in this situation and see the various psychological reactions to this consistency problem. For example, some individuals who wished American reporters granted the privilege were aware of the common principle involved and somewhat embarrassed about it, but nevertheless expressed contradictory attitudes on the question of Russian reporters. Witness the subjects who said "Yes" about American reporters but who flatly said "No" on the question about Russian reporters and added: "Now I've contradicted myself on the question before," or "It's not quite fair but that's the way I feel." Another group of respondents evidenced an adjustmental procedure to resolve the felt conflict. These subjects said "yes" to the question on American reporters, were aware of the common principle involved and were somewhat embarrassed, but could neither see themselves saying "yes" nor "No." So they said "I didn't know" to the latter question and made such remarks as: "well, it would be wrong to say 'no' after I said 'Yes' to the other but I can't say 'yes' so I just won't say." A considerably larger group were flatly inconsistent saying first "yes" and then "no" and apparently they felt no embarrassment or conflict whatsoever. Cognitively they did not see the two issues as operating in terms of any common principle. Witness the subject who said "yes" to the question on American reporters, "we send our boys over there and really freed them and they turned yellow on us," and "no" to the question on Russian reporters, "we got too many spies in this country today."

By analyses of such experiments we should be able to come out with a set of precise findings as to the correlates of consistency and the psychological processes that determine the differential reaction to the problem of consistency between specific feelings and espoused principles. By the same token other studies of changes in measured attitude accompanying the variation in other experimental procedures can be analyzed in detail in an attempt to understand other correlates of behavior that is consistent or inconsistent under the impact of various forces.

THE DIRECTIONS OF BEHAVIOR: A FIELD-THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF INCONSISTENCIES

Morton Deutsch

Marie Jahoda has raised many significant problems in her introductory statement. The problems, from the point of view of this writer, are basic and are not detachable from fundamental theoretical issues. The question of consistency is linked to the problem of defining behavioral direction; the problem of direction is linked to the question of finding an adequate geometry for psychological and group life spaces, etc. From the social practitioner's viewpoint, a quite generic question is being phrased, "How can we influence a person, or groups of people, to behave in a certain way?" It is clear that these problems cannot be dealt with in detail in an article of this sort; our main purpose here will be merely to sketch out some of their dimensions.

Before proceeding, it may be well to indicate that "inconsistency" does not necessarily result in an inability to understand behavior. It is possible for "inconsistent" behavior to be understandable. A feeling of confusion in the observer is not an essential ingredient to the identification of a behavior as being inconsistent. Furthermore, while an understanding of the behavior may dispel such confusion, it does not destroy the inconsistency unless the "inconsistency" itself is a figment of the observer's misunderstanding. Such misunderstanding may result from an application of an inappropriate frame of reference (e.g. the observer's objectives rather than the subject's objectives) for evaluating the consistency of behavior. Also, it may result from semantic confusion—i.e. differences in the meanings an observer and a person being observed attribute to a given set of signs or symbols. These semantic "inconsistencies" are of considerable importance for the researcher who must constantly remind himself that the meaning of any statement must be partially drawn from its context (stated or unstated) and who must, therefore, allow his research tools to uncover the context of any response. However, it is evident that semantic inconsistencies between the observer and the observed are not what is commonly included in the concept of inconsistency and, as such, they shall not be further discussed.

What is Consistency?

It seems appropriate to start by examining the meaning of "consistency." The phrase "behaves consistently" implies behavior at two or more instances of time and further implies that these instances of behavior have, in terms of a specified set of coordinates, the same direction. Identical behaviors, at two instances of time, may or may not be consistent. To take an obvious example, to congratulate a person when he has successfully solved a difficult problem is not consistent with congratulating that person
after he has miserably failed with a simple problem. On the other hand, widely different actions may be entirely consistent. The rewarding of a child when he is good and the punishing of the child when he is bad are, for certain purposes, completely consistent behaviors. The consistency of behavior is, thus, not a matter of "content" or "form" but rather a question of "direction."

Direction of behavior can only be evaluated or stated in terms of a specified frame of reference. For one set of coordinates, a given action may have the direction "toward," for another set it may have the direction "away." Inviting a Negro neighbor in an interracial housing project in for a cup of coffee may be consistent with the goal of being neighborly and inconsistent with the goal of getting along with one's mother-in-law.

The conflict arising from the overlap of these two frames of reference for evaluating behavior is exemplified in the dilemma stated by a white housewife who resides in an interracial housing project: "I'm very friendly with the Negro lady next-door; we're in and out of each other's place all the time. A problem comes up when my relatives, especially my mother-in-law, visit. They don't like the idea of my living next door to Negroes. You know... my friend sometimes just pops in... Well, I don't want to hurt my friend... I got to get along with my mother-in-law... It's a problem, all right."

Marie Jahoda, in her introductory section, has indicated three types of inconsistencies: logical, psychological, and sociological. It seems unlikely that "logical inconsistency" has an independent status from the other two types; the tool of logic helps one to demonstrate that a given behavior is inconsistent with another behavior in the context of a given set of psychological or sociological coordinates. Behavior is never "illogical" apart from the assumed frame of reference (psychological or sociological) with which the behavior is being evaluated. To the extent that it is otherwise "illogical," the behavior reflects inadequacies in the appropriateness of the specific logic as a tool in understanding behavior. Psychological and sociological types of inconsistencies in behavior may be considered to be respectively behaviors which are incongruent with specified individual or social purposes. These types of inconsistencies are discussed in more detail below.

Psychological Inconsistencies

According to the notions expressed in the preceding paragraphs, a person is psychologically inconsistent when his behaviors at two instances of time do not have the same psychological direction. Basic to this conception of inconsistency is the meaning of the phrase "psychological direction of behavior." The direction of behavior is definable in terms of the matrix

Established as a consequence of the relationship between the individual's position at an instance of time and a specified goal. For example, Bavelas has defined the direction "toward" as any step (i.e. change of position) which decreases the distance from a specified point of reference (e.g. a goal); conversely, the direction "away" is defined as any step which increases the distance from a goal. The distinction between direction "away" and direction "toward" provides a basis for the crude categorization of behaviors as consistent or not consistent. To the extent that a geometry, applicable to psychological analysis, is developed which allows more precise statements of direction, it will be possible to state more exactly the degree of consistency between behaviors in relation to a given frame of reference.

There seem to be at least four major types of psychological inconsistencies; they arise from: (1) conflict; (2) lack of knowledge; (3) lack of skill; (4) unrecognized locomotion.

1. Conflict. By definition, behavior which is consistent with one goal will be inconsistent with another goal which conflicts with (or is in an opposite direction to) the first. Going "toward" the one goal will result in going "away" from the other goal. Conflict may be conscious or unconscious; it may be situational or internal; actual or potential.

It is easy to understand why a person is inconsistent in his statements with respect to living in an interracial housing project if he is able to verbalize his feelings this way: "I like it here... I think the Negro people are wonderful. They should be given every opportunity, the same as whites. I want my children to grow up to be unprejudiced... yet I am worried about Ann, my daughter. She's grown up so that she doesn't see any differences between Negro and white people. She's only 12 now... there are a lot of fine Negro boys here in the project... she's likely to just naturally fall in love with one... If she does, it would be such a mess... people are so prejudiced... she'd never be happy. I don't know what to do... it would be all right, I guess, if everybody weren't so prejudiced against mixed marriages... I've been thinking a lot about it... I'll probably move out before Ann gets much older."

However, not all conflicts are verbalizable. A person may or may not be able to report that, for example, the reason he sometimes insults Negroes despite his genuine respect for them is because he has considerable pent-up aggression which he finds it possible to express only where no social barriers to aggression exist—or only against those who, because they are considered to be socially inferior, cannot retaliate. Without the aid of the subject's description of his conflict, the task of "explaining" the inconsistencies in behavior may be quite difficult to the scientific observer. Psychoanalysts have gone into considerable detail in explaining the dynamics of repression

2 Bavelas in his paper, "A Mathematical Model for Group Structures," J. Applied Anthropology, 1948, has started to develop a geometry in which it is possible to assert more than one rate of going toward or away in relation to a structure that is stratified with respect to two positions.

M. Deutsch and M. E. Collins, op. cit.
and the mechanisms by which conflicts are kept inaccessible. It is beyond the purposes of this paper to deal with the various mechanisms.

In addition to the dimension of awareness, one may consider the degree of internalization of a conflict. Many inconsistencies of behavior can be considered nothing more than reflections of the inconsistent demands placed upon the individual by society. If the groups to which an individual belongs have contradicting values and standards for behavior, it is unlikely that the individual will be consistent in his behavior. For example, in a study of children in a public housing project in which Negro and white families live in separate sections, it was found that Negro and white children who were quite friendly in school (the school was unsegregated) would separate and have no contact upon entering the housing project. The children implicitly understood that different standards with respect to inter-racial association existed in the school and in the housing project. They behaved consistently with regard to the standard operating in the school when they were at school and with regard to the standard operating in the housing project when they were at home. Of course, in the project they were behaving inconsistently with the standard of the school and vice versa.

The conflicts between group standards may or may not be internalized —may or may not represent an actual conflict for the individual. If the individual's main concern is conformity and if there is no overlapping between the groups with conflicting standards, the individual is not likely to experience conflict and, in a strict sense, is not being psychologically inconsistent. The conflict is situational rather than internal and to the extent that the situations of potential conflict can be isolated from one another, the individual may experience no inconsistency or conflict. It is probable that the most frequent and most striking instances of apparent inconsistencies in behavior arise out of the individual's conformity to the standards of differing groups which function in relative isolation from one another.

However, to the extent that group standards become internalized in the form of values and that these values become generalized, conflicting group standards are likely to result in psychological inconsistency. Let us briefly list some of the factors leading to the internalization of group standards and the generalization of values. Internalization is probably dependent upon two types of factors: (1) the degree to which behaviors consistent with the group standards result in need satisfaction; and (2) the degree to which the cues initiating behavior to conform to group standards must be self-produced.

Generalization of a value to situations other than that in which it originates depends upon several factors, among which are: (1) the extent to which the situation in which the value is established encourages the formulation of a generic value by appropriate symbolization of the situation to which the individual is responding and of the responses which he is making;

(2) the strength of the value as determined by such factors as the strength and multiplicity of the needs on which it is based, the degree of internalization of the value, etc.; and (3) the similarity of the new situation to the situation in which the value became established.

In the last several paragraphs we have indicated consistency in behavior may result from inconsistency in the objectives of behavior. To the extent that an individual is driven by forces which propel him to goals which lie in opposing directions, his behavior is bound to be psychologically inconsistent as momentary factors strengthen one force and then the other. The observer, evaluating a person's behavior in terms of his (the observer's) objectives, may perceive psychological inconsistency when there is none. From our discussion, it should be clear that a person cannot be psychologically inconsistent with respect to a goal he does not possess (or no longer possesses).

2. Lack of Knowledge. Even when the objectives of an individual do not lie in differing directions, it is quite possible for an individual to be psychologically inconsistent if, for example, he doesn't know what direction to take to reach his goal. An individual lost in the woods, uncertain whether the steps he is taking are leading toward or away from his goal, may one moment approach his goal and at the next moment retreat from it. When the situation is such that it is impossible to anticipate the consequences of one's behavior; it is inevitable that behavior will be inconsistent. If there are no recognizable signposts by which one can predict the effects of one's behavior, it is impossible for one to establish a consistent direction for behavior. In a sense, for the individual concerned, no direction exists since there is, in his life space, no connected path between himself and his goal. Even if the individual perceives a given path to his goal, there is no guarantee that his cognition will be adequate to the reality. He may intend his actions to lead to his goal only to discover from their effects that they do not.

There are, of course, many situations in which it is difficult to anticipate the effects of one's actions. In a complicated society, this is particularly true for social and political actions. The many instances of "boomerang" effects in political and social strategy are points in evidence. The Ku Klux Klan in Alabama recently, for example, flogged a number of liberal white people with the intent to intimidate the non-prejudiced. The effects ran counter to their intentions; the law and the leading citizens were aroused to indignation with the consequence that the Klan is likely to be further from, rather than closer to, its goal. Here is an inconsistency for which we can be grateful. It also can provide a useful lesson for those of us with rather different intents from that of the Klan. "Direct" behavior, action which is "immediately apparent," may be completely inconsistent with the intended effects ... the Umweg is frequently a necessity for social, as well as physical, locomotion.

It seems possible to assert that a major portion of the instances of psycho-
logical inconsistency result from the individual's lack of knowledge of how to be consistent. The social practitioner in the field of intergroup relations is frequently plagued with the feeling that there is no consistent direction to his efforts. Without adequate guide-posts by which to evaluate his work, he has no realistic basis for being satisfied or dissatisfied with his accomplishments; nor has he any adequate criteria by which he can learn that one kind of effort leads to progress while another kind has harmful effects. In such a situation, the only basis for consistent behavior arises in relation to a "search model" or a systematic procedure for inquiry. Research methods provide a tool for the acquiring of the knowledge which is necessary to a consistent direction of behavior. Action in a field that is cognitively unstructured must be coordinated with research, if the field is to become sufficiently structured so as to permit effective behavior. Directions in the life space depend upon its cognitive structure; without knowledge of the consequences of one's actions, it is impossible to behave consistently.

3. Lack of Skill. An individual may have consistent objectives, know what steps are necessary to achieve his goal, but still behave inconsistently. His inconsistency may arise from his inability to perform the locomotions he intends. "Inability" may, of course, result from psychological conflict or lack of knowledge but, in addition, it may result from a lack of skill in execution. Thus, many of us have been in situations where prejudiced remarks have been made but we couldn't behave in a manner consistent with our objective of neutralizing the harmful effects of the prejudiced remarks despite our knowledge of what to do. We possessed no effective skill in putting our knowledge to use.

The work of the Commission on Community Interrelations (C.C.I.) of the American Jewish Congress in training people effectively to handle prejudiced incidents has clearly demonstrated that skillful social action may require more than the correct intent and unpractised knowledge. Individuals who can indicate an effective technique to follow while calmly discussing the situation in the abstract may fluster easily in the real situation and actually strengthen rather than weaken the harmful effects of the prejudiced person.

Many social skills require considerable practice before they are spontaneously available for use in real situations. The experiments of CCI have demonstrated that people can acquire social skills and become competent in their usage with training. It does not seem an exaggeration to say that many people are not friendly (particularly with individuals from groups with whom they have had little previous contact) because they do not know how to start being friendly—they have not the social skills necessary to the breaking down of superficial social barriers. It is an uncommon experience at recreational centers to find boys and girls (or, for that matter, different ethnic groups) segregating themselves from each other despite their desire to mix and their knowledge in the abstract of what should be done. However, lacking "ice-breaking" skills, their actual behavior may be quite inconsistent with their intents.

4. Unrecognized Locomotion. Change of position with respect to a goal may occur as a result of the individual's behavior or of other factors. The world may change; a person's goal may move closer or farther away; the individual may have been moved unwittingly by events beyond his control. In any case, it is possible for a person to locomote (change his position) without his being aware that any such locomotion has taken place. If, for example, a person has unknowingly moved closer to his goal and considers himself to be farther away from the goal than he really is, he may behave in such a way as to decrease rather than increase his chances of reaching his goal.

This type of inconsistency is not so rare as first impression might lead one to suspect. Technological changes and social dynamics frequently make obsolete social practices which were once valuable. To the extent that these obsolete social practices persist, they may serve as real obstacles to the achievement of desired objectives and thus may be inconsistent with currently held goals. Thus, many labor practices which may have become necessary to union strength and survival in a capitalist economy have been self-defeating in a socialist economy, for example, in Great Britain. In the field of interracial relations, the fight for equal, though separate, facilities for Negroes and whites may be a step forward under certain conditions, but under other conditions it may be a major obstacle to the development of wholesome interracial relations.

Many of us are Rip Van Winkles, slumbering on while the world changes. To the extent that we do not take cognizance of how changes beyond our control affect our positions in relation to our goals, we are likely to behave in ways which are either inconsistent or irrelevant to our purposes. The incorrect assessment of present position is likely to lead to a faulty perception of the direction to one's goal and result in futile efforts to progress.

We have indicated that psychological inconsistency is understandable in terms of several different types of factors: conflict in goals, lack of knowledge, lack of skill, and unrecognized locomotion. Though, as a consequence of these factors, psychological inconsistency is a commonplace, we should not underestimate the degree of consistency and the strength of the striving for consistency which characterizes organismic behavior. Since, by definition, effective behavior in relation to a goal is consistent behavior, one can expect the individual to strive to eliminate factors resulting in inconsistent action toward his major goals. This entails an organization of sentiments or attitudes, a super-ordination and subordination, such that the major goals the individual seeks are non-conflicting and the development of a generalized cognitive map of the world in which he moves, so that the individual may direct his behavior appropriately despite changes.

in position. While the unification of attitudes and the integration of knowledge is rarely complete, the striving for consistency is indicated in the value in which behavioral consistency is held. The identification of a person's actions as being "inconsistent" is a serious accusation and may be strongly resented.

The value of consistency may be enhanced or weakened by the social pressures to which the individual is exposed. Consistency of behavior, for the casual observer, probably allows for greater predictability—that is, if a person is consistent, you are more likely to know what he is going to do than if he is not. Since predictability of behavior is a necessary condition for many forms of social interaction, the social pressures to behave consistently may be quite strong. On the other hand, the inability to behave consistently as a consequence of conflicting group memberships, lack of knowledge or skill, etc. may weaken the individual's allegiance to the value of "consistency"; attempting to conform to it is too frustrating.

Societal Inconsistency

Psychological inconsistency, it has been indicated, may reflect societal inconsistency. It is difficult, if not impossible, for an individual who lives in a society which is characterized by conflicting interests, opposing value systems, and different concepts of social reality to be psychologically consistent. Of necessity, the individual will belong to groups which exert conflicting pressures upon him and will absorb values that are not congruent with each other. The child living in a segregated interracial housing project but going to an unsegregated school will find it difficult to be consistent both with the standards for behavior he has internalized in the home and with the standards which guide his behavior in the school. The friendships developed in the atmosphere of an interracial camp may conflict with the allegiance to "the gang" in the neighborhood. You may hurt your Negro friends if you are friendly with prejudiced people, and you are not socially accepted if you are friendly with Negro people.

There are many instances of psychological inconsistency which are forced upon the individual by the conflicting interests, groups, value systems, etc. in American life. Myrdal, in the American Dilemma, West in Plainville, the Lynds in Middletown, as well as many others, have indicated the many conflicting forces in the United States to which the individual may be exposed; no further elaboration is needed here. Since many of these conflicts are inescapable, the individual is bound to be, in some ways, psychologically inconsistent. In face of the many inconsistencies in the social reality, it would probably be disastrous for the mental health of the individual if he attempted to be completely consistent and could not bear within himself some measure of inconsistency. On the other hand, the individual who passively tolerates all types of inconsistencies and makes no attempts to change external reality into a more coherent environment may rob himself and his community of the opportunity of creating a more congenial milieu.

To sum up, our analysis of the factors leading to psychological inconsistency suggests that consistent behavior requires: (1) a clear objective or goal which has sufficient strength to be compelling despite the presence of other conflicting objectives; (2) knowledge of the direction to the goal; (3) skill in utilizing the knowledge to produce effective locomotion; and (4) an awareness of the many factors which may operate independently of one's motivation that may change one's position in relation to the desired objectives.

Psychological inconsistency is, however, frequently only a mirror of societal inconsistency; as such it is a measure of the conflicting group pressures that the individual is exposed to as a result of the multiplicity of social roles that he must fulfill in a complex, uncoordinated society. Constructive action directed toward overcoming the internal contradictions of society will be necessary before we can hope to have individuals who are free of internal contradictions. The implication is clear: efforts to produce change in the individual must not only be directed at the individual but also at the social institutions and group standards which determine the individual's values and which help to induce the goals for which he strives.