some sort of other and approaches that view it as an extension to new terrain of projects envisioned for the metropolitan context. Most scholarship on development discourse, while situating it in the broader horizon of modernity, takes the former approach (e.g., Escobar 1994). Without disputing this characterization of the expansive discourse of development, I have argued here that the technologies of speech used in Delhi were invented to target political others, the autocrat and its complement, the passive or submissive subject, even when these were identified with the aid of social divisions derived from colonial sociology. These politically pathological persons were assumed to be more common in Germany, Japan, and the decolonizing world but were also found in America, in small towns and cities, in every class, and in virtually every sort of social institution. The urban community development project shows how, when embedded in technical programs, the politics of the Cold War could be incorporated into the practices of states like India that endeavored to remain outside the conflict. But as I've tried to show, these technologies of democracy were like army jeeps built in WWII to fight authoritarianism and later redeployed on Cold War fronts against communism. When American consultants were fighting the Cold War in the lanes and offices of Delhi, they were, like the proverbial general, also fighting the last war.

Self-help, locality, participation, and skepticism about the role of the state fit so neatly into the contemporary scholarly paradigm of neoliberalism that scholars have seen this "bottom-up" approach as constituting a "new orthodoxy" (Henkel and Stirrat 2001:170). The great expansion of the role of NGOs in contemporary governance is undeniable. However, placing participatory change wholly within a story of the retreat of the state obscures its roots in the ideological confrontations with authoritarianism. The democratic technologies of speech I have described were developed during wartime to aid the American state's unprecedented engagement with its own population and its plans for Germany and Japan, visions of the most profound social transformations of societies ever attempted. In Delhi these technologies were deployed not as substitutes for welfare withdrawn, but to solve problems far beyond the capacity of the developmentalist state.

The prevailing scholarly exclusion of this history from treatments of participatory development has required contemporary critics to rediscover of the fundamental politics of this approach to subject making, which was well known to its inventors and early practitioners. In the last decade, participatory development and anti-poverty programs in the US using the descendants of the methods of the Delhi urban community development program have come under growing criticism. Cooke and Kothari (2001) raise the question of whether participation is the "the new tyranny," and Cruikshank (1999), following Foucault, finds in the "will to empowerment" a new relation of power between the agents of empowerment and those who are empowered. Such critiques would have puzzled Lewin, Lippitt, and Clinard. Although social psychologists and the Ford Foundation itself fended off right-wing charges that they were agents of socialist tyranny, they elaborated the liberal technologies of what we now call empowerment with the explicit aim of social control, albeit control in what they considered its most democratic form. To demonstrate this point, Lewin prompted Lippitt to experiment with *laissez-faire* leadership, in addition to "democratic" and "autocratic," in order to make clear to overly-individualist Americans that democratic leadership was not simply a matter of letting people do what they want. Lewin saw this fallacy as the understandable but false belief of a "people living in a thoroughly democratic tradition" (1939:83). Clinard criticized the American sociologists who were reluctant to put to use the growing body of scientific techniques of social change for fear of losing the scientist's objectivity or of being considered social workers. He pointed to the scientific as well as social benefits of putting social science to work in programs of social action, particularly in the labo-

ratories of developing countries: "By not being concerned with social action in such situations as those provided in underdeveloped countries, sociologists miss an important scientific opportunity: the opportunity to test their points of view and knowledge through immediate application to programs of social control" (Clinard 1963:219). Clinard approvingly quoted the 1947 observation of another American sociologist that "theoretical knowledge is increased most significantly in the efforts at social control" (Clinard 1963:219). What is striking is not the scandal of power relations embodied in such efforts, but the profound confidence these change agents placed in the capacity of scientifically proven technologies of language to ameliorate what they saw as the fundamental aporia of democratic governance.

## Notes

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1. On the domestic front they fashioned programs to combat a number of social problems, such as morale, diet, housing, industrial absenteeism, race relations, inflation, even the lagging sales of war bonds. Others, focusing more directly on the war abroad and the postwar occupation, developed leadership training programs for military officers and civilian bureaucrats, studied the effects of bombing on the morale of Japan and Germany, and helped shape occupation and reconstruction policies (e.g., Johnson and Nichols 1998).

2. The famous studies of Mayo and others on the effect of worker "participation" on industrial productivity were cited to support this conviction.

3. Such political constraints played an important role in shaping social programs even during the war. The Japanese internment camps run by the War Relocation Authority of the federal government were, of course, an important exception.

4. This was one the findings of Lewin and Margaret Mead's efforts during World War II to persuade American housewives to cook more sweatbreads, kidneys, hearts, etc. when meat was scarce and expensive. Groups of housewives who had arrived at a public decision were more likely to accept the change agent's recommendations than those individually encouraged and given the same information (Lewin 1943).

5. Generally, these equations were much more complex. For example, Lippitt expressed the conclusion that work progress in the democratic group required discussion and planning with

the formula:  $d \frac{D}{P, G} = d \frac{D}{P, SoExp}$ , "the direction [d] toward the goals (G) of the club for the democratic (D) members (P) was by the path of social expression (SoExp)" (Lippitt 1940:180).

6. The degree to which the children could be transformed by their participation in the groups illustrates the sharp divergence of Lewin's Gestalt field theory view of authoritarian orientations from the psychoanalytic model of the "authoritarian personality" emphasizing early childhood experiences developed by Adorno and others (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford 1950).

7. During the same period, Alex Leighton, a psychiatrist by training, conducted "field studies" on democracy-engendering leadership in Camp Poston, a Japanese internment center (1945).

8. Paley (2004) has termed this form of democracy "accountable democracy."

9. This was the main difference between urban and rural community development in India. Rural community development programs had also promoted such a so-called horizontal pattern of social life, but their primary goals were economic improvement through better cultivation and breeding techniques, irrigation systems, and co-operatives.

10. Female community organizers were instructed to hold "fake interviews" with the mothers, if they demanded to be spoken with (Clinard 1966:173).

11. The young Edward Shils, interviewing German prisoners of war in the U.S. to evaluate German morale for the Office of Strategic Services, had early on pointed out the utility of waiting until after interviews before completing forms.

12. For an excellent recent treatment of democracy and Tamil political oratory see Bate 2009.
13. Even British community developers working in Africa during the 1950s and 1960s, in marked contrast to their American counterparts, generally worked through "traditional leaders" (Batten 1957). For accounts of British colonial views of "natural leaders," see Freitag 1989 and Haynes 1992.
14. This analysis showed, for example, a high correlation of apathy and a low "total activity level" ( $r_s = .44$ ), no correlation between the "total activity level" and the number of formal organizational meetings of the *vikas mandals*, a high correlation between a high "total activity level" and the number of informal actions groups formed within a *vikas mandal* area ( $r_s = .84$ ) and no correlation of the "total activity level" with the length of time required to initiate the *vikas mandal* (DUCD 1962).

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