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The Impact of Status Differences on Coalitional Agreements: An Experimental Study

Edward J. Lawler
Cornell University, ejl3@cornell.edu

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Keywords

status differences, coalition negotiations, coalitional action, pay-rates, outcomes, insurgent action

Disciplines

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The Impact of Status Differences on Coalitional Agreements
An Experimental Study

Edward J. Lawler
University of Iowa

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Abstract

This experiment investigated the impact of status differences between subordinates and face-to-face coalition negotiations on insurgent coalitional action. The effects of these variables were examined in stratified groups, where a leader established inequitable pay-rates, and subordinates could coalesce and destroy a portion of the leader's outcomes. The results showed that status differences (as opposed to status similarity) undermined the sense of common interests between subordinates and reduced the severity of coalitional action against the leader. Face-to-face negotiations engendered a more cautious approach to coalition negotiations and also reduced the severity of insurgent action. The results suggest that status differences pose an "organizational problem" for subordinates attempting to mobilize action against a leader.

Dahrendorf (1959), in his neo-Marxist theory of social stratification, argues that authority relations inherently foster two opposing “quasi groups.” A quasi group refers to an aggregate of persons in a relatively common situation with respect to the distribution of authority. Those in authority positions (i.e., superordinates) represent one quasi group, while subordinates compose the second quasi group. According to Dahrendorf, the interests of these two quasi groups are inevitably opposed, but overt conflict occurs only when these interests lead to a coalition (i.e., “interest group”) explicitly organized to influence authorities. This poses an important research question: under what conditions will a subordinate quasi group be transformed into a coalition (i.e., interest group) opposing authorities? The present study addresses this question in the context of a laboratory experiment on “revolutionary” coalitions. As in related experimental work, a revolutionary coalition is broadly defined as joint action by two or more subordinates against a group leader (Caplow, 1968; Michener and Lawler, 1971; Michener and Lyons, 1972; Lawler, 1975).

The focus on revolutionary coalitions in stratified groups distinguishes this study from most coalition research. In general, coalition research has examined how persons choose between alternative coalitions in situations where coalitions are necessary for persons to attain outcomes (see Gamson, 1964; Komorita and Chertkoff, 1973, for reviews). In the present study, two subordinates in a three-person group are treated inequitably by a group leader, and subordinates have the option of coalescing against the leader. A coalition is not necessary for subordinates to attain outcomes, but is an influence strategy which destroys leader outcomes and may induce him to establish more equitable pay-rates.

Dahrendorf (1959: 182-189) elucidates three general conditions that might engender coalitions or interest groups between subordinates: technical, political, and organizational

conditions. Technical conditions essentially involve values and goals around which subordinates might organize and which provide tire normative justification for subordinate action against leaders. Political conditions concern the efficacy of the coalition (e.g., its potential power and likelihood of success) and the capability of leaders to repress insurgent action. Organizational conditions bear on the difficulty of subordinates actually mobilizing joint action (e.g., ease of communication, relative status of subordinates in the group). According to Dahrendorf, these general conditions may affect the actual formation of subordinate coalitions and/or the severity or “violence” of coalitional action undertaken by subordinates.¹ The present study investigates factors that fall within the general rubric “organizational conditions.”

Specifically, this study is concerned with the impact of status differences between subordinates on the frequency and severity of coalitional action against a group leader. It is generally assumed that persons with different status in a group have more difficulty coalescing than do persons with similar status. However, a recent experimental study failed to support this notion (Lawler, 1975). In that study, two subordinates in a three-person group were confronted with an equitable or inequitable reward distribution. In one condition, the two subordinates had the same status level in the group; while in the second condition, they occupied different status levels. The results of the study revealed that an inequitable reward distribution engendered more frequent and more severe coalitional action by subordinates, while status differences between subordinates did not constrain such coalitional action.

¹ To Dahrendorf (1959: 212), “violence” refers to a continuum of hostile action ranging from discussion and debate, to competition and strikes, to civil war. His' notion of violence is comparable to the “severity” of coalitional action in the present study, which represents different amounts of damage levied on the group leader.

There are two plausible reasons for the failure of the status hypothesis in this prior study. First, the inequity was extreme, and it apparently aroused a strong sense of common fate between subordinates irrespective of any status differences. Second, the coalition negotiations were held in a face-to-face context, which may have heightened the “self-presentational” aspects of the negotiations and thereby weakened the resistance of the higher status subordinate to an insurgent coalition. The present study addresses these issues and extends the Lawler (1975) research by examining the impact of status differences under conditions of “low” inequity, with the expectation that status differences will inhibit coalitional agreements where the normative pressure of inequity is mild. This status hypothesis will be investigated under two forms of communication between subordinates: face-to-face versus verbal, without face-to-face, communication. Each of these independent variables is discussed below.

Status differences. Some coalition research supports the notion that resource differences exacerbate conflict within an alliance and thereby hamper coalitional action (e.g., Vitz and Kite, 1970; Barker and Jansewicz, 1970; Nitz and Phillips, 1969). Vitz and Kite (1970), in a study particularly relevant to the present one, found that discord within an international alliance was greatest where resource differences between allies were moderate and lowest where such differences were small. This conflict had the effect of reducing the fortifications of the coalition against a threatening adversary. Aside from extending the study by Lawler (1975), the present study will provide information on whether the Vitz and Kite (1970) findings on resource differences in an international setting generalize to status differences within hierarchically differentiated groups. As in some recent coalition research (Michener and Lawler, 1971; Michener and Lyons, 1972; Lawler, 1975), status represents a person's • position in a larger

structure and not a resource input to the coalition as in most coalition research (Gamson, 1964; Caplow, 1968; Komorita and Chertkoff, 1973).

Status in the present study refers to a person's rank on three hierarchical dimensions: performance, control, and rewards. Persons with different status have different levels of task expertise and different amounts of control over the group's task decisions, and they receive a disparate proportion of the group's outcomes. With status differences, subordinates may anticipate a possible conflict of interest. The higher status subordinate may be reluctant to coalesce because his group status affords him greater outcomes than the other subordinate, and he therefore has more to lose and less to gain from a coalition. The lower status subordinate, recognizing this potential conflict of interest, may expect less support for coalitional action from the higher status subordinate, and this may depress his inclination toward coalitional action. Research does indicate that expectations of little support from others for a coalition reduce one's proclivity toward insurgent action (Michener and Lyons, 1972; Lawler, 1975). Based on the foregoing reasoning, one would expect status differences to weaken the common interests of subordinates and to reduce the frequency and/or severity of coalitional action.

Form of communication. The effect of status differences may depend on the form of communication between subordinates. This research is concerned with the impact of face-to-face negotiations and includes two specific forms of communication: face-to-face versus verbal without face-to-face. As Goffman (1959, 1963) suggests, face-to-face interaction sensitizes people to the impressions they "give off" to others. Applied to the present study, face-to-face communication may enhance the salience of self-presentations, and thereby specify the effect of status differences. The higher status subordinate in the status difference condition may believe his interests militate against coalitional action, but also may expect pressure from the lower

status subordinate to coalesce against the leader. His presentation of self may be problematic, for he might appear egotistical or selfish if he strongly resists coalitional action. Some research in prisoner's dilemma settings indicates that face-to-face communication induces greater cooperation than verbal communication without face-to-face contact (Wichman, 1970); similarly, in the present study, face-to-face communication with the lower status subordinate may lead the higher status subordinate to partake more readily in a coalition. By doing so, he may jeopardize his share of the group's outcomes, but may establish a favorable "face" vis-a-vis the other subordinate. The importance of such intangible rewards is documented by research indicating that persons will forego tangible rewards to save or maintain face (Brown, 1968). This reasoning suggests a status-by-form-of-communication interaction effect indicating that status differences inhibit coalitional action less in a face-to-face context.

Method

Procedures

Two independent variables were manipulated in a two-by-two factorial design: status differences (same versus different) between subordinates, and the form of communication (face-to-face versus intercom) between subordinates. A total of 36 triads (9 per cell) were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental treatments. Each triad contained two subjects (i.e., subordinates) and a confederate (i.e., leader). Male, undergraduate volunteers at the University of Iowa served as subjects.

The task. Initially, the two subjects and the confederate were placed in separate rooms and were given Part One of the written instructions. These instructions explained that their task was to make accurate spatial judgments, and that their group earns money depending on their task performance. The task consisted of judging the proportion of darkened area on black and white cards. As documented in prior research, the ambiguity of this task permits fictitious feedback and enables the establishment of a bogus status hierarchy (Michener and Lawler, 1971; Michener and Lyons, 1972; Lawler, 1975).

The status hierarchy. From these instructions, subjects also learned that a status hierarchy would be established to facilitate the group's performance. The status hierarchy was ostensibly based on group members' relative task competence, as measured by a test. After reading Part One of the instructions, each subject (and the confederate) took a judgment test consisting of spatial judgments similar to those required on the aforementioned task. During the judgment test, all three persons (two subjects and one confederate) were brought together in one room. This was the only face-to-face contact subjects had with the confederate during the experiment. After they finished the test, subjects returned to their private rooms and awaited the results. At this point, the confederate secretly departed. All further communication from the confederate (i.e., group leader) to the subjects was fabricated by the experimenter. The brief presence of the confederate verified for subjects the existence of three persons in the group.

The experimenter gave subjects fictitious test feedback which manipulated the status variable. Each person was assigned a status weight. These status weights allegedly symbolized subjects' relative task competence and indicated the weight (i.e., influence) to be given each person's judgment when group scores were computed. Subjects understood that the experimenter used these weights when computing the group score.

The status weights were presented as percents, with a total of 100% allocated to the group. In all experimental conditions, the confederate was assigned the highest status weight (i.e., 40%) and became the group leader. In the status-similarity condition, both subordinates (S1 and S2) received status weights of 30%; while in the status-difference condition S1 received 35% and S2 received 25%. The written forms, manipulating status, were completed in advance of the experiment and packaged so that the experimenter would remain unaware of the experimental condition at this point.

The leader's prerogatives. After they received their prearranged status weights, subjects read Part Two of the written instructions. These instructions explained that the leader divides the group's money among its members. The leader could divide the winnings in any manner, and could even keep all of the money for himself. Therefore, from the subjects' standpoint, the leader had the greatest task ability, the greatest control over the group's task decisions, and complete discretion over the division of the group's winnings. The leader's reward prerogatives were used to set the inequity parameter at a low level, and to provide the leader with the capacity to retaliate against a coalition by usurping larger amounts of the group winnings on future trials.

The coalition. The instructions indicated that the subordinates could coalesce (if they wished) by signing a formal agreement. Subjects were informed that they need not coalesce and that the coalition opportunity was merely a way to assure them some influence in the group. If formed, a coalition could destroy up to 50% of the leader's winnings, but could not change his status weight or deprive him of the prerogative of allocating the group's winnings on future trials. Any money destroyed by a coalition was taken from the leader and returned to the experimenter. Like strikes, work slowdowns, sick-ins, and so on, coalitions in this study are outcome-blockage tactics-meaning they reduce the flow of outcomes to the target without

directly and immediately enriching coalition members. (See Michener and Suchner, 1972, for a general discussion of outcome-blockage tactics.) Such coalitions are influence tactics that might succeed, fail, or elicit retaliation, depending on the response of the target to coalitional action. A coalition could be negotiated during the S1-S2 discussion which occurred after the leader allocated the group rewards. The context of this discussion manipulated the form of communication variable. The S1-S2 discussion was the only time the subordinates could communicate with each other. During all other parts of the experiment they were in separate rooms and could not communicate.

Trial sequence. The experiment consisted of one trial, but subjects believed there were four. Telling subjects there were more trials was important because it impelled subordinates to consider the long-term consequences of coalitional action as well as the prospect of leader retaliation. At the beginning of the trial, subjects judged five black-and-white cards, while in separate rooms. Next, the experimenter collected these individual judgments and ostensibly combined them into a group score with a “weighting chart” allocating influence proportional to the status weights.

Four minutes later, the experimenter announced bogus results over the intercom. All groups were told they won \$1.80 out of a possible \$2.00, which represented a high level of group success. Feedback on individual performance indicated that individual performance was similar to member’s test performance. In conjunction with the announcement of these bogus results, the experimenter instructed the leader (over the intercom so subjects could hear) to complete a form dividing the group’s money. The experimenter then gave this prefabricated form, which set the inequity parameter, to the subordinates. Across all conditions, the leader kept 50% of the money for himself, which was more than that legitimized by his status weight of 40%. In the status-

similarity condition, both subordinates were given 25%, which was 5% less than their status weight legitimized; in the status-difference condition, S1 was given 30% and S2 was given 20%, which was also 5% less than subordinates' status weights (35% and 25%, respectively). In both the status-similarity and status-difference conditions, each subordinate received 5% less than that suggested by his status weight.

After subjects digested the information on the "money distribution form," they completed the mid-questionnaire, containing measures of pertinent cognitive variables (e.g., attitudes toward coalitional action, perceived similarity of interests). On completion of this questionnaire, subordinates could engage in a discussion for up to five minutes. In the face-to-face condition, they were placed in one room for the discussion; while in the intercom condition, they merely remained in their private rooms and talked over an intercom. This discussion provided subjects with the opportunity to discuss the progress of the group and to negotiate a coalitional agreement that would destroy a portion of the leader's winnings.

After the discussion period, subordinates completed the postexperimental questionnaire. While completing this questionnaire, subjects believed that there were still more trials. Subjects were then debriefed and paid two dollars.

Dependent Measures

To form a coalition, subordinates filled out a “S1-S2 Coalition” form which stated:

On this trial, S1 and S2 agree to reduce the money the leader received by _____
per cent.

S1’s initials_____

S2’s initials_____

This form was available to subjects throughout the discussion. A coalition occurred only when S1 and S2 agreed on the percent reduction in the leader’s outcomes and initialed the form.

The frequency variable was measured by merely coding whether or not a coalition formed, and hence could assume a value of zero or one. The severity of action provides a more sensitive indicator of coalitional action and was measured by the percent reduction in the leader’s winnings. Subordinates could destroy up to 50% of the leader’s winnings, so the range of this variable was zero to fifty. When coalitions did not form, severity was coded as zero.

Questionnaires (mid- and post-) provide information on the success of the status manipulation and on other cognitive variables. In addition, subordinate discussions were tape-recorded (unbeknown to subjects) and verbal statements in the early phase of the discussions were coded as follows: (1) who made the statement (S1 and S2), and (2) what was the statement (i.e., question, “definition of situation,” coalition proposal). The severity of the first coalition proposal was coded from zero to fifty, with zero indicating a proposal not to form a coalition. The response to the first proposal was coded as agree or disagree. The questionnaire and interaction data are used to interpret the impact of the independent variables on coalition behavior.

The person who coded the interaction data knew that the study had something to do with coalitions, but was unaware of the manipulations or hypotheses. As a check on intercoder reliability, a second person (also unaware of the hypotheses) coded the data, and the average agreement between coders was 92% (range 86% to 97%) for verbal statements and 85% (range 82% to 92%) for identification of who made the verbal statements. The coefficients of intercoder agreement (π) averaged .83 for verbal statements and .75 for the identification data, which reflect a reasonable degree of intercoder reliability.

Results

As indicated by postquestionnaire data, the status manipulation was successfully induced. One question asked subjects, “How dissimilar are the status weights of S1 and S2?” and a second one asked, “How dissimilar are the monetary winnings of S1 and S2?” In the status-difference condition, both subordinates perceived their status weights (for S1: $F = 80.02, df = 1/32, p < .001$; for S2: $F = 38.04, df = 1/32, p < .001$) and monetary rewards (for S1: $F = 22.98, df = 1/32, p < .001$; for S2: $F = 128.76, df = 1/32, p < .001$) as more different than in the status-similarity condition. Moreover, subordinates saw differential status weight as a legitimation for differential monetary payoffs, which documents the credibility of the status weights. A question on the postexperimental questionnaire asked, “How do you think the leader should distribute the winnings among members of the group?” There was no difference between subordinates’ judgment of what the leader deserved across status conditions (F 's < 1). However, S1 was seen as deserving a larger portion of the group’s winnings in the status-difference condition (where S1 had higher status) than in the status-similarity condition (for S1:

$F = 110.11, df = 1/32, p < .001$; for S2: $F = 60.02, df = 1/32, p < .001$); and S2 was viewed as deserving less in the status-difference condition where S2 had the lowest status weight (for S1: $F = 22.51, df = 1/32, p < .001$; for S2: $F = 11.95, df = 1/32, p < .01$). Clearly, the status manipulation was effective, and appropriate conditions were established for a test of the study hypothesis.

Insert Table 1 Here

Coalition Behavior

Table 1 presents the mean severity of coalitional action for each experimental condition. An analysis of variance reveals two main effects. As predicted, a status-difference main effect indicates that the severity of coalitional action was less when potential allies had different, as opposed to the same, status in the larger group ($F = 8.33, df = 1/32, p < .007$). A form of communication main effect indicates that the severity of action was less in the face-to-face condition than in the intercom condition ($F = 4.72, df = 1/32, p < .04$). The interaction effect is not statistically significant ($F = 1.49, n.s.$). Thus, both status differences and face-to-face communication constrained the severity of coalitional action.²

² When the cases where coalitions did not form (i.e., zero severity) are excluded, the difference between the means in the status conditions and between those in the communication conditions are nearly identical to the difference between the marginals in Table 1. If one excludes the zero cases, the mean severity in the status-similarity condition is 23.7 compared to 13.8 in the status-difference condition, which are statistically significant differences ($t = 2.64, p < .01$). Similarly, the mean severity in the face-to-face condition is 14.3 compared to 23.6 in the intercom condition, and these differences are also statistically significant ($t = 2.46, p < .025$). However, the instances of zero severity should be included in the analysis (as in Table 1)

The coalition frequency provides a secondary indicator of coalitional activity. Table 2 contains the percentage of coalitions formed by experimental condition. Although the results are in the expected direction for the status variable, an analysis of variance does not reveal significant effects for either status differences ($F = 1.94, p < .17$) or form of communication ($F < 1$).³ Status differences did not prevent the actual formation of coalitions.

Insert Table 2 Here

Attitudes Toward Coalitional Action

The mid-questionnaire, administered before collection of behavioral data, contains information on subordinates' attitudes toward coalitional action. Recall that S1 and S2 have equal status in the status-similarity condition and that S1 has higher and S2 has lower status in the status-difference condition. One question simply asked persons the extent to which they favored a coalition. Subjects answered on a nine-point scale, and an analysis of variance shows different results for S1 and S2. As anticipated, the subordinate with the least status in the status-

because deciding not to form a coalition is clearly a zero-severity decision. Furthermore, in natural settings, decisions on the nature of coalitional action (e.g., such as severity) are seemingly the critical issues in coalitional negotiations, and inseparable from mere decisions to join forces. It is inconceivable that parties would form a coalition without agreement on the nature of action to which they are committing themselves.

³ One might question the use of analysis of variance on a frequency variable that can only take on values of zero or one. This is likely to violate the assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity. However, it should be noted that (1) the F-test is robust with respect to these assumptions as long as the cell sizes are equal (Kirk, 1968: 60-61)-a condition that is satisfied in the present study; and (2), there is evidence that the use of analysis of variance on dichotomous dependent variables yields results virtually identical to those obtained by nonparametric alternatives (Seeger and Gabrielsson, 1968; Gabrielsson and Seeger, 1971).

difference condition (i.e., S2) favored a coalition less than in the status-similarity condition ($F = 6.31, df = 1/32, p < .025$); however, the status did not affect S1's inclination toward coalescing even though he had higher status than S2 in the status-difference condition ($F < 1$).

Another item on the mid-questionnaire asked subordinates to indicate how much of the leader's winnings they wished to destroy. Subjects responded by inserting a percent (i.e., 0% to 50%). Both subordinates favored destroying less in the status-difference, than in the status-similarity condition (for S1: $F = 5.84, df = 1/32, p < .025$; for S2: $F = 7.25, df = 1/32, p < .01$). In sum, status differences inhibited the severity of action advocated by both subordinates, while divergent status reduced only S2's inclination toward coalition formation.

Discussion

In Dahrendorf's (1959) terms, the results identify two factors that constrain the violence of interest-group action (i.e., coalitions) by quasi-group members (i.e., subordinates): status differences and face-to-face communication.⁴

Status differences. The status-difference effect extends the Vitz and Kite (1970) and Lawler (1975) studies. The status conditions in the present study are comparable to the low versus moderate resource differences in the Vitz and Kite study, and Vitz and Kite found that moderate resource differences reduced the mutual defense fund established by allies to combat an adversary. Similarly, in the present study, status differences reduced the severity of coalitional aggression against an inequitable group leader. Thus, the Vitz and Kite (1970) findings on

⁴ See note 1.

resource differences in an international setting evidently generalize to status differences between subordinates in a stratified group.

A recent experimental study of coalitions did not find a status-difference effect under conditions of extreme inequity (Lawler, 1975). The present study shows that status differences inhibit the severity of coalitional action under conditions of “mild” inequity. A lower level of inequity apparently does not involve enough provocation to unite subordinates in severe action when they occupy different status levels in the group.

Bilateral conciliation accounts for the status-differences effect on coalitional severity. When they had different status, subordinates were aware of a potential “conflict of interest,” and they adopted a conciliatory stance in which both took account of their divergent interests and moderated their opinions and proposals on coalitional action. Questionnaire and interaction data reveal little overt conflict between subordinates, but support bilateral conciliation as an interpretation for the status-difference effect. Data bearing on this interpretation are discussed below.

A question on the mid-questionnaire (administered before the subordinate discussions) indicates that status differences aroused perceptions of more divergent interests than status similarity. The question asked, “In your opinion, how similar or opposed are your interests and (other: S1/S2)?” Both subordinates viewed their interests as less similar when they had different status in the group (for S1: $F = 4.38, df = 1/32, p < .05$; for S2: $F = 6.61, df = 1/32, p < .01$). As expected, subordinates were more cognizant of a potential “conflict of interest” in the status-difference condition.

Questionnaire and interaction data (from subordinate discussions) suggest that both subordinates adopted a conciliatory stance in response to this potential conflict of interest. First,

as reported in the results section, both subordinates favored undertaking less severe action in the status- difference condition than in the status-similarity condition. Second, and more important, the first proposal (i.e., 0% to 50%) in the discussion was less severe in the status-difference condition regardless of which subordinate made the proposal ($F = 10.71, df = 1/31, p < .005$). Moreover, the severity of the first proposal is highly related to the actual severity of coalitional agreements. A regression of the severity of coalitional agreements on the severity of the first proposal, controlling for status differences and form of communication, yields a standardized regression coefficient of $b^* = .84$ for the severity of the first proposal; furthermore, the impact of status differences on coalitional agreements disappears ($b^* = -.04$), suggesting that the status effect is totally mediated by the initial proposal. The initial proposals apparently set the tone for the discussion and provided a base line around which minimal variation occurred when coalitional agreements were constructed.

Other data corroborate the importance of initial proposals (and, by implication, bilateral conciliation) in accounting for the status effect on severity. The response to the first proposal (regardless of who made the response) was more likely to be agreement when subordinates had different, as opposed to the same, status in the group ($\chi^2 = 4.35, p < .05$). Some form of disagreement (e.g., counterproposals, expression of doubt, questioning the reason for the proposal) was actually more likely when subordinates had the same group status. Being cognizant of a potential conflict of interest, subordinates in the status-difference condition apparently took steps to avoid overt conflict or disagreement.

In sum, status differences induced bilateral conciliation which reduced the severity of coalitional action. Under status differences, the subordinate with higher status was apparently willing to coalesce, but to take only mild action against the group leader; while the subordinate

with the least status expected less support for the coalition from the higher status subordinate ($F = 4.76, df = 1/32, p < .05$) and may have advocated less severe action to elicit such support. This mutual accommodation of subordinates in the status-difference condition engendered coalition formation, but reduced the severity of action.

Form of communication. The communication main effect indicates that the severity of coalitional agreements was less under conditions of face-to-face communication than under intercom communication. This finding may reflect greater self-presentational concern by potential allies when their initial encounter is face-to-face, regardless of their relative status. Being more sensitive to the impressions they give off, subordinates may have cautiously approached face-to-face discussions and may have probed each other's opinions before making concrete proposals. Such mutual caution would produce less risky and more moderate coalitional agreements.

Some interaction data support the notion that subordinates exercised greater caution under face-to-face communication than with intercom communication. The opening statement in the discussion was coded into two categories: definition of situation or coalition proposal. A definitional statement involved any judgment or definition concerning the group or its leader (e.g., a statement that the reward distribution is unfair), which did not contain a coalition proposal. Any statement which included a coalition proposal (e.g., don't form, form, and so forth), even when combined with a definitional statement, was coded as a proposal. The data indicate that the opening statement (regardless of who made it) was more likely to be a definition in the face-to-face condition than in the intercom condition ($\chi^2 = 6.41, p < .01$). Thus, subordinates in the face-to-face condition were more likely to probe the feelings of the other by offering a definition of the situation before making explicit proposals; while in the intercom

condition subordinates were more likely to lead off with a concrete proposal which, of course, presupposed a particular definition. This suggests a more cautious approach in the initial phases of face-to-face encounters, which may account for the form of communication main effect. This interpretation, however, must be viewed as tentative because the nature of the first statement did not significantly affect the severity of coalitional agreements ($t = 1.26$, N.S.), though the means are in the expected direction.

Table 1

TABLE 1
Mean Severity of Coalitional Action For
Each Experimental Condition

Form of Communication	Status		
	Same	Different	
<u>Face-to-Face</u>	12.1	5.9	8.5
<u>Intercom</u>	24.8	9.4	17.1
	18.3	7.7	

Table 2

TABLE 2
Percentage of Coalitions Formed in Each Experimental Condition

Form of Communication	Status		
	Same	Different	
<u>Face-to-Face</u>	67%	56%	61%
<u>Intercom</u>	89%	56%	72%
	78%	56%	

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