



## Pacific Sociological Association

---

"Settling-in": An Interactionist Perspective on the Entry of the New Manager

Author(s): Dafna Izraeli

Source: *The Pacific Sociological Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Jan., 1977), pp. 135-160

Published by: [University of California Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1388909>

Accessed: 22/06/2014 04:12

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Sage Publications, Inc. and Pacific Sociological Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Pacific Sociological Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

**“SETTLING-IN”**  
**An Interactionist Perspective**  
**on the Entry of the New Manager**

DAFNA IZRAELI  
*Tel-Aviv University*

**T**he entry of a new manager into an organization has traditionally been studied from the organization's perspective.<sup>1</sup> It is usually treated as a problem of socialization according to which the organization is perceived as shaping the incumbent's attitudes and behavior to fit the requirements of his new role. Sociologically, the emphasis is on the ways in which conformity is achieved. The focus in the managerial literature is usually on programs for getting new managers to meet the organization's expectations. These programs are typically referred to as “induction,” “orientation,” “initiation,” “indoctrination,” or “breaking-in.”<sup>2</sup> The terminology reflects the organization's perspective and, specifically, its concern for establishing control over participants—particularly those it authorizes to act on its behalf.<sup>3</sup>

---

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *This work draws on and extends research published earlier in the Sloan Management Review (Winter, 1975, Vol. 16, No. 2: 55-70). I am indebted to Robert P. Biller, Neil J. Smelser, and Edwin Epstein for their helpful comments.*

PACIFIC SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW, Vol. 20 No. 1, January 1977  
©1977 Pacific Sociological Assn.

The first part of this paper examines the problems inherent in the socialization model for understanding the encounter between a new manager and an organization and suggests an alternative, interactionist perspective. This perspective is then applied to the role of the middle manager and a field study is used for analyzing the “settling-in” process—the process by which a new manager secures his survival in the organization.

### THE SOCIALIZATION MODEL

The socialization approach is a behavioral model of social interaction in which the dominant activity mode is perceived to be learning and conditioning. It assumes the organization initiates action for the incumbent, who responds in accordance with the stimuli presented to him—provided these are presented effectively. By implication, the new manager lacks predefined interests or goals that are incompatible with the ones the organization has defined for him.<sup>4</sup> Since, it is assumed, he is highly motivated to meet the organization’s expectations, all that is required is that these be made known to him in a manner that he can comprehend and apply. Berlew and Hall (1966: 210) express these ideas in the Lewinian terms so popular among learning theorists:

In terms of field theory, when the new manager first enters an organization, that position of his life space corresponding to the organization is blank.

In terms of Lewin’s model of attitude change, the new manager is unfrozen and is searching for information and identification models on the basis of which he can change in the direction he feels the organization expects him to change.

The socialization model, as a perspective for understanding what transpires when a new manager enters an organization, suffers from several important limitations.<sup>5</sup>

1. It views the organization, or at least the management, as a monolithic entity, in which there is consensus concerning what is to be expected of a new manager. In reality, however, the

various managers with whom the new person interacts and is interdependent have different ideas concerning what he should (or should not) do, how he should do it, and what his relationship to them ought to be. This variation reflects their own different interests and problems in the organizations, as well as those of the department(s) with which they are associated.

2. The socialization model treats the content of the new manager role as a given and as defined by the organization. It ignores the part played by the incumbent in shaping his role as well as in influencing how others come to perceive his role.<sup>6</sup> This viewpoint ignores what Goffman (1959: 248) calls "role enterprise,"

whereby a particular member attempts not so much to move into a higher position already established as to create a new position for himself, a position involving duties which suitably express attributes that are congenial to him.

Thus, in trying to meet the expectations of his role partners, the new manager attempts to advance his own interests rather than merely react to the pressure they exert on him.

3. The socialization model assumes that once the new manager has been taught what is expected of him, he will be able to fulfill the formal requirements of his position. This assumption overlooks the tension inherent in the new manager role—tension generated by the gap between his formal authority and managerial expectations of him on the one hand, and his actual power to act in the name of that authority and to meet these expectations on the other. Whether, in fact, he has the power to act is an empirical problem, and does not follow necessarily from his authority to do so.<sup>7</sup> As Becker and Strauss (1956: 259) observe:

Those new to office may be too zealous. They often commit the indelicate error of taking too literally their formal promotion or certification, when actually intervening steps must be traversed before the attainment of full prerogatives. The passage may involve

trials and tests of loyalty, as well as the simple accumulation of information and skill.

The dynamics of this passage I call “settling-in.” Settling-in refers to the process by which a new manager secures his survival in the organization during the critical period of his “induction.” The concept is generated by an interactionist perspective which focuses on the actions and responses of interacting individuals (Blumer, 1969; Strauss, 1964).

#### THE SOCIAL INTERACTIONIST MODEL

This model is based on three premises.

1. The study of the transactions that occur between the new manager and other members of the organization requires an analysis of the interplay between social structure and social process (Weick, 1969: 1).<sup>8</sup> A static description of structural arrangements, such as market conditions, organizational contingencies, interdepartmental relations, or even of managerial types must be intertwined with a consideration of strategic plays—moves and countermoves—used by the actors as they make their way through the structure and in doing so shape its organizational contours. This mode of inquiry is in harmony with Cicourel’s (1970: 230) observation that

Terms like “status” and “role” are convenient for the observers as a kind of intellectual shorthand for describing complex arrangements and activities in social life, but of limited utility for specifying how the actor or observer negotiates everyday life.<sup>9</sup>

This approach shifts the emphasis from role conformity to role enactment and role generation, for we are primarily concerned with the individual’s attempt to “make aspects of his role explicit . . . creating and modifying roles as well as merely bringing them to light; the process is not only role taking but *role making*” (Turner, 1962: 22). The more diffusely defined the role, the greater leverage the actor has to shape it, subject to the pressures from his role partners with whom he negotiates the boundaries of permissible enactments.

2. The actors are engaged in a mixed-motive game; that is, a situation in which they have both common goals which motivate them to cooperate and divergent interests which divide them. Analyzing interaction as negotiation is different from viewing it as problem solving or as cooperation, in the assumptions that are made about the relationships between the actors. Negotiation lies somewhere between persuasion and bargaining, as defined by March and Simon (1958: 129):

Problem-solving assumes that the agents in conflict have the same goals and that search and analysis will, therefore, reveal satisfactory solutions. Persuasion assumes that the agents have common deep-level goals, and that one can convince others to shift their shallower goals so that the conflict disappears. Bargaining assumes persistent differences in goals, but arrival at a compromise about behavior through the use of threats, bluffing, swaps, concessions and general gamesmanship.

*Negotiation* assumes that the parties at one and the same time have both common goals as interdependent members of an organization and persistent differences as individuals separate and competing for resources within that organization. The fact of their interdependence constrains their conflict, while that of their competition defines the conditions that limit trust and cooperation.

3. Becoming a manager involves more than learning about the technology, structure, or culture of an organization. It is to a considerable extent a political process (Dill, 1962: 248).<sup>10</sup> It involves winning the support of relevant others, neutralizing or eliminating opposition, and building a base of influence to assure the willing compliance of those for whose activities the manager is accountable, and the backing of those to whom he is accountable.<sup>11</sup>

While all new managers must settle-in if they are to stay in, the problems they encounter in the process seem to vary with the level at which they enter the organization. The remainder of this paper is concerned with the middle manager and with the observation that becoming a middle manager entails interesting

patterns of strain (Dalton, 1959; Fox, 1971; Fletcher, 1973).<sup>1 2</sup> The term as used here refers to those positions responsible for managing the activities of lower managers, which derive their authority from hierarchical superiors.

#### **THE MIDDLE MANAGER'S DILEMMA**

Unlike the foreman operating in the interstices of two organizational structures (Smelser, 1963: 77), the middle manager is clearly a member of management. His concern is less with identity (Roethlisberger, 1945; Gardner and Whyte, 1945; Miller and Form, 1964) than with attaining influence to be more like those to whom his values and ambitions are oriented (Fox, 1971). His performance is affected by the amount of influence he can exert (Pelz, 1952; Kahn, 1964: 54; Katz, Maccoby, and Morse, 1950; Strauss and Sayles, 1960: 336). His influence, however depends on his ability to share in the control of such valued resources as financial rewards and the right to hire, fire, and promote participants.<sup>1 3</sup> Unlike top management, however, he lacks direct control of these resources. His access to them is mediated through his superiors, who "authorize" him to act on their behalf.

There are many reasons why a middle manager may fail to get the support of his boss. The boss may view him as a threat because he is better trained or appears too ambitious or because his presence intrudes on what the superior considers to be his own prerogatives. The boss may have preferred the promotion of another person; he may simply dislike the new manager on personal grounds and consider their respective managerial styles to be incompatible. In any case, the middle manager may be formally authorized to act within certain spheres but find that his boss is subverting his attempts to avail himself of his organizational prerogatives.

Blau and Scott (1963: 237) observe that organizations generate the tools that managers can use to exert their authority, ingratiate themselves among subordinates, and win compliance. This analysis of the middle manager role, however,

suggests that his access to these resources is problematic. In fact, research indicates that the most pressing problem of concern to middle managers is the difficulty they face in influencing subordinates' acceptance of policies and procedures (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1973: 41; Maier and Hoffman, 1964). When the person is new, the problem of "power deficiency" is more acute. The next section examines the strains of "settling-in," while the rest of this study is concerned with the strategies employed by a middle manager to both gain support within the organization and circumvent the effects of his limited access to resources.

#### **THE STRAINS OF "SETTLING-IN"**

The new manager finds an already existing set of social arrangements that order the relations among the members of the organization. These arrangements develop over time and are characterized by shared understandings about the meaning of things and by the differential distribution of trust, influence, and access to resources, of rights and commitments. The entry of the new person sends ripples inundating the system.<sup>1 4</sup> The arrangements in the social field are shaken, at least temporarily, as members assign meanings to the fact and manner of his arrival and formulate responses for coping with it. Almost inevitably his role partners will have some mental image of what they expect, hope for, or fear from the newcomer. Even those indifferent to his entry will have some expectations that define the conditions for extending their cooperation to the new manager—if only at the level of complying with his authorized demands of them.

The middle manager likely begins his organizational career as an isolate. New to the organization, he lacks a network of social relations with others in a position to assist him by supplying information, those "strategic secrets" (Goffman, 1959: 142) that would enable him to plan his moves wisely, or at least safely. Allies could enhance his influence by backing him, complying with his directives, and rendering multiple services to secure his position in the organization.



Weaving his way into the social fabric of personal relations, however, is problematic for the new middle manager. Alliances are forged over time from the exchange of valued resources and the awareness of communal interests. They are based on a measure of mutual trust and strengthened by the bonds of personal sentiment. In other words, they are the product of time, access to resources, and tactical skill.

Early in his career the new manager will devise some strategy (with varying degrees of awareness) for "settling-in." While the motives, goals, and tactics will differ, they will usually involve attempts at coalition formation. The coalition process reshapes the role structure and alters the relationship between formal status and power (Burns, 1955; Dalton, 1959; Caplow, 1968; Gamson, 1961; Bujra, 1973). Through coalitions he increases his support. The remainder of this paper analyzes the process by which such coalitions are formed and "settling-in" is carried off. The analysis is organized around an empirical case of a factory organization.

#### THE FACTORY CONTEXT<sup>15</sup>

Telev began operations as a radio assembly plant in the 1950s. The market for consumer goods is particularly sensitive to economic fluctuations. By 1963 competition and market saturation led to a drop in Telev's radio sales. The onset of a general economic recession in 1965 intensified the downward trend in sales. Between 1962 and 1967 Telev reduced its labor force from 250 to 65 employees.

Shortly after Israel inaugurated its first television transmission station, in 1968, Telev opened a television assembly department. A year later, when this study began, the department was in the process of rapid expansion. Television sales during 1969 exceeded all forecasts and certainly the most optimistic expectations of Telev's management. Market demand for Telev sets was greater than its output capacity. Eager customers paid in advance and then waited to receive delivery. The management feared that if the supply continued to lag

behind the demand, Telev would lose customers to its competitors. Furthermore, it believed that the boom was temporary and wished to take advantage of market opportunity.

During 1969 intensive efforts were made to increase television production. New machines were installed, the work flow made more efficient, and the labor force was increased from 41 to 75 workers (50 women and 25 men). Continuous pressure, mainly in the form of production bonuses, was used to raise output. In mid-year Mr. D.S. was hired to fill a new position—that of department supervisor.

The arrival of the supervisor presents an interesting organizational problem, since his responsibilities previously had been divided between two people—Tom, the senior technician, and

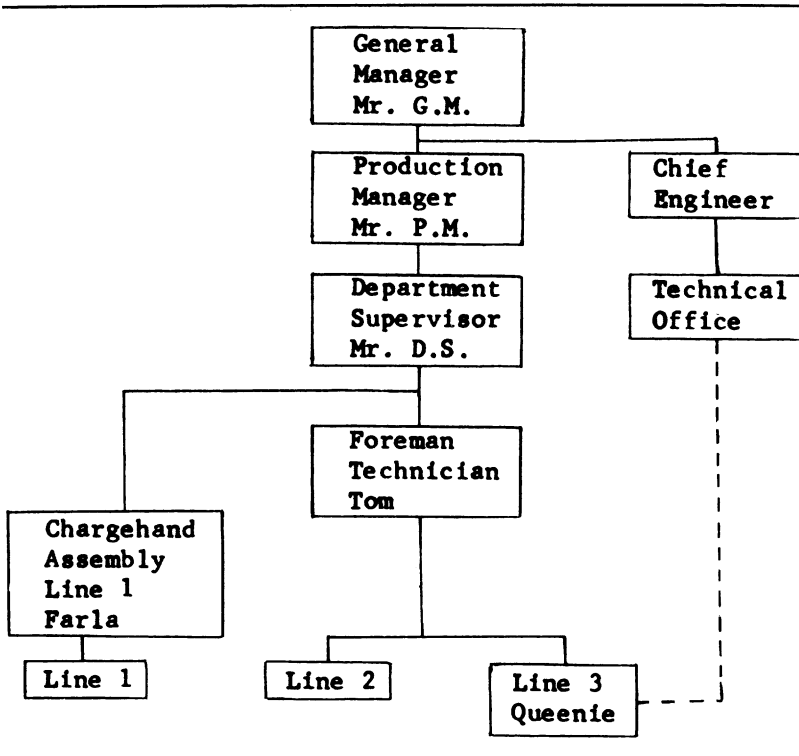


Figure 1: Telev T.V. Department Formal Organization Chart

P.M., the production manager of Telev. Although formally the foreman of an assembly line in the department, Tom was generally considered to be in charge of the department. He earned a special administration premium for paper work and for "keeping things running smoothly."

The production manager, P.M., took a direct interest in all aspects of television production. His reluctance to delegate authority effectively cemented his control over routine decision making on the shop floor. P.M. and Tom had worked together for over ten years and had established an understanding that made each predictable to the other. As P.M. once explained to me, "Through the foremen, the production manager rules the factory. The General Manager, Mr. G.M., is the father of this place, but the production manager runs it."

The position of supervisor was forged out of those of P.M. and Tom, thus reducing their respective responsibilities in the television department. The potential for conflict existed in the very structure of this situation.

I do not claim, however, that conflict was inevitable. Had the two old-timers been pleased to be relieved of these supervisory responsibilities they might even have welcomed the arrival of D.S. Had Tom not wanted to be promoted to supervisor or had he been on bad terms with P.M. he may have been more helpful to D.S. Had D.S. shown himself to be less ambitious and had he allowed P.M. to retain direct control over the department, as in the past, a coalition may have developed between these two men. These conditions, however, did not exist.

At the end of his two week observation period and three days prior to the departure of the general manager on an extended trip abroad, the supervisor submitted his report to the management team. He contended that, under current conditions, production levels could not rise above a daily average of 65-70 sets. The production manager disagreed. The next day P.M. hovered over the production lines—adding workers, urging them to work faster. By the end of the day they had assembled a record 91 television sets. Triumphant, P.M. declared that he had disproved D.S.'s assessment and that with proper super-

vision output could be increased considerably. The following day output dropped to below average because the supply of frames from the carpentry shop had been depleted. D.S. retorted that before production could rise, changes had to be made in both the television department and elsewhere in the factory.

This dramatic encounter between the two men had important symbolic ramifications. P.M., who enjoyed a network of loyal supporters on the shop floor, used the performance to place responsibility for future output on the supervisor and specifically on his ability to motivate workers. D.S.'s rejoinder, by focusing on the problems of interdepartmental coordination, shifted the responsibility to the production manager.

When the general manager left for his extended vacation, he had not clarified the boundaries of the new manager's responsibilities. A struggle for control over the television department developed, with D.S. taking the offensive.

### THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The remainder of this article describes some of the tactics employed by D.S. to "settle-in" as television department supervisor. Four tactics are analyzed:

- (1) strategic replacements among the old guard,
- (2) neutralization of opposition,
- (3) commitment of those yet uncommitted to P.M., and
- (4) gaining direct support from higher up.

### STRATEGIC REPLACEMENTS

A change in personnel at the top of the organization usually leads to changes among the ranks of the "first lieutenants." The successor, notes Gouldner (1954), makes strategic changes to rid himself of the resistant old guard. By installing "his men" in key positions he assures himself of their loyalty, as well as

improved communication and, consequently, greater control over the organization.

The middle manager in a small organization is limited in his ability to fire those working under him, particularly while he is still new. Such a move requires approval of higher-ups and must be justified in terms acceptable to them. It is generally easier to make adjustments in the way jobs are distributed within the department since such matters usually come within the purview of the supervisor. He can make strategic replacements by transferring those workers not committed to his opponents to "key" positions, thus ingratiating himself with them. But key positions in the department, such as foreman, senior technician, and quality controller, are likely filled by old-timers with long-standing alliances with the old guard. Such senior workers accumulate rights to their jobs as well as other sources of power which make them difficult to displace.

The middle manager then has two alternative courses of action. (1) He can recommend that the old-timer be promoted to a position outside the department. This tactic is not promising since he lacks the influence to effect promotions so early in the game and since the superior will likely be unwilling to forego "his man" in the department. (2) He can weaken the old-timer's base of power, such as by discrediting his suitability for the job, and then replace him. This tactic has the advantage of being pursuable in the name of company efficiency or increased productivity.

The discrediting tactic can be implemented using two different maneuvers. (1) Reports of the opponent's failures are emphasized while those of his successes are suppressed.<sup>16</sup> Such tactical selection of information in essence accepts current performance standards but points to the fact that the person is not meeting them. (2) Current standards are declared inappropriate and requiring change. The opponent is presented as a person resisting the necessary changes and, by implication, as a liability to company interests. The second maneuver seems the preferred alternative. By insisting that performance criteria need to be reassessed and redefined, he presents himself as having

initiative and new ideas and avoids being accused of personal malice toward the one he is discrediting.

D.S. selected the latter course in the case of Queenie. Queenie was a veteran of some 13 years at Telev and had risen to be in charge of the final quality control station in the television department. She was not popular among the other workers. They complained that her exacting standards held up production and her propensity for rejecting sets with minor faults severely reduced their production bonuses. Rumor had it that frequently there was nothing at all wrong with her rejects.

D.S. was unable to persuade Queenie either to speed up her work or to train her assistant to share the full work load. Queenie refused. Since she was directly responsible to the technical office for technical standards, D.S.'s authority over her was further attenuated. D.S. wanted to remove her from the production line not only because she held up production but because of her close connections with P.M. Daily she reported directly to his office on events in the television department. P.M. backed her openly. He believed her general competence and particularly her exacting standards to be essential for establishing a market reputation for quality. He consequently preferred to ignore the high turnover among those sent to assist her, most of whom requested to move to another position or were rejected by Queenie.

With the hiring of a new assistant for Queenie, D.S. resolved to undermine her monopoly on quality control. He shared his intentions with the assistant and urged her to learn the job as best she could and not be discouraged by Queenie's critical manner. He openly declared that the standards maintained by Queenie were totally inappropriate in relation to what the market demanded, that they conflicted with the company's interest in increasing output, and that they were, in fact, costing Telev a great deal in unearned profit. After a campaign of several months and growing pressure from the board to raise the output, P.M. agreed to replace Queenie with her assistant. Queenie was taken off the production line and promoted to quality controller for the department. From then on she spent

most of her time outside the department.<sup>1.7</sup> D.S. thereby succeeded in ingratiating himself with the line workers, and particularly with the new controller, and in placing “his man” in a key position.

#### NEUTRALIZING POTENTIAL OPPOSITION

Accumulated insights into organizational behavior lead us to predict that a new middle manager would seek an alliance with his immediate subordinates—the foremen in the department. If successful, such an alliance secures access to information and to the network of informal shop floor relations usually enjoyed by long-serving subordinates. Loyal foremen are in a position to mobilize rank and file sentiment in favor of a new supervisor (Gouldner, 1954: 84) and to protect him by concealing his errors and inadequacies from those who could benefit from knowing about them (Dalton, 1959). The willing compliance of subordinates gives the middle manager a measure of autonomy from his superiors (Blau and Scott, 1963: 162), since he does not need their active interference in resolving problems of disciplines, and therefore to some extent “seals-off” the department from outside criticism. Winning the subordinate’s loyalty, however, can entail serious difficulty, since:

1. Recruitment from outside the organization blocks the advancement of members within who anticipated promotion to the job. When those thwarted in their ambitions are the subordinates on whose cooperation the new man is dependent, they are unlikely to become his allies (Levenson, 1961).

2. The addition of an intermediary level between foreman and production manager increases the distance between the two positions. Insofar as managers tend to evaluate their status with reference to their distance from the top of the formal status structure, the lengthening of the hierarchy deflates the value of the foreman’s position and comes to be perceived as a demotion (Tausky and Dubin, 1965).

3. In his attempt to “settle-in,” the incumbent likely begins his organizational career with a demand for tightening up and for greater efficiency. This usually entails two related tactics:

first, narrowing areas of subordinates' discretion by routinizing jobs, thus reducing their autonomy and increasing the supervisor's control; second, insisting on increased formalization of interaction, particularly formalization of work procedures and hierarchical relations. This course, pursued when the newcomer feels unable to mobilize the informal system, is aimed at weakening alliances between subordinates and higher-ups and ensuring that communications and directives do not bypass the supervisor. The new manager's interest in establishing himself in the department comes into conflict with the foreman's interest in preserving both the scope of his autonomy as well as those privileges accumulated over time, including direct access to the office of the production manager. When this occurs the foreman will probably be drawn closer to those others who are also wary of the newcomer-in this case the production manager.

#### THE CASE OF TOM

Initially P.M. and Tom were aligned in their mistrust of D.S. P.M. treated him formally, addressing him as Mr. D.S., although he addressed peers and subordinates alike without the prefix. Tom was put in charge of "explaining things" to the new supervisor. While overtly friendly, he was cautious and disclosed as little as he could without seeming uncooperative.

Tom had hoped to be promoted to supervisor. During the first few weeks after D.S.'s arrival he was uncertain whether the man would be kept for the job. Even if he were, the division of responsibility between them still had to be determined. Tom hoped he would retain control over the pace of his repair work as well as other privileges he enjoyed in the department. D.S. was eager not to alienate this old-timer technician who better than anyone knew the intricacies of the Telev T.V. set and had preserved a monopoly of know-how regarding the more "delicate" repairs. D.S. made no attempt to increase control over Tom. He explained:

Tom wastes a lot of time during the day so that he can stay overtime. This bothers me but I am not interested in starting up with



him, so I say nothing and don't check up on him. I need him and he won't let anyone else into his job without a fight.

I don't want a confrontation with Tom because if I push him against the wall, he'll have to take an open stand against me and that I want to avoid.

Tom, for his part, tried to maintain his neutrality in the clash between D.S. and P.M. This he was allowed to do since neither the production manager nor the department supervisor considered it in his interest to antagonize him.

#### **THE CASE OF FARLA**

The case of Farla, an experienced chargehand, marks an interesting contrast to that of Tom.

Initially, Farla's relations with D.S. were friendly. They shared complaints about the way things were run at Telev. Farla, however, maintained close and direct contact with the production manager. Realizing he could not win her over, D.S. altered his strategy. He made life in the department difficult for Farla. He did not share information with her and excluded her from his meetings with the other foremen. To them he said she was not to be trusted, an opinion that pleased Tom, who resented Farla's past refusal to channel requests to the production manager through him.

D.S. instructed her to bring all problems to him. Farla claimed that the production manager had told her that D.S.'s authority did not extend over her and that she was to continue channeling requests to him. Farla felt caught between the two men. She described her situation to me in the following way:

P.M., D.S. and I are like the three people who shared a bed. The man in the middle was asked how he liked such an arrangement. "Generally I like it," he replied, "because whether the blankets are pulled to the right or to the left, I am always covered, but when the two sides start fighting then it's terrible because I get hit from both sides."

Tom's ability to form a double entente, in contrast to Farla's inability to do so was due less to the activities of these two actors than to the production manager and supervisor both

being more dependent on Tom than on Farla. They allowed him to follow a neutral course while they forced Farla into taking sides.

When, some weeks later, Farla accepted a transfer to the newly opened components department, both she and the supervisor were pleased at her removal from the television department.

## **ESTABLISHING SUPPORT**

The new manager seeks support both to provide a cadre of lieutenants with whom to replace the old guard as well as to establish his influence among his subordinates. Two problems constrain his efforts.

1. The middle manager, particularly in small organizations, has less freedom than his formal superiors to bring in "his own people" from the outside. He must select those from among his department whom he considers will serve his interests best. A new supervisor, however, makes his assessment on the basis of incomplete information concerning the history of the people he is judging or of their relationships in the factory.

The Department Supervisor promoted Ben, a trained technician, to position of foreman on line 3. The promotion was unofficial, pending approval from the production manager. Ben was grateful to D.S. for the opportunity, since P.M. had ignored his requests for advancement.

As acting foreman, however, Ben showed himself to be particularly lacking in human relations skills. Workers complained to D.S. that he was inconsiderate, offensive, and incompetent. D.S. regretted his commitment.

2. The middle manager's access to organizational resources is limited and consequently many of his present gains are made by promises of future rewards. Settling-in requires early credit. These promises meet with some success because, as Etzioni (1968: 125) observes, "the subjects' considerations . . . are probalistic." Those who comply do so because they believe that the probability of being rewarded in the future merits their

cooperation. Their continued cooperation, however, depends first on the ability of the middle manager to fulfill his debts, at least to the extent of retaining his credibility, and second on the cost involved for the workers in supporting a superior who is in conflict with his own superior.

D.S. varied his tactics for ingratiating himself with the different categories of workers in the department. Among the women, who comprised the majority of the workers, he relied a great deal on his personal charm to make himself attractive and to motivate them to want to please him. For most of these semiskilled and unskilled female workers the factory job was either a temporary interlude before marriage or childbirth or a dead-end route. In either case they were not politically involved in the factory, and not in a position or not motivated to exact the price demanded by male workers for their cooperation.

D.S.'s handsome looks and wit were important independent resources brought from the outside. He used them to establish "mock courtships" with many women workers, marking his comments with sexual innuendos while emphasizing the value he placed on efficient, reliable work. These flirtations were intended to increase his attractiveness and to screen the authority nature of the relationship between supervisor and production worker.

D.S. gained support from some dissatisfied old-timers and new male workers by moving them into better bonus paying jobs or increasing their overtime quota. The resources D.S. could distribute were meager. Their value lay largely in their promise of "better things to come." He, so to speak, accumulated good will on credit, with a commitment to "deliver at a later date."

Without the backing of superiors in the organization, settling-in becomes a precarious undertaking. This analysis suggests that the turnover of middle managers in the first year or two in the organization may be the result of their being pushed out by disgruntled debtors, those not adequately remunerated for their investment of trust and cooperation.

#### **MOBILIZING SUPPORT FROM HIGHER-UPS**

Alliances with higher-ups, which skip hierarchical levels, while a difficult situation for those being bypassed are among

the most promising means for intraorganizational mobility. Martin and Strauss (1956: 93) astutely observe:

Progression of individuals along career lines is not only a result of technical competence and of being available and trained at the right time. A major influence determining who moves and how far is the action of a sponsor. In many instances, and especially at higher levels, this is almost a necessary condition for mobility.

When a middle manager (C) fails to get the active sponsorship of his own superior (B), the most promising tactic is to gain direct support from his superior's superior (A). Such an alliance between A and C gives C three important advantages in his relationship with his superior (B): (1) C is less dependent on B's good will for access to organizational resources. (2) Suspecting that he will not be backed by his boss (A), B will likely initiate activity less frequently for C than otherwise. (3) The supervisor (C) will consequently be freer of control from B and freer to initiate action for his own subordinates.

In a hierarchical organization, bypassing one's superior is not a simple matter. In his study of purchasing agents, Strauss (1962) observed that they rarely went directly to the boss. They feared this would be taken as an indication of incompetence and would probably be ineffective anyway and offend their immediate superiors, with whom they had good relations. This analysis suggests the conditions under which successful bypassing takes place. A subordinate (C) is more likely to seek direct access to his boss (A) when he believes that his own superior (B) is unwilling or unable to advance his interests; his boss (A) is willing to give him access; he can legitimate his need to bypass the superior in terms of the organization's best interest.

The advantages of alliances with higher-ups for lower participants are clear. Those to be gained by the superordinates are less obvious. Why should A override his immediate subordinate B and lend his support to C? There are several possible reasons: A may be impressed with C's abilities and perhaps even view him as a successor to B. He may consider B disloyal or overly ambitious. Or, he may wish to use an alliance

with C to tighten control over B as well as to gain access to information directly from lower levels in the organization. The boss is “under pressure to perform well himself—to meet deadlines, to keep things going” (Dill, 1962: 152), and in trying to cope with his job he may find it in his interest to establish direct links with subordinates, and even with those on the shop floor. An alliance with C provides A with a ready-made channel of communication through which he can learn “at first hand how his decisions are being carried out, what unforeseen obstacles are encountered and what the level of morale in the organization is at any moment” (Martin and Sims, 1956).

Variations of this tactic are the “open door policy,” where shop floor workers are invited “to chat” informally, or the “democratic committee policy,” where lower management are requested to hold weekly departmental meetings to which A asks to be invited. While such policies are pursued in the name of greater democratization of control, they in fact serve a social control function for top management in relation to those in the middle.

When the general manager returned from his extended vacation, D.S. reported his successes to him and severely criticized the production manager for “interfering” in his work and failing to back him in relation to the workers. G.M. listened. He was under fire from the Board of Directors to speed up production. Market demand was heavy and the company had recently made a heavy investment in parts for assembly.

The general manager urged P.M. to refrain from direct intervention in the management of the television department. As a consequence of G.M.’s support for the supervisor, the production manager appeared less often on the shop floor. D.S. observed with considerable pleasure: “P.M. used to give 85% of the instruction to the workers and I only 15%. Now it’s the other way round. I give 85% and he only 15%. Even Farla [chargehand] got instructions to report directly to me.”

The production manager explained to me: “I know that G.M. is creating tension just to keep me on my toes. That’s why he asked to be invited to the weekly meeting of department foremen. But if he encourages them to talk, all they’ll do is uncover a lot of garbage.”

In the past G.M. had relied on the production manager to keep him informed on events in the factory as well as to meet occasional additional production requirements. His long absence, pressure from the board, and D.S.'s harsh criticisms combined led G.M. to alter his tactics. His support of D.S. was aimed at encouraging the flow of information directly from below, as well as to pressure both to increase production.

### CONCLUSION

The incorporation of middle managers into the organization is typically treated as a problem of socialization and viewed from the organization's perspective. The shortcomings of the socialization model for understanding the process by which a new manager in fact "settles-in" were considered and an alternative, social interactionist model was suggested.

A social interactionist perspective on the encounter between new manager and relevant others in the organization focuses on the interplay between social process and social structure. It views the new manager as actor and active rather than merely as reactor or passive. It highlights the emergent qualities of situations and the socially constructed nature of social reality.

The new middle manager is presented not only as taking his role as it is defined by the organization, but as making or shaping his role to be in line with his preferences and interests. The process by which the new manager establishes himself in the organization, therefore, is in large measure a political one. Settling-in involves winning the support of others and the right to use one's formal prerogatives, including the right of access to organizational resources.

Formal organizations generate resources which managers use to enhance their influence over subordinates. Control over these resources, however, is not automatic; rather, it is conditional. For the new middle manager, access to them is largely contingent on the backing of formal superiors. When he fails to get backing, he faces the dilemma of power deficiency, and settling-in becomes more problematic. This dilemma was analyzed and a case study used to illustrate a strategy for settling-in.

Further research using a social interactionist model can add to our understanding of the processes by which managers enter organizations and sustain themselves in them, the processes by which they create, maintain, and dissolve social relationships as they move through the structural arrangements of the system. Such an analysis also promises to shed light on the practical organizational problems of managerial turnover, mobility, and performance.

### NOTES

1. This is so generally true that the few exceptions deserve special mention. Some of these are: Gouldner (1954), Dill et al. (1962), Levenson (1961).

2. The term generally used with reference to top management is "management development." According to Strauss and Sayles (1972: 489), however, "many development programs are, in effect, forms of indoctrination."

3. Manager's loyalty or high level of commitment to the organization is sometimes treated as the outcome of successful socialization. See, for example, Schein (1971) and Buchanan (1974).

4. A notable exception is Schein (1961). He views management development as a process of influence in which the organization must develop strategies for persuading managers to act in the organization's best interest. He contrasts his approach to "the existing conceptions of the development of human resources built upon assumptions of how people learn and grow."

5. There is a lack of studies showing just how management carries out socialization. Most of the processual work in this area has been done on small work groups of lower organizational participants. See especially Lupton (1963).

6. Mayntz (1960: 740) makes a similar observation of role making in a university setting: "To a certain degree every organization member helps fashion the role image which is later used to judge him and in the sense the role image is suffused with personal elements."

7. This problem is related to that discussed by Scott et al. (1967-1968), who argue that when there exists an incompatibility between what a manager is authorized to do and the criteria by which he is evaluated, the situation will be unstable and there will emerge pressure for change.

8. The strategic contingencies approach first developed (but not labeled as such) by Crozier (1964) and formalized in the work of the Aston Group (Hickson et al., 1971) is an example of structural analysis of power in organizations. An actor's power is a function of his ability to create uncertainty for others or to control the strategic contingencies of others. Accepting this proposition, the interactionist approach focuses on the processes by which actors come to control contingencies. It is concerned with the process of power-accumulation. (I am indebted to Mayer Zald for this distinction, made in personal communication.)

9. Cicourel's exploration is for what he calls the "rules or policies" by which meaning is ascribed to situations. Our concern, however, is limited to the actual meanings and the attempts to shape them.

10. For works that give particular attention to political aspects of organizations see Dalton (1959), Burns and Stalker (1961), Crozier (1964), Thompson (1967), Gamson (1968), Zald (1970), Pfeffer (1974), and Perrow (1970).

11. Several studies point to the critical nature of the first year in the organization for a manager's career (Schein, 1971; Berlew and Hall, 1966; Buchanan, 1974). Berlew and Hall (1966: 222), using a socialization model, explain that the first year is a critical period for learning, "a time when the trainee is uniquely ready to develop or change in the direction of the company's expectations." Our analysis suggests that a manager's long-term career is strongly influenced by the nature of the settling-in process that occurs in the first year; that is, by the alliances he forms, the way he defines himself and comes to be defined within the political system, and the image he projects of himself and his worth. As Goffman (1959: 11) notes "It would seem that an individual can more easily make a choice as to what line of treatment to demand from and extend to others present at the beginning of an encounter than he can alter the line of treatment that is being pursued once the interaction is underway."

12. For a theory of role strain see Goode (1960) Goode assumes that within a network of relationships an actor's resources are fixed and each addition to the network creates new demands and consequently additional strain. Role strain is reduced by bargaining aimed at reducing the number of demands made on an actor. An interactionist perspective of role relationships and resources, however, suggests the possibility that the actor may use his relations with some role partners as a resource in his dealings with other role partners. In other words, an increase in relationships not only increments the expectations on the actor, it may also greatly increase the resources available to him for meeting these expectations.

13. On the relationship between influence and control over resources see Blau (1964), Cartwright (1965), Thompson (1967), and Olsen (1970).

14. Strauss and Sayles (1972: 258) point out that "one of the most common and most difficult problems in introducing change is that of bringing in a new manager to head up an existing department in an established company."

15. The study was conducted in Israel during twelve months of anthropological fieldwork. The author worked in the television department.

16. This is the reverse of the tactic suggested by Thompson (1967: 124) for individuals seeking to expand their discretion: "Where alternatives are present, the individual is tempted to report successes and suppress evidence of failures."

17. Both P.M. and D.S. individually shared with me their belief that Queenie's recalcitrance on the line was a tactic used to pressure P.M. to promote her. Having achieved this she became more "cooperative."

## REFERENCES

- Becker, H. S. and A. L. Strauss  
 1956 "Careers, personality and adult socialization." *Amer. J. of Sociology* 62: 253-263.
- Berlew, E. and D. T. Hall  
 1966 "The socialization of managers: effects of expectations on performance." *Admin. Sci. Q.* 11: 207-233.



- Blau, P. M.  
1964 *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: John Wiley.  
--- and W. R. Scott  
1963 *Formal Organizations: A Comparative Approach*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Blumer, H.  
1969 *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Buchanan, B. II  
1974 "Building organizational commitment, the socialization of managers in work organizations." *Admin. Sci. Q.* 19: 533-546.
- Bujra, J. M.  
1973 "The dynamics of political action—a new look at factionalism." *Amer. Anthropologist*: 132-152.
- Burns, T.  
1955 "The reference of conduct in small groups." *Human Relations* 8: 467-486.  
--- and G. M. Stalker  
1961 *The Management of Innovation*. London: Tavistock.
- Caplow, T.  
1968 *Two Against One: Coalitions in Triads*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Cartwright, D.  
1965 "Influence leadership and control." in J. G. March (ed.) *Handbook of Organizations*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Cicourel, V.  
1970 "Basic and normative rules in the negotiation of status and role," in David Sudnow (ed.) *Studies in Social Interaction*. New York: Free Press.
- Crozier, M.  
1964 *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*. Chicago: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Dalton, M.  
1959 *Men Who Manage*. New York: John Wiley.
- Dill, R. et al.  
1962 *The New Managers: Patterns of Behavior and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Etzioni, A.  
1968 *The Active Society*. New York: Free Press.
- Fletcher, C.  
1973 "The end of management," in J. Child (ed.) *Man and Organization*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Fox, A.  
1971 *A Sociology of Work in Industry*. London: Collier Macmillan.
- Gamson, W.  
1961 "A theory of coalition formation." *Amer. Soc. Rev.* 26: 373-382.  
---  
1968 *Power and Discontent*. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey.
- Gardner, B. B. and W. F. Whyte  
1945 "The man in the middle: position and problems of the foreman." *Applied Anthropology* 4: 1-28.
- Goffman, E.  
1959 *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.

- Goode, W. J.  
1960 "A theory of role strain." *Amer. Soc. Rev.* 25: 483-496.
- Gouldner, A. W.  
1954 *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*. New York: Free Press.
- Hickson, D. J. et al.  
1971 "A strategic contingencies theory of intraorganizational power." *Admin. Sci. Q.* 19: 216-229.
- Kahn, R. L.  
1964 "Field studies of power in organizations," in R. L. Kahn and E. Boulding (eds.) *Power and Conflict in Organizations*. New York: Basic Books.
- Katz, D., N. Maccoby, and N. Morse  
1950 *Productivity Supervision, and Morale in an Office Situation*. University of Michigan Survey Research Center.
- Levenson, B.  
1961 "Bureaucratic succession," pp. 362-375 in A. Etzioni (ed.) *Complex Organizations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Lupton, T.  
1963 *On the Shop Floor*. London: Pergamon.
- Maier, N.R.F. and L. R. Hoffman  
1964 "Types of problems confronting managers." *Personnel Psychology* 17: 261-269.
- March, J. G. and H. A. Simon  
1958 *Organizations*. New York: John Wiley.
- Martin, N. H. and J. H. Sims  
1956 "Thinking ahead: power tactics." *Harvard Business Rev.* 34: 25-36.
- Martin, N. H. and A. L. Strauss  
1956 "Patterns of mobility within industrial organizations." *J. of Business* 29: 101-110.
- Mayntz, R.  
1960 "The visiting fellow: an analysis of an academic role." *Amer. Soc. Rev.* 25: 735-741.
- Miller, D. C. and W. H. Form  
1964 *Industrial Sociology*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Olsen, M. E.  
1970 *Power in Societies*. London: Collier Macmillan.
- Pelz, D. C.  
1952 "Influence: a key to effective leadership in the first-line supervisor." *Personnel* 29: 3-11.
- Perrow, C.  
1970 *Organizational Analysis: A Sociological View*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Pfeffer, J. and R. Salancik  
1974 "Organizational decision making as a political process: the case of a university budget." *Admin. Sci. Q.* 19: 453-473.
- Roethlisberger, F. J.  
1945 "The foreman: master and victim of double talk." *Harvard Business Rev.* 23: 283-298.
- Schein, E. H.  
1961 "Management development as a process of influence." *Industrial Management Rev.* 11.

- 
- 1971 "Organizational socialization and the profession of management," pp. 1-14 in D. A. Kolb et al. (eds.) *Organizational Psychology*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Scott, W. R. et al.  
1967- "Organizational Evaluation and Authority." *Admin Sci. Q.*: 93-117.
- Silverman, D.  
1970 *The Theory of Organizations*. London: Heinemann.
- Smelser, N. J.  
1963 *The Sociology of Economic Life*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Strauss, A. L. [ed.]  
1964 *George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Strauss, G.  
1962 "Tactics of lateral relationship: the purchasing agent." *Admin. Sci. Q.* 7: 161-186.
- and L. R. Sayles  
1960 *Personnel*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- 
- 1972 *Personnel* (3rd edition). Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Tausky, C. and R. Dubin  
1965 "Career anchorage: managerial mobility motivations." *Amer. Soc. Rev.* 30: 725-735.
- Thompson, J. D.  
1967 *Organizations in Action*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Turner, R. H.  
1962 "Role taking: process versus conformity," pp. 20-40 in A. M. Rose (ed.) *Human Behavior and Social Processes: an Interactionist Approach*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare  
1973 *Work in America*. Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. Prepared under the Auspices of the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Weick, K. E.  
1969 *The Social Psychology of Organizing*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.
- Zald, M. N. [ed.]  
1970 *Power in Organizations*. Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt Univ. Press.

*Dafna Izraeli is Lecturer in Sociology in the Graduate Department of Labor Studies at Tel-Aviv University. She is currently conducting research on various aspects of influence among men and women shop stewards in industry, as well as on occupational sex segregation in Israel.*