

Problem Solving in Labor Negotiations: Retest of a Model

La solution de problèmes en matière de négociations collectives

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Résumé de l'article

On cherche de plus en plus à découvrir des moyens de faire de la négociation collective un meilleur instrument en vue de la solution des problèmes qu'elle pose. C'est ainsi que l'on s'efforce de négocier certaines améliorations à la qualité de la vie en milieu de travail, d'établir des régimes de participation des employés aux bénéfices et la mise au point de méthodes destinées à accroître la productivité. Walton et McKersie (1965) ont soutenu qu'une négociation fondée sur l'esprit de compréhension exige le recours à certains mécanismes spéciaux comme, par exemple, de ne pas s'agripper à une position mais d'échanger des vues et des impressions au sujet d'un problème. La recherche indique que la confiance mutuelle et le respect entre les négociateurs est une condition préalable importante, si l'on veut résoudre un problème avec succès.

Peterson et Tracy (1976a) avaient conçu et vérifié antérieurement un modèle de solution des problèmes en matière de négociation collective. Cette première vérification se fondait sur un échantillon de 65 chefs négociateurs choisis dans toutes les régions des États-Unis qui négociaient des conventions collectives pour des groupes moyens ou considérables, la plupart de plus de 500 salariés. La présente étude vérifie le modèle de nouveau à partir de données fournies par 47 chefs négociateurs qui participaient à la négociation de conventions collectives dans des unités plus petites, la plupart de moins de 500 salariés dans la région du nord-ouest Pacifique.

On a comparé les résultats des deux enquêtes. Les conditions ou les comportements des parties à la négociation qu'on a relevés et qui se recoupent dans l'une et l'autre études, concernant les succès obtenus dans la solution des problèmes, reposent sur la confiance mutuelle et le respect entre les négociateurs, l'exploration des questions qui se soulèvent entre les parties d'une façon informelle et diplomatique, la discussion des causes des problèmes et de l'opinion qu'on s'en fait avant de prendre une décision ferme, une certaine prévision au sujet des enjeux futurs des négociations de même que des relations actives et suivies entre les parties. En dernier lieu, l'étude porte sur les résultats des deux enquêtes.

Problem Solving in Labor Negotiations

Retest of a Model

Richard B. PETERSON
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and
Alan CABELLY

Two tests of a model of problem-solving in labor negotiations are reported, using samples of private-sector negotiations and in the Pacific Northwest.

During the past 5-10 years a number of writers have dealt with the subject of integrative bargaining (problem-solving) in labor negotiations. Some of the literature has criticized labor union leaders in the United States for their reluctance to support quality of work life projects. For example, Myers (1971) criticized labor union officials for their adamant position against job enrichment programs. Winpisinger, President of the International Association of Machinists, has responded by stressing the point that union members place a low priority on such programs; most union members are interested in more concrete improvements such as better wages, hours, and working conditions (1972). Research by Kochan, Lipsky, and Dyer (1974) on local union officials supports Winpisinger's position. Other union arguments against major innovations in this area include fear of cooptation by management as well as the fear that job redesign would force unions to give up hard-fought gains in contract language.

Another stream of literature identifies ways that unions and management can build a positive union-management relationship. For example, Shershin and Boxx (1975) emphasize the need for both sides to play down the adversarial position in favor of cooperative or conciliatory approaches.

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Finally, the preponderance of the recent literature in this area has concentrated upon specific problem-solving innovations. Some of the better known projects are the Experimental Negotiated Agreement (ENA) in the Basic Steel Industry, the Scanlon Plan use in specific firms, the Rushton Coal Mine experiments, and the Jamestown, New York joint labor-management committees. These and other experimental approaches have been outlined in various reports published by the Work in America Institute and the now defunct National Center for Productivity and Quality of Work Life (1976).

What seems to be missing in all of this literature is an attempt to separate and identify the situational variables that encourage problem solving in negotiations. Also lacking is any specific discussion of bargaining techniques that would facilitate problem solving.

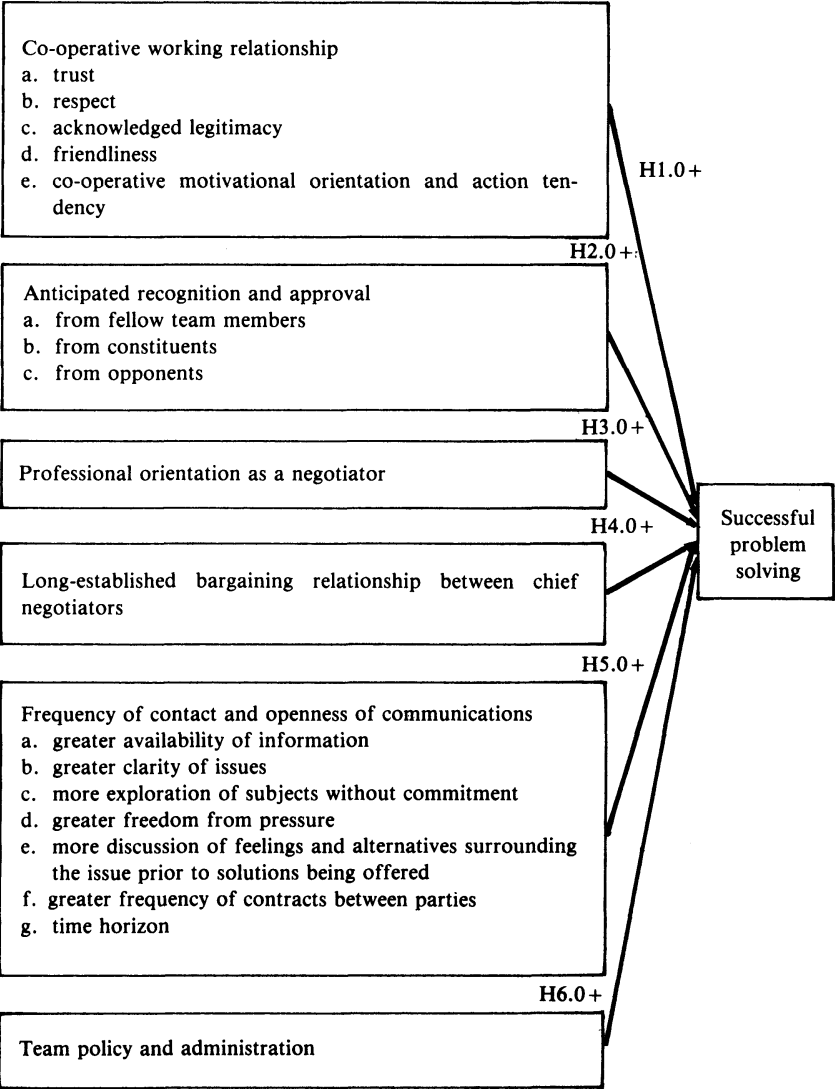
Our research has two specific objectives. On the theoretical plane we wish to develop and test a conceptual model of integrative bargaining developed in the earlier work of Walton and McKersie (1965). For the practitioner we are concerned with identifying conditions, behaviors, and procedures that enhance problem-solving approaches in labor negotiations. We hope to provide indications of situations or actions that help or hinder successful integrative bargaining.

The next section of this paper outlines and briefly discusses our conceptual model of integrative bargaining. The following sections discuss the method and the results from testing the model in two different studies. The final section discusses the findings in light of theory and practice.

THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The conceptual model (see Figure 1) was developed (Peterson and Tracy, 1976a) prior to the two studies reported here. The model itself derives primarily from Walton and McKersie's integrative bargaining model outlined in their book, *A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiation* (1965), and from our earlier work (Tracy, 1971). However, other empirical studies reported later also support our hypothesized linkages.

FIGURE 1
Model of Factors Affecting Successful Problem-Solving
in Labor Negotiations



The model identifies six major independent variables that are expected to be positively related to the dependent variable of perceived success in problem-solving. We define this dependent variable as bargaining over problem issues in which both sides may gain from a good solution. This is a narrower definition than the one offered by Walton and McKersie (1965), who also include cases "when the gains of one party do not represent equal sacrifices by the other" (p. 5). We would expect more problem-solving activity where both situations were tested; thus, our test is conservative.

The model argues that perceived success in integrative bargaining is enhanced where (1) certain conditions are present, and (2) certain procedures are used by the negotiating teams. While most of the variables relate to interorganizational relationships, some are of an intraorganizational nature.

Below are listed the six groups of independent variables shown in Figure 1, with a brief description of the group. Each group of variables is hypothesized to be positively related to perceived success in integrative bargaining. Thus, each group represents a numbered hypothesis. Literature support for each hypothesis is cited following the description of the group of variables.

- (1) *Cooperative working relationship* — a basic position in which the parties are able to work together. Specific elements include mutual trust, respect for competency of the other side's negotiators, acknowledged legitimacy of the other party, a modicum of friendliness, and a cooperative motivational orientation.

The most extensive research support relates to trust. Gruder and Rosen (1971), Gergen (1969), Frey and Adams (1972), Bonoma (1976), and Magenau *et al* (1976) emphasize the importance of this variable both for successful integrative and distributive (carving up the pie) bargaining.

The Julian, Hollander and Regula (1969) research supports the need for mutual respect. Turk and Lefcowitz (1962) emphasize the crucial role of legitimacy. Friendliness is supported by the findings in the Swingle and Gillis (1968) and Johnson (1971) studies.

Finally, cooperative motivational orientation is identified as probably the most general factor. Research support is drawn from studies by Healy (1965), Blake and Mouton (1962), Walton and McKersie (1966), Pruitt and Lewis (1975), Bonoma (1976), and Driscoll (1978).

- (2) *Anticipated recognition and approval* — fellow team members, constituents, and members of the opposing team are seen as supporting the negotiators and their work.

Support for the importance of this variable in promoting successful problem-solving is found in studies by Stevens (1963), Druckman (1971), Vidmar (1971), Klimoski (1972), Frey and Adams (1972), Magenau and Pruitt (1979), Driscoll (1978), and Wall (1975).

- (3) *Professional orientation as a negotiator* — commitment of the negotiator to bargaining as a full-time occupation.
- (4) *Length of the bargaining relationship* — length of time or number of times that the parties and/or negotiators have dealt with each other.

Walton and McKersie (1965), and Urban (1971) provide arguments and data supporting the linkage between these variables and success in problem-solving.

- (5) *Frequency of contact and openness of communications* — availability of information, clarity in stating issues, exploration of subjects without commitment, freedom from pressure, discussion of feelings and alternatives surrounding an issue prior to solutions being offered, frequency of contacts between parties, and time horizon or farsightedness of the parties.

Literature support for using these various procedures is widespread. Representative research and writings include Stevens (1963), Walton and McKersie (1965), Swingle (1970), McGrath (1966), Siegel and Fouraker (1960), Druckman (1971), Johnson (1971), Vidmar (1971), Contino (1968), and Healy (1965).

- (6) *Team policy and administration* — the bargaining team's use of effective decision-making procedures and organization of work.

The Balke, Hammond and Myers (1973) research offers one of the few empirical tests of the importance of team policy on bargaining outcome, although it applied to a distributive bargaining situation.

Before proceedings further, we should mention that the model does not include all possible behavioral variables. Our latest research design includes additional behavioral variables. Furthermore, we have not included in the model some important economic variables (e.g. bargaining power, estimated likelihood of a strike) that are expected to affect integrative (problem-solving) bargaining activities.

METHOD

The Sample

The respondents were drawn from two sample bases of private sector chief negotiators for labor and management. The first group was drawn

from a nationwide sample and represented contracts covering 500 or more employees in the private sector (Peterson and Tracy, 1976a). The data were collected between May and October 1973.

The second sample of private sector chief negotiators represented firms located in the Pacific Northwest (PNW). The preponderance of these firms had a contract covering less than 500 employees. These data were collected between mid-1976 and mid-1977.

The data analysis for the nationwide sample is based upon usable responses from 65 (37 management and 28 unions) chief negotiators. These 65 negotiators represent feedback from sixty separate contracts. The Pacific Northwest data analysis draws upon usable responses from 47 (24 management and 23 union) chief negotiators representing forty-one different bargaining agreements. In data analysis the samples were weighted to give equal weight to the responses of the management and union negotiators. This meant that the effective sample size for hypothesis testing was reduced to twice the size of the smaller group in each sample.

The Questionnaire

The chief negotiators in each sample were requested to complete two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was completed approximately 30-45 days prior to contract termination. This information served as a pre- or early-bargaining base point.

The second instrument, similar in nature but longer, was to be completed upon settlement or when an impasse was reached. The intent of this second questionnaire was to ascertain the conditions and bargaining procedures as perceived by the chief negotiators upon the completion of negotiations. The analysis of the two questionnaires together was designed to ascertain the impact of conditions and behaviors on various measures of the outcome.

The independent variables were divided into three groups: the existing state of the relationship during the very early stages of bargaining; perceptions of the behavior exhibited by both sides in the later stages of the negotiations; and perceptions of the bargaining outcomes (Peterson and Tracy, 1976a).

There were at least two scaled questions for almost all the variables contained in the conceptual model. The statements were deliberately mixed such that no two questions measuring the same factor were placed near each other. Half the scales had the positive end toward the right, half toward the left, and this was true within variables as well. These design features were

incorporated into both questionnaires as a means of minimizing errors caused by response set, contiguity of questions and halo effect.

We are reporting results using the summed independent variables, not the separate questions. The dependent variable was measured by the question: "How successful were the two negotiating teams in finding solutions to problems which adversely affected both parties¹?"

We used perceptions of successful problem-solving since there was no feasible way of objectively measuring either the amount or degree of success of problem-solving. Moreover, with respect to the decision making of the responding chief negotiators the important question was whether they believed that successful problem-solving had or had not taken place.

The questionnaires used in these two studies were the result of pilot testing in four mock negotiation settings. Histograms, correlation coefficients and factor analysis were employed as means of testing the clarity of questions, the distribution of variables and the strength of the relationship within and between variables.

We tested the internal consistency of the summed variable scores in the nationwide study using the Spearman-Brown formula. The median reliability coefficient was .68 with a range of .29 to .87. The reader should keep in mind that the questions to be summed for each independent variable were not designed to measure exactly the same aspect of the variable. Had they been so designed, higher reliability coefficients would have been expected.

We also factor analyzed the data from the nationwide study as a further check on whether the questions we were using really grouped into factors as intended. The results generally supported the intended factor structure for most of the variables reported here except availability of information, freedom from pressure, and time horizon.

RESULTS

In this section we shall report the results of the testing of six hypotheses. Most of the hypotheses were tested by means of 't' tests associated with Pearson product moment correlations. The exceptions are Hypotheses 3 and 4 where the noncontinuous nature of the data led us to use the F in analysis of variance test instead.

¹ *The British Journal of Industrial Relations* article used the sum of this question and the "How successful were the parties at finding ways to improve the contract for mutual benefit?" question. The number of significant correlations was somewhat higher in that analysis than for the use of the single dependent variable used here. In the PNW study, however, the second question was replaced by "How successful were the parties in finding solutions to problems which adversely affected only one of the parties?" Thus, the question about solving problems that adversely affect both parties is the only question common to both studies that measured success in problem-solving.

Table 1 reports the results of the testing of Hypothesis I. All of the coefficients were significant at the .05 level in the nationwide study while only two of the five coefficients were significant in the PNW study. In that study the correlations for two of the other three variables, *legitimacy* and *cooperative motivational orientation*, were in the predicted direction. Only friendliness showed a negative relationship.

We now turn our attention to recognition and approval. Table 2 reports the correlation coefficients for recognition and approval from own team, constituents, and other team. While *anticipated approval from constituents* was statistically significant in the nationwide study, recognition and approval from own team and the other team proved significant in the PNW study. Moreover, all of the coefficients were in the predicted direction.

Hypothesis 3 relates to the expectation that the more professional the chief negotiators are, the more likely they are to engage in successful problem-solving. Professionalism was measured by whether negotiating was the respondent's primary job or not. Table 3 shows that the relationship was not significant in either study.

The next hypothesis is concerned with the relationship between experience of the chief negotiators and successful problem-solving. We reason that more experienced negotiators are likely to try, and be successful in, integrative bargaining more often due to an increasing sense of competence. Table 4 reports the results. Again, we find that the association is not significant in either study.

The fifth hypothesis identified certain bargaining procedures that are expected to increase the likelihood of successful problem-solving. Table 5 reports the Pearson product-moment correlations for each of the eleven variables. Seven of the eleven coefficients were significant in the nationwide study while only four of the eleven relationships were significant in the PNW study. However, with the exception of *frequency of meetings to explore issues* and *team freedom* (PNW only) all the correlations for both studies were in the predicted direction.

The final hypothesis is that effective team policy and administration is likely to be present where the parties have engaged in successful problem-solving behavior. Table 6 shows that this linkage is significant in the nationwide study and approaches significance in the PNW study.

TABLE 1
Relationship Between Perceived Success in Problem-Solving
and the Working Relationship Between the Parties

<i>Hypothesis number and subvariable</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Success in problem-solving</i>	
		<i>Nationwide (N = 48-52)</i>	<i>PNW (N = 42-44)</i>
1.1 Trust of other side	— Honesty of other team	.400*	.270*
	— Trust toward chief negotiator of other team		
1.2 Respect for other side	— Respect for chief negotiator of other team	.492*	.318*
	— Skill of negotiators on other team		
1.3 Legitimacy of other side	— Validity of other side's goals	.241*	.208
	— Right of other side to make proposals its makes		
1.4 Friendliness of the relationship	— Friendliness of people on the other side with you	.500*	-.101
	— Friendliness of people on the other side with other members of your team		
1.5 Motivational orientation and action tendencies	— Constructiveness of other side in competition with your team	.481*	.065
	— Degree to which other side tries to support or undercut your team's position with constituents		

* Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient significant at the .05 level or better.

TABLE 2
Relationship Between Perceived Success in Problem-Solving
and Approval from Team Members, Constituents or Opponents

<i>Hypothesis number and subvariable</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Success in problem-solving</i>	
		<i>Nationwide (N = 51-55)</i>	<i>PNW (N = 42-44)</i>
2.1 Favorable recognition and approval from own team member	— Credit given you during negotiations for your work and ideas from team members	.201	.316*
	— Personal praise you received during negotiations from team members		
2.2 Anticipated favorable recognition and approval from constituents	— Level of confidence in support from your constituents	.250*	.242
	— Anticipated satisfaction of constituents with team's bargaining strategy		
2.3 Favorable recognition and approval from opponents	— Credit given you and your team members by opponents for work and ideas	.160	.273*
	— Personal praise received by you and team members from opponents		

* Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient significant at the .05 level or better.

TABLE 3
Analysis of Variance of Perceived Success in Problem-Solving
Between Levels of Professional Orientation

<i>Nationwide Study</i>			
<i>Response</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean perceived success in problem solving</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Negotiating is primary job.	10	79.2	23.8
Negotiating is part of duties, but not primary part.	46	68.8	21.8
Negotiating is not part of regular duties.	8	61.1	43.0

Degrees of freedom = 63. F Score = 1.18. Not significant at .05 level.

<i>Pacific Northwest Study</i>			
<i>Response</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean perceived success in problem solving</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Negotiating is primary job.	11	115.8	18.3
Negotiating is part of duties, but not primary part.	33	121.6	27.4
Negotiating is not part of regular duties.	0	0.0	0.0

Degrees of freedom = 42. F Score = 0.40. Not significant at .05 level.

TABLE 4
Analysis of Variance of Perceived Success in Problem-Solving
Between Levels of Length of Bargaining Relationship

<i>Nationwide Study</i>			
<i>Number of times chief negotiators have bargained with each other</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean perceived success in problem solving</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
None	17	77.6	24.2
Once or twice	13	65.6	30.0
Three or more times	28	66.9	24.2

Degrees of freedom = 57. F Score = 1.16. Not significant at .05 level.

<i>Pacific Northwest Study</i>			
<i>Number of times chief negotiators have bargained with each other</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean perceived success in problem solving</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Only this once	15	110.6	24.9
Two to four times	22	124.4	22.9
Five or more times	8	126.3	31.6

Degrees of freedom = 41. F Score = 1.60. Not significant at .05 level.

TABLE 5
Relationship Between Perceived Success in Problem-Solving
and Frequency and Openness of Communications

<i>Hypothesis number and subvariable</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Success in problem-solving</i>	
		<i>Nationwide (N = 51-56)</i>	<i>PNW (N = 42-44)</i>
5.1 Public availability of information	— Amount of information needed for problem-solving which was publicly available	.254*	.006
Availability of information from other side	— Freeness of other side in making available the information needed by you to solve problems		
5.2 Ability of own side to clarify issues	— Clarity of your side in stating issues	.212	.193
	— Specificity of your side in stating issues		
Ability of other side to clarify issues	— Clarity of other side in stating issues	.360*	.228
	— Specificity of other side in stating issues		
5.3 Exploration of subjects without commitments	— Degree of exploration by both sides of subjects on an informal noncommittal basis in negotiating sessions	.336*	.258*
	— Degree that both sides got together outside regular bargaining sessions to explore subjects off the record		
5.4 Personal freedom from team pressures	— Your freedom of constraints from members of your team	.309*	.041
	— Amount of initiative you were personally allowed to take in negotiations		
Team freedom from constituent pressure	— Degree of unawareness of constituents with what was going on in negotiations	.111	-.083
	— Freedom of your bargaining team from constituent pressure		
5.5 Discussion by own team	— Level of discussion with other team of possible causes for problem before taking a position	.112	.073

<i>Hypothesis number and subvariable</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Success in problem-solving</i>	
		<i>Nationwide (N = 51-56)</i>	<i>PNW (N = 42-44)</i>
Discussion by other team	— Level of discussion with other team of feelings about issue before taking a position		
	— Level of discussion with your team of possible causes for problem before taking a position	.415*	.295*
	— Level of discussion with your team of feelings about an issue before taking a position		
5.6 Frequency of contacts between the parties	— Number of grievance meetings in past year	.189	-.281*
	— Number of other meetings between parties in past year		
5.7 Far-sightedness of own side	— Far-sightedness of own team with respect to future bargaining issues	.266*	.181
	— Far-sightedness of own team with respect to future working relationship		
Far-sightedness of other side	— Far-sightedness of opponents with respect to future bargaining issues	.406*	.459*
	— Far-sightedness of opponents with respect to future working relationship		

* Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient significant at the .05 level or better.

TABLE 6
Relationship Between Perceived Success in Problem-Solving
and Own Team's Policies and Administration

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Success in problem-solving</i>	
		<i>Nationwide</i> <i>(N = 56)</i>	<i>PNW</i> <i>(N = 42)</i>
6.0 Team policy and administration	— Effectiveness of own team's decision-making procedures	.243*	.235
	— Effectiveness of own team's organization of work		

* Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient significant at the .05 level or better.

DISCUSSION

Having completed two tests of our behavioral model of problem-solving in labor negotiations, we feel that we can draw some conclusions regarding the model.

First, it seems apparent that such underlying conditions as trust, respect, friendliness, legitimacy, and cooperative action tendencies are rather crucial for such success in integrative bargaining. While we did not test for causality, insights from the data and interviews leads us to believe that these are necessary pre-conditions for successful integrative bargaining (Peterson and Tracy, 1976b).

Second, recognition and approval from own team, constituents, and the other side appear to have some importance, but are probably not as controlling as the first five variables.

Third, neither professionalism nor bargaining experience of the chief negotiators appeared to relate to success in problem-solving. Walton and McKersie had expected a strong association. Why didn't it happen? One possibility is that our measures for these two variables didn't really tap the intended dimensions. For example, professionalism may not necessarily equate with negotiating being the respondent's primary job. Also, the effects of more experience in dealing with one another may cancel out. By this we mean that more experience can mean the development of the trust needed to try new ways, but at the same time may lead the chief negotiators to employ a familiar pattern of bargaining approaches.

Fourth, by itself, motivation to resolve a mutual problem is not enough. The chief negotiators need to use certain procedures to increase the likelihood that problem-solving will be successful. The importance of procedures was especially noticeable in the nationwide study. The most robust associations across the two studies were for *exploration of solutions without being committed to a position, discussion by other team of problems before taking a position, and far-sightedness of other team.*

Fifth, effective team policy and administration appears to relate to successful problem-solving. Intraorganizational relationships also are important.

We found a somewhat lesser number of significant relationships in the PNW study than in the nationwide study. We feel that there are some plausible reasons. One possible reason relates to bargaining unit size and assessment of extent of problem-solving in the negotiations. Table 7 reports this data for the two studies. It is clear that (a) the PNW chief negotiators were involved in contracts covering fewer workers (as intended) and (b) that these

chief negotiators perceived less problem-solving taking place compared to their counterparts in the nationwide study even though more PNW negotiators negotiated as their primary job. Furthermore, we surmise that outside expertise in the various problem areas was less available to the PNW chief negotiators.

Secondly, the sample size in the PNW study was smaller than in the original study. There were some cases where the correlations in the PNW study were somewhat higher than in the nationwide study, but due to smaller sample size the correlation coefficient missed significance at the .05 level.

TABLE 7
Size of Bargaining Unit and Character of Bargaining

Size of Bargaining Unit

	<i>Nationwide Study</i>	<i>PNW Study</i>
1-499 Employees	11 (16.9%)	40 (85.1%)
500-999 Employees	20 (30.8%)	4 (8.5%)
1 000 and Over	28 (43.1%)	1 (2.1%)
Not Reported	6 (9.2%)	2 (4.3%)
	65	47

Character of Bargaining

	<i>Nationwide Study</i>	<i>PNW Study</i>
Totally Distributive	3 (4.6%)	1 (2.1%)
Generally Distributive	16 (24.6%)	10 (21.3%)
Half and Half	17 (26.2%)	18 (38.3%)
Mostly Integrative	21 (32.3%)	10 (21.3%)
All Integrative	8 (12.3%)	5 (10.6%)
	65	44*

* Note: Three chief negotiators did not respond in the PNW study.

The data in Table 7 suggest that chief negotiators in both studies have a different way of categorizing character of bargaining behavior than is suggested in most of the bargaining literature. This conclusion is borne out by the results of our interviews with 38 key negotiators in the nationwide study. Problem-solving doesn't necessarily require something like the Armour Automation Fund, West Coast Longshore Modernization and Mechanization Agreement or the Experimental Negotiation Agreement in Basic Steel. It may simply mean clarifying contract clauses that have caused both sides a lot of wasted time and energy in grievances. In this sense, such problem-solving may represent the mixed-motive strategy discussed by Walton and McKersie (1965, pp. 161-183).

What broader conclusions can be drawn from these two studies? Perhaps the most important one is that Walton and McKersie and we have identified several variables that are associated with success in integrative bargaining (problem-solving) in labor negotiations. While two studies are not definite proof of most of the behavioral models, the general consistency in results is indeed encouraging. What we hope to do in future research is to identify economic variables so that the model can capture more of the interdisciplinary nature of bargaining.

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La solution de problèmes en matière de négociations collectives

On cherche de plus en plus à découvrir des moyens de faire de la négociation collective un meilleur instrument en vue de la solution des problèmes qu'elle pose. C'est ainsi que l'on s'efforce de négocier certaines améliorations à la qualité de la vie en milieu de travail, d'établir des régimes de participation des employés aux bénéfices et la mise au point de méthodes destinées à accroître la productivité. Walton et McKersie (1965) ont soutenu qu'une négociation fondée sur l'esprit de compréhension exige le recours à certains mécanismes spéciaux comme, par exemple, de ne pas s'agripper à une position mais d'échanger des vues et des impressions au sujet d'un problème. La recherche indique que la confiance mutuelle et le respect entre les négociateurs est une condition préalable importante, si l'on veut résoudre un problème avec succès.

Peterson et Tracy (1976a) avaient conçu et vérifié antérieurement un modèle de solution des problèmes en matière de négociation collective. Cette première vérification se fondait sur un échantillon de 65 chefs négociateurs choisis dans toutes les régions des États-Unis qui négociaient des conventions collectives pour des groupes moyens ou considérables, la plupart de plus de 500 salariés. La présente étude vérifie le modèle de nouveau à partir de données fournies par 47 chefs négociateurs qui participaient à la négociation de conventions collectives dans des unités plus petites, la plupart de moins de 500 salariés dans la région du nord-ouest Pacifique.

On a comparé les résultats des deux enquêtes. Les conditions ou les comportements des parties à la négociation qu'on a relevés et qui se recoupent dans l'une et l'autre études, concernant les succès obtenus dans la solution des problèmes, reposent sur la confiance mutuelle et le respect entre les négociateurs, l'exploration des questions qui se soulèvent entre les parties d'une façon informelle et diplomatique, la discussion des causes des problèmes et de l'opinion qu'on s'en fait avant de prendre une décision ferme, une certaine prévision au sujet des enjeux futurs des négociations de même que des relations actives et suivies entre les parties. En dernier lieu, l'étude porte sur les résultats des deux enquêtes.