AD-758 825

THE RELEVANCE OF HUMAN INTELLECT AND ORGANIZATIONAL POWER FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Prepared for:

Office of Naval Research

April 1973

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The Relevance of Human Intellect and Organizational Power For Organizational Development

by

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This research was sponsored by the Organizational Effectiveness Research Programs, Psychological Sciences Division, Office of Naval Research, under Contract NO. N0014-67-0097-0017, Contract Authority Identification Number, NR 170-817.

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Acknowledgements

This report is a revised version of the paper presented at the Second Annual New Technology in Organizational Development Conference, sponsored by the N.T.L. Institute of Applied Behavioral Science, in Washington, D.C., November 30-December 1, 1972. Grateful appreciation for their comments on an earlier version of this paper is extended to Robert Kaplan, Robert Neal, John Stanton, David Jenkins, John Adams and the conference participants.

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author)

Department of Administrative Sciences
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut 06520

2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Unclassified

2b. GROUP

3. REPORT TITLE

The Relevance of Human Intellect and Organizational Power for Organizational Development

4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)

Technical Report No. 3

5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)

Clayton P. Alderfer

6. REPORT DATE

1 April 1972

7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES

~~29~~ 34

7b. NO. OF REFS

4

8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.

N0014-67-0097-0017

b. PROJECT NO

NR 170-817

c.

d.

9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)

10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY

Organizational Effectiveness Research Programs, Office of Naval Research
Arlington, Virginia 22217

13. ABSTRACT

A critical essay discussing several key problems in the application of behavioral science to organizational problems is presented. Two kinds of problems are identified: (1) the under utilization of intellectual resources, and (2) the misunderstanding and misapplication or organizational power. Explication of these two problems is undertaken, and it is hypothesized how these two classes of errors can be shown to explain many of the problems faced by organization development practitioners. With the problems identified, an alternative approach to organizational change that relies on a complementary, rather than a collaborative, relationship is proposed. The utilization of this approach in two quite different settings is briefly described.

DD FORM 1473 (PAGE 1)

S/N 0101-807-6801

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

14 KEY WORDS	LINK A ROLE	LINK A WT	LINK B ROLE	LINK B WT	LINK C ROLE	LINK C WT
Human Intellect						
Organizational power						
Organizational development						
Collaborative relationship						
Complementary relationship						
Authority						
External consultant						
Senior internal consultant						
Junior internal consultant						

DD FORM 1 NOV 65 1473 (BACK)

S/N 0101-807-6801

ic

Unclassified

Security Classification

A-31409

A friend and colleague of mine, Thomas Lodahl coined the statement, "The world is not a T-group." When I first heard him say this I was caught by the large number of complex issues that might be better managed if this simple statement were better understood, accepted, and applied by practitioners of organizational development. Many of us have entered the field of applied behavioral science in part because of having had a moving and enriching experience through participation in a T-group. The warmth, the apparent leveling, the sense that more humane values are workable, and the experience of new ways of learning and working that often emerge from a T-group experience all contribute to the wish that all of one's experience should share these characteristics. Perhaps those goals are realizable, but I believe that enough data is in to say with some certainty that it hasn't happened yet and is probably unlikely to be achieved by tomorrow (Argyris, 1971). Like other innovations, the model offered by the T-group has its merits, but it is also incomplete. There are several issues in particular which I believe have been ignored, misunderstood, and misapplied as a result of the failure to appreciate that indeed the world is not a T-group. Harvey and Davis (1972) have done a nice job of identifying certain dimensions on which laboratory (T-groups) organizations differ from non-laboratory organizations. In this paper I shall identify a number of problems which my experience consistently tells me interfere with optimally effective organization development and which I believe have evolved because of a failure to come to terms fully with the reality that everyday organizational life differs in some very important ways from the last moments of an effectively functioning T-group. From the problems I shall then turn to one model which I have found helpful in getting around the problems that were identified. The last section of the paper will then briefly describe two cases illustrating how the model can guide actions.

The T-group as a social innovation has been instrumental in allowing many people to see the unrealized constructive potential of human emotions. During the course of a laboratory program, people can develop very warm feelings for one another as group members struggle with and work through the problems of group formation and as they learn to give and receive helpful feedback. But along with these constructive gains from T-grouping have come certain other losses. As members of a group learn how the use of words, the analysis of human behavior, and other intellectual activity can distance one human being from another, some tend to reach the conclusion that intellectual work of all kinds is the arch enemy of authentic relationships. It has often struck me as paradoxical how some members of the human potential movement have failed to accept planning, thinking, and evaluating (all human intellectual activities) as part of the human potential to be developed and utilized. I have no sense of being alone in making this criticism, and I believe the whole field of applied behavioral science is now turning in directions which will make increasing use of intellectual work in furthering the values and social processes which the field has to offer. A second mislearning which I believe has grown out of the T-group experience concerns the understanding and use of power in group and organizational settings. One stance toward T-group learning, shared by many practitioners, is to minimize as much as possible the power differences between staff and participants because exaggerated authority tends to interfere with the kinds of personal learning often achieved at the end of a group (Egan, 1970). Although I believe this is an error in the conduct of group training, I am even more convinced that it is a serious mistake when the purpose of laboratory education is not only personal

learning for individuals but also leadership and group dynamics education for managers, teachers, and other professionals.

In summary, I believe that the application of laboratory methods to the solution of organizational problems has suffered from two classes of errors, each growing out of the otherwise extraordinarily beneficial learnings first found in the T-group laboratory. The first error concerns the under-utilization or, in some cases, the abandonment of human intellect. The second error pertains to flight from the very difficult issues surrounding the use of power and authority.

My belief in the validity of these two criticisms stems from a variety of data, all of it informal, and yet all of it quite convincing to me at a personal level. The first source of data is myself. During my years as a professional I have found versions of these criticisms operating in and interfering with my own effectiveness. Little in what I say in the following pages by way of criticism of the profession do I feel immune to myself. A second source of data is in the observations of my colleagues, some toward whom I feel considerable warmth, some toward whom I have no relationship, and some toward whom I feel disrespect. I have observed colleagues when I have worked with them, and I have also followed others into systems and listened to clients describe (and evaluate) their work. A final source of data comes from the reactions I received when these criticisms were first presented orally to an audience of internal and external organizational development consultants.

Under-utilization of human intellect. To test the hypothesis about the under utilization of intellectual resources, let me pose some questions for organization development practitioners. How many subscriptions to

professional social science journals do you take? How many research journals from psychology, sociology, and anthropology could you list? How many new research books in the field of organizational behavior published in 1972 could you list? How many of you keep updated logs of fhe projects you are dealing with? How many of you have written planning documents to explain applied behavioral science to members of your organization?

This summer at an N.T.L. Learning Community I was talking with one of our most respected women colleagues and was surprised to learn that she did not have a Ph.D. In explaining to me why she had decided not to go back to school, she described how her son had recently finished his degree only after becoming quite angry at key faculty members. I responded that I had not known anyone who was honest who had not worked out a substantial degree of anger in the process of completing a doctorate. I knew that I had. Then she said that she was afraid that if she went back to school, she would lose her ability to communicate ideas in clear and simple language because she would become too intellectual and abstract. I asked her if she knew anyone who forgot how to speak English after they learned French. This episode provided me with additional understanding about why many people in our profession do not do more intellectual work. Some who resist it do so not because an assessment of the intrinsic merits of the activity, but because it is painful and difficult to do intellectual work. They avoid intellectual work for emotional reasons.

Incidentally, I recently discovered a new "helpful" intervention. I was able to convince a number of clients in one organization to write some of their materials in complete sentences. As surprising as this may seem, it turned out to be instrumental for dealing with some resistances

by a key set of line managers in one section of the organization. One of the managers' ways of judging a person's competence was whether material they saw was presented in grammatically correct ways. They were in engineering not marketing or public relations.

I believe that another reason why so little intellectual work is done in O.D. is because many of us enjoy treating what we know as a kind of magic and keeping it to ourselves. (Still another hypothesis is that many practitioners in the field are dumb.) One of the best internal consultants I've known recognizes that the managers with whom he has worked cannot explain to one another how he has helped them. He stays in demand because many people feel that he has helped them. However, when asked what O.D. is, they say it is "what Pete does." Pete has thrived in several major budget cuts in the corporation because he has the support of several very highly regarded line managers, but the O.D. group in that company is not in good shape, partly, I believe, because lack of intellectual work has kept the group from arriving at consensually accepted statement of their corporate mission.

Another approach was taken by an internal consultant charged with developing a corporate plan for human resources management. His plan was written out and included a 30 page document as well as the usual complete dog-and-pony show. His first presentation was to the company president, a committed advocate of applied behavioral science. The president reacted very positively to the presentation, which was complete with human need theory, open systems theory, thirteen specific interventions, and a brief description of several projects already underway in the company. Both the president and the consultant agreed that the presentation was pretty theoretical and would be a problem for some others who would hear it.

They further agreed that the way to deal with the problem was not to decrease the theoretical content, but to increase the use of concrete examples so that the managers would be better able to connect the theory to their work experience. One of the key features in the president's reactions to the program was that he found what the consultant said to be consistent with his 20 years of work experience and reading behavioral science literature. In fact, he found that the newer theoretical presentation solved some of the problems that had been troubling him over the years.

The writing is on the wall. As more people become familiar with applied behavioral science, they will demand higher grade intellectual work. One's success as an internal or external consultant will in part depend on his ability to meet these demands.

This criticism was viewed differentially by internal and external consultants. Most external consultants who spoke agreed with the validity of the problem. They felt that they themselves read less than was desireable and thought the general validity of the charge was high. Among internal consultants the responses were more varied. Some did not even "get around to dealing with the issue", others agreed with it, and still others wondered whether it was not a strength rather than a weakness. One possibility for understanding these reactions is that because they themselves are generally more secure intellectually (by virtue of holding Ph.D.'s, writing articles now and then, etc.) the external consultants are more able to accept the criticism. Support for this hypothesis was found in the remarks of one internal consultant who reported that the standing of an internal consultant in his own organization was increased substantially after he had completed the Ph.D.

Flight from power and authority. Problems with power and authority begin with the family. As a result I assume that all of us by virtue of participating in the human condition arrive on the scene with considerably mixed feelings about people who control our lives. From the standpoint of organizational development, the significant kinds of power pertain to the ability (by virtue of personal characteristics) or the capability (by virtue of organizational position) to influence the availability and utilization of significant resources. Consultants always have power when they are functioning in role, although they may underappreciate the nature of the power they possess. The types of power and the extent of those powers depend heavily on the role a consultant negotiates for himself and upon his own personal characteristics. It ia an occupational reality of consulting that persons operating in this role must deal with some individuals whose power is more than their own and others whose power is less than their own. I have noticed that internal and external consultants tend to evidence certain chronic problems in how they relate to their own and others' management of power in human systems.

Often an internal consultant is a person who entered the profession as a second-best career. He might have been "dumped" into personnel work after he had been less than successful in line management, or he might have entered the field directly because he had fears about his abilities to do the job of managing people when concrete results were demanded. He is often very good at empathizing with people who have been hurt and punished by organizations. Literally he knows because he has been there himself--perhaps more than many. He was latently in favor of people expressing all their emotions before ever seeing a T-group because he has so many emotions to

express himself and sometimes has trouble holding them in check. So a group experience, where "we let it all hang out", is quite consistent with many of his personal needs.

With this sort of background, the internal consultant tends to run into a number of predictable problems as he operates professionally. Because his career history is often known by his clients, he frequently has difficulty in gaining the confidence of operating managers who are understandably reluctant to accept the advice of someone whose competence, as they understand it, is not very high. If the internal consultant does not fully flee from questions about his own newly acquired competence, he is able to gain the confidence of some managers, especially those whose situation is so desparate that they are willing to try almost anything.

Having gained the confidence of line managers, the internal consultant is permitted to develop a role for himself. But as he works, he is particularly prone to two kinds of mistakes, arising from his own irresolution of authority problems. Both errors are connected with his wish to avoid being with an authority figure who is upset.

The first kind of error happens when the internal consultant is reluctant to discuss with powerful line managers elements of their style which are manipulative, secretive, or paternalistic and when he is slow to go toward the feelings of anger that often develop in the line manager toward the consultant. For similar reasons he does not speak for his own needs in key situations, and he is unlikely to take initiatives toward managers. From the manager's eyes this kind of behavior confirms some of his worst fears about the consultant. Not only did he fail in other careers because he lacked dynamism, but the same thing is happening again.

The second kind of mistake which internal consultants may make is to encourage subordinates to be especially thorough in expressing their negative and angry reactions to their supervisors. Some internal consultants find it m much easier to support some one else's expression of criticism than to express their own. I have called this phenomenon among certain consultants, "fanning counterdependence." People who do it are good at empathizing with the suffering subordinates in a situation and significantly less able to empathize with the supervisor who must absorb and respond to all the criticism. Their unstated view of the supervisor is that anyone as powerful as he can easily deal with large amounts of negative feedback if he deserves his job, and if he can't, he shouldn't have the position. Such an internal consultant is slow to believe that supervisors have feelings of pain, anxiety, and anguish, and they need non-collusive support in establishing real mutuality in their work relations. Internal consultants who make this mistake are usually able to see how threatened the manager is of their services but unable to see how their own behavior contributes to this threat.

External consultants are often people who have difficulty maintaining a committed organizational affiliation. They may be teaching at a university, operating in private practice, or sharing membership in a consulting firm. Whatever the organizational connection, the external consultant often is not a <u>central</u> member of the system, if he is a member of a system. In part this is because of his role in life, but it is also reflective of his personal style. A person who is busy helping others with their problems may be short of time and energy for dealing with his own problems. But I suspect that this is the smaller explanation for his behavior. More significant, I fear, is his reluctance to stay around to deal with the consequences

of his actions. His specialty is unfreezing people and systems. In his arament are a number of proven techniques for stimulating people to examine their behavior, express their emotions, and try new behaviors.

External consultants are usually good at gratifying their own needs. They, too, have been hurt by organizations, but not nearly as much as many internal consultants. After one or two experiences with being damaged in organizational life, many external consultants evolve a life role that keeps them without an organization or with many organizations. Expert at managing short-term power relationships; quick, articulate, funny, and smooth, an effective external consultant is able to win the confidence of line managers who are looking for new tools for improving their organizations, motivating their people, and increasing organizational commitment. Many external consultants are best when things are going well at the beginning of a relationship.

Many external consultants are also especially poor in developing professional relationships with others either inside or outside of organizations when it remains ambiguous who the star is. Most external consultants work well alone or have a partner who is clearly always in second place in the pecking order.

Most external consultants enjoy contacts with powerful line managers, and it does not take much effort for them to tell you their list of well-known clients. One external consultant's feelings toward another are usually mixed and contain substantial elements of competitiveness. One pattern of behavior I have frequently noticed is for one person to praise another and then off-handedly identify something like a fatal flaw. "If only so-and-so were not so self-centered," or "Did you know what so-and-so- just did?"

In reacting to this paper, one well-known external consultant indicated that he had trouble responding because he had developed his own analysis of consultancy. Then he proceeded to tell the group what his views were even though another session was designed for him to do exactly that. Informally another external consultant told me that I had presented too polarized a position which had turned him off and prevented him from wanting to read the rest of the paper. A different external consultant specifically identified another well known external consultant and characterized his work as "bullying the client until he buys the rationalization."

Some external consultants have predominantly negative feelings toward internal consultants. Forgetting their own difficulties in maintaining a sustained organizational commitment, they are critical of internal consultants who appear to be conservative in their attitudes and approach. They often head directly to the top man in the system without recognizing how much harm this might do to the insider's local esteem. When the external consultant relates to the internal consultant, he does so manifestly as a professional colleague but latently in a spirit of superior to subordinate. An external consultant who does not operate with this latent attitude should be able to tell you very easily, directly, and admiringly what he respects and likes about the internal consultants with whom he is working, and perhaps, most importantly, what the internal consultants can do better than he can.

A final feature of some external consultants is that they tend not to stay around long when flak hits. Their "gun-and-run" approach keeps them on the move. For the sake of image, an external consultant knows that it is not too smart to be closely associated with failures. His many other commitments always provide a convenient reason for exiting, and his distain

for internal consultants provides him with an easy explanation for why things did not work out well in a particular situation.

External consultants live constantly with the knowledge of how tenuous their relationship to clients is. If they play it cool, do not deal with their needs in a situation (out of strength, of course), and counter threats to continuation with readiness to leave, they may inadvertently encourage clients to use them in short-run ways. Rather than regular participation in an on-going developing program, the external consultant is used for emergencies and crises. He is brought in to handle the "impossible" situations. This approach aids his heroic fantasies. If he succeeds, it was a true conquest, and he emerges as a genuine hero. If he fails, he loses no face in being unable to manage the impossible. Similarly the internal consultant can avoid risking his local credibility by taking on high risk adventures. If the external consultant fails, it confirms the difficulty of the problem or his ineptness. Either way, the internal consultant also emerges relatively unscathed, and he may achieve a bit of retaliation for being one-down in relation to the external consultant.

Manifestly internal and external consultants are very different. But there are ways that the "pathologies" of roles may complement each other. Unwittingly or even consciously internal and external consultants may collude to keep each other in business in the short-run, but the long-run consequence may be to have little effect on changing human systems other than to raise expectations which later will be frustrated, and therefore make change that much more difficult next time around.

A major reason for this outcome lies with the ways both kinds of consultants mismanage authority relationships. Each tends to adopt a

strategy for relating to those with real power over their lives which avoids working through the conflictful and turbulent processes that are always present when real change is taking place. Internal consultants who avoid these kinds of turbulent interactions do so at some cost to their self esteem and the careers of those they set up against the system. External consultants who avoid the such conflictful interactions do so at the cost of their clients and the profession in general. When an external consultant does not publicly examine his errors, when he acts as if he has a magical formula, and when he walks away when the relationship gets conflictful, he violates the values and processes that he is presumably hired to promote.

Reactions to the power and authority criticism also differed markedly between internal and external consultants. By and large the internal consultants seemed to engage the issue more fully, and to be more able to accept the parts that applied to them and to point out discrepancies in terms of their own experience. One representative response came from an internal consultant who had worked with me and with other external consultants and said, "Thought your remarks re 'Management of Power Relations'. . . was well handled . . . a very direct acknowledgement of the problems faced by both parties." Other internal consultants said that they learned to distinguish between external consultants who were "mechanics" and undesirable and those who were "engineers" and with whom productive relationships could be established. Another reaction from internal consultants was that they did indeed frequently have problems working through issues of conflict with key line managers. It is hard to be sure what the low response frequency by external consultants means. One possibility, however, is that they saw the issue as right enough not to disagree with and painful enough not to discuss publicly with other external consultants while potential clients (i.e., internal consultants) were present.

Conclusion. The two problems I have attempted to identify--the under-utilization of the human intellect and the flight from power and authority--are separate issues, but there are also ways that they inter-relate. One kind of power available to both internal and external consultants stems from knowledge of the theories and findings of behavioral science research. Well integrated knowledge in this area should contribute to the understanding and effectiveness of both kinds of consultants, and the more internal consultants are able to develop their own intellectual equipment the less they will realistically be in a one-down position relative to external consultants on this dimension. I believe that the essence of the problem in both cases stems from an avoidance of frustrating, anxiety provoking activity. No human being will survive very well if he does not find ways to avoid certain stresses and tensions, but it is also disastrous to avoid all kinds of pressures. The working through of many kinds of anxieties is essential to both personal and profession growth. I believe that dealing effectively with the tensions of intellectual growth and the frustrations of power-conflicts are essential to the personal development of organizational consultants and to the field of applied behavioral science. I do not believe that is necessary, however, to reproduce the dysfunctions of traditional education or the capriciousness and duplicity of politicians (organizational and societal) to cope with these difficulties. The following section will present one approach to effectively integrating the human support found in effectively functioning T-groups with the knowledge available through behavioral science to change constructively some of the realities of organizational life.

The Complementary Relationship

The rhetoric of applied behavioral science is rich with the phrase "collaborative relationship." I have learned to mistrust that phrase because it has so often seemed to me to be used collusively and seductively. Some of the things that I have observed in the name of collaborative relationships include the following: Let's you and I agree that we have a collaborative relationship so we can avoid dealing with our differences. Let's you and I form a collaborative relationship so we can forget that you have much more real power than I do, or that I have much more freedom than you do. Let's you and I agree that we have a collaborative relationship so we don't have to recognize that I am better at some things than you are, and you are better at some things than I am. Let's you and I form a collaborative relationship so we can forget that we have different things to gain and lose as a result of doing things together. I know that the originators of the term collaborative relationship did not intend these misuses to crop-up, but they have. I propose the term complementary relationship as a way to get us thinking more concretely and realistically about what an effective professional relationship is.

A complementary relationship exist when the relevant parties, recognizing that they have different organizational roles, personal needs, and primary abilities, agree to work together blending their different contributions in such a way that the primary needs of each are met, the differential costs are shared according to each one's contribution to the problems, and the negotiations around these matters are dealt with as directly and as openly as possible.

Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967) point out that all human relationships may be classified according to whether they are based on equality in which case they are termed symmetrical or whether they are based on difference in which case they are called complementary. The definition of complementary relationship I have proposed goes somewhat beyond the view offered by Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967) because, while it is based on recognizing certain major classes of differences among professionals, it also calls for a common process for dealing with these differences. It is no accident that the problems with organization development that I have identified stem from excessive reliance on symmetical relationship models. Intellectual work tends to produce differences in ideas, in results, and in conclusions, and many problems surrounding power in pyramidal systems begin when individuals and groups must cope with differential amounts of various resources. The present emphasis on the complementary relationship based on open acknowledgement and discussion of differences is intended to be an antidote to the various pathologies associated with excessive reliance on symmetrical models that do not adequately reflect the nature of individual, group, or organizational reality.

The specific complementary relationship which I have found to be very productive in the service of organizational change is a "professional triad" consisting of a senior internal consultant, a junior internal consultant, and an external consultant. The purpose of this professional triad is to aid the normal task oriented line organization in developing more open and trusting problem-solving relationships in the service of meeting the individual and organizational needs of its members. The professional

triad attempts to combine its social technology with organizational power and human support to achieve these ends. Each member of the professional triad contributes differentially to these ends as a function of his abilities, personal needs, and organizational role.

The senior internal consultant is someone who has been successful in terms of the primary mission of the organization. For example, if the system is a school, he has been a fine teacher and is known for this. If the system is a research and development laboratory, he has made some first-rate contributions to the field. If the system is production oriented he has achieved success in meeting quantity and quality goals. As a result of these achievements this person is locally respected. Potential clients do not look at him as someone who does O.D. because he can't do anything else.

The more I have observed organizational behavior, the more convinced I have become that people do not get ahead just because they perform effectively, although in most realistic systems that is essential. But in addition to being effective, the successful manager learns how to make things happen that meet the needs of higher ranking members of the system. Thus he usually has more informal influence--both upward and downward--than a formal position description would give him. He is usually seen as someone the system does not want to lose.

His ways of operating may approximate being manipulative, and if he is unable or unwilling to see this, he is not a good candidate for changing these values and practices in the system. But if he has evolved his techniques as a realistic response to the system and is not personally

wedded to them, the utility of his knowledge of such things as when it is a good and bad time to approach a certain person, how to phrase a particular issue, when to confront a particular conflict and when not to, who to talk to get certain kinds of information, etc., is simply invaluable.

Another important characteristic of the senior consultant is that he is substantially dissatisfied with how the system operates. He sees and abhors the human wreckage that is created by the organization, and though he is discrete about who he says this to, his own behavior in achieving his success task-wise includes a number of examples where he intervened to aid substantially the human condition of people in the system. In short he is committed to humane values in more than a verbal way.

All of these characteristics make the senior internal consultant a person who is conceptually equipped, emotionally prepared, and organizationally situated for his job. But these assets do not complete the picture; the ideal senior internal consultant also has some liabilities. Just as he is helped with some relationships because he has power in the organization, he is feared in other contexts. Some members of the system may hold back information from him because they believe he can make a difference. Most often these fears are tied up the career aspiration, but there may also be people who are competing with the senior consultant for other resources and don't trust him not to use their information against them.

Another liability of the senior internal consultant is that he has felt relatively little of the pain associated with failing within the system because he has failed so little. While he readily recognizes that he could not have succeeded without the help and support of others, he

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also justifiably gives himself credit for achieving what he did. He is a little blind to the things that have come to him as a result of chance or the benevolent attitudes of a particular person early in his career. As a result he is somewhat inclined to blame others in the system who have not done as well as he has. While he is critical of the system, it is often very hard for him to believe that a particular person's plight is not more the results of his efforts than what he has been dealt by nature. All of this adds up to the senior man's being short of empathy for people who have suffered the most in the system.

Most organizations have their own theory to explain why certain events happen. This view is communicated through company training programs, messages from the president, and the implicit messages that are communicated by who is and is not promoted. Much of this theory becomes true by virtue of the self-fulfilling prophecy. People act as if it was true, and it becomes true. A person who has succeeded in the system is especially prone to accepting the local explanations for organizational life, and anyone who stays for a long time is bound to accept unknowingly certain assumptions about why things happen as they do.

The senior internal consultant and the junior internal consultant both suffer from the blinders which spending a long period of time in a system create.

The external consultant's contributions begin because he is outside the system. By virtue of keeping up with the literature and consulting with other systems, he is usually familiar with many systems, not just that of his present client. He thus carries several theories for explaining things, and has watched many different prophecies fulfilled, not just the

particular ones of the given system. He should be a source of new ideas and approaches and a resource for enabling the client to get access to novelty that goes beyond his own particular competencies. In this way he complements the particular set of blinders shared by with the senior and junior internal consultants.

The external consultant is likely to try again things that have worked well for him in other settings. If he has been thorough in his understanding he will be able to modify his techniques to the new setting, but there is often the danger that he suffers from misunderstanding why he was effective in a prior situation. Thus he, too, suffers from a potential set of blinders that are in many ways complementary to those of the internal consultants. If he is able to join forces effectively with the internal consultants, together the team should be able to adapt the offerings that have worked well in one setting to the special conditions of the new setting. For this to happen, however, the external consultant must accept the limitations of his own knowledge--both in terms of the particular situation and in terms of prior settings--and accept the influence of knowledgeable insiders.

For the external consultant to fully utilize his capacities it is important that he have first hand access to the raw data of the organization he is consulting with. This means that he must see, interview, and influence line managers and their subordinates. Otherwise he will have no first hand data base against which to check the reports of his inside colleagues. As he goes about this data collection he should be alert to ways in which his actions may undermine the standing of the internal consultants and simultaneously do all that he can to enhance their deserved feelings of competence and esteem.

The external consultant can also add his own special kind of influence to the success of change activities. Presumably he has had different experiences, has developed several ways of thinking about things, and therefore can speak with the authority of competence on some issues. He may be able to help clients distinguish between reasonable risks, sure things, and unreasonable gambles. This use of his professional power is very appropriate, providing the consultant continually checks to be sure that it is the client who is making the choices, not he himself. A particularly difficult kind of input to handle is a recommendation about another external consultant. If I really know another person's work, it usually means that we have some kind of personal as well as professional relationship. Thus I am inclined explicitly to include the outlines of that personal relationship in any assessment I make, telling the client that I am doing that so he can use the information to correct for my biases. I invite the client to tell me his concerns in evaluating another consultant, so I can gear my comments to the dimensions of his thinking. After we have discussed the person in his terms, I am not reluctant to include additional information if I think important omissions are being made. They seldom are.

The junior internal consultant makes his primary contribution through his capacity to empathize with lower ranking members of the system, especially those who have been hurt and thwarted by the organization. He is usually able to gain the confidence of people at his own rank and below because of his personal warmth and the fact that he is not threatening organizationally. He is most able to find out where the problems are in the system and is likely to be alert to subtlties in the penalty system of the organization which are not seen by either the senior internal consultant

or the external consultant.

Because he is liked by most people, he has easy access to many kinds of information that those who are less well known or more threatening could not obtain. People ususlly enjoy talking to this person because he is unlikely to make them uncomfortable and is likely to be a very good listener. The pattern of his not confronting people is likely to extend to his relations with the senior internal consultant and the external consultant. Therefore, an external consultant and a senior internal consultant who want to fully benefit from the contributions of the junior internal consultant have to discipline themselves to listen carefully. In the process they may develop greater capacities for being empathic themselves. Thus by being a good listener himself and "requiring" his colleagues to listen carefully to him, the junior internal consultant may teach his colleagues to improve their own abilities in this area.

As this learning process occurs it is likely that the junior internal may also come to appreciate that he has more to offer than he might think. If he sees that his contributions are useful and is confronted with the consequences of his being mildly indirect or excessively tentative, the junior internal consultant may begin to modify one facet of his style which should allow him to enjoy more success in the organization. The outcome of this kind of exchange is that all parties benefit in complementary ways for the solution of the immediate problem and are stimulated to improve their shortcomings in the long-run.

I have now observed a number of people who began as junior internal consultants grow in stature and esteem within their organizations, as they more fully integrated their reactions to authority figures and as they became

more thoughtful in the diagnosis, design, and evaluation of their work. Others, perhaps as a sign of growth or as a signal of further flight, have turned to other activities. Some have gone back to line management positions, and others have found staff jobs that are less uncertain and tension-laden than O.D. work. Those internal consultants who have grown within their roles have usually moved in two ways. First, they have gained increased credibility and influence with line managers. One very high ranking corporate executive credited two significant promotions of his own to the help he received from an O.D. consultant and brought the consultant immediately into a new assignment of great complexity and difficulty. Another direction in which successful internal consultants have moved has been upward in their own staff groups. From a role in which they operated as "lone eagles", as one man put it, they begin to feel an increasing responsibility to supervise and coach junior consultants. Often pressures to take on this kind of role come from junior consultants who wish to learn, but there are also organizational needs that must be met. I believe that our social technology has progressed to the point where a stable group of internal consultants should be supported by most organizations. One way to insure that this possibility is realized is for the more successful internal consultants to seek and accept greater authority in their organizations.

Illustrations

The model of complementary triads can be applied to organizations of varying sizes and complexity, but size is a critical variable in application. In smaller systems, the roles may each be held by a single individual. In a larger system the various roles may have several incumbents. I shall illustrate this application by describing how we have operated in two systems

during the last several years. The first organization was a boys' boarding school consisting of approximately 50 faculty members and 400 students. The second system was a public utility corporation consisting of 14,000 employees.

The Boarding School. In the boarding school there were several critical subunits. One consisted of the headmaster and the staff members who reported directly to them, and the others consisted of the student officers of the various classes and the students over which they exercised influence. In this system there were two faculty members who combined their usual organizational role with that of being an internal change agent. The senior of these two men was the assistant headmaster and the junior man was the school chaplain. After a system diagnosis was carried out by a team of external consultants advised by a liaison committee of students and faculty, these two men were proposed for their new roles by the diagnostic team. Their new roles were negotiated first with the headmaster and then with the entire faculty.

The two men were proposed for their roles for two sets of reasons. Perhaps most important was their personal qualities. Both were deeply committed to helping the school become a more humane system, and during the diagnostic phase of the intervention had shown considerable talent in doing so. But the second set of qualifications pertained to their organizational roles. The role of assistant headmaster, effectively the number two person in the school, symbolized access and possession of considerable influence in the school. The role of chaplain symbolized the values of care, concern, support, and aid with personal crises. Moreover, both men were highly committed to developing their roles in non-traditional

ways. Assistant-headmaster-as-change-agent and chaplain-as-change-agent were emphases that blended very well with the personal inclinations of the two incumbents. Each man participated in off-site training through N.T.L. programs and engaged in regular consultation with a team of external consultants.

For some kinds of interventions the internal consulting pair worked alone. One particularly successful intervention consisted of their designing an activity to help reduce the amount of harrassment that first year students received from upper classmen. In planning this intervention, the internal change agents consulted with the external consultants, but the actual change behavior was fully carried out by the two internal consultants. Measurements taken by the external consultants two years later showed that the interventions had had their desired consequences. Harrassment of new students had decreased. For other kinds of interventions, the internal and external consultants worked together. One of the more difficult interventions centered around understanding and changing the roles of senior class officers, who had school-wide responsibility for rule enforcing, rule changing, and penalty setting. Over several years a number of interventions were attempted with this group. Most were partially, but never fully, successful. Usually the internal and external consultants worked together in planning and executing of these activities.

The Public Utility. In the public utility two levels of natural functional groups were identified as intervention targets. The first consisted of units headed by upper middle managers, people who typically reported to corporate officers. The second type of unit were those headed by second

level managers, those who supervised the lowest ranking management positions. There were a number of reasons for selecting these units for intervention. First, the senior internal consultant believed that these were the units around which "work was organized." Second, the levels directly above the upper middle managers and directly below the second level managers had long been sources of difficulty. The very top executives had been the target of several previous unsuccessful O.D. attempts and were skeptical of behavioral science as a whole. Foremen, classically people in the middle, were long the target of company training programs. Most people had rather mixed feelings about the outcomes of these efforts. The senior internal consultant reasoned that the corporate group might be most readily persuaded to consider O.D. technology if subordinates reported constructive outcomes from their involvement. Third, the senior internal consultant was an organizational peer of these managers. As a consequence he knew most of the people and was respected and trusted by a significant number.

The professional triad in the public utility consisted of a senior internal consultant, six junior internal consultants, and several external consultants. The senior internal consultant had occupied several key management positions in the organization prior to entering O.D. work, and he was viewed by many in the organization as one of the more successful managers. Prior to making a full-time commitment to O.D. work, he had utilized behavioral science consultation as a line manager and had had a central role in the implementation of several innovations in the system, both technical (a new set of hardware) and social (a corporate wide program in MBO).

On entering his new assignment, the senior O.D. consultant took a number of key actions. He worked to increase his own self-understanding

and capacity for self study by attending a number of laboratory education programs, and took part in a number of one-on-one sessions with the external consultant. He developed an extensive reading program in the applied and general behavioral sciences. Simultaneously with these activities he began to recompose the existing internal O.D. group which had long suffered from a poor corporate reputation. Several members of the old group were transferred to new assignments, one man was promoted, and several new people were brought into the group. The senior internal consultant also began a series of presentations to upper middle managers throughout the corporation in which he outlined an extensive plan for organization development throughout the company. These talks brought a number of opportunities for entry, and as these were developed junior internal consultants were assigned to be project managers. The projects were developed through consultation with the relevant line managers, a junior internal consultant, and the senior internal consultant. As of this writing, a number of the projects have begun to bear fruit, although it is too early in the total program to have done the kind of evaluation that was possible in the boarding school.

Conclusion

I believe that it takes power, empathic support, and well formed theoretical ideas to bring about constructive organizational change. The complementary professional triad offers one approach for utilizing these resources. It recognizes that people occupy different organizational roles, participate in different occupational histories, have different primary needs and abilities, and therefore have different essential contributions to make

to the complex and challenging processes of organizational change. If we can explicitly recognize these differences and tolerate the pain of our personal incompleteness, we can begin to join the differences, not in the collusive rising of futile expectations, but in the hard work of changing human systems to be more rationale and more humane.

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