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Behavioral Science Technology and Organizational Effectiveness

an example and a normative prescription

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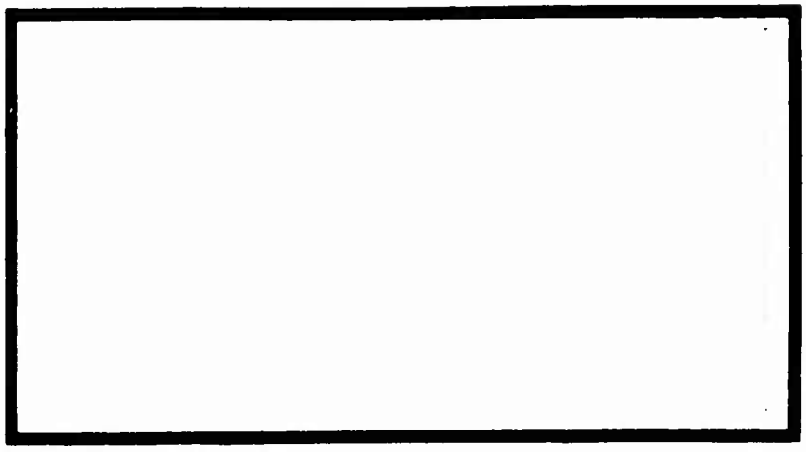

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ABSTRACT

"Behavioral Science Technology and Organizational Effectiveness: An Example and a Normative Prescription" by Joel T. Champion.

In the decade of the 1970s, we will witness a trend toward the increased application of behavioral science technology in business, industry, and government. ~~In part, this trend~~ will be spurred by an expanding consciousness of the need for social and personal responsibility on a number of dimensions, not the least important of which will be the creation of opportunities for individuals to strive for human dignity in their working environments. Before adopting any specific technique or program, however, managers should carefully evaluate and compare their own objectives, values, and assumptions about the nature of man with those of the specific program under consideration. The central hypothesis of this article is: the greater the degree of incongruence between the objectives, values, and underlying assumptions of the leaders in a given organization and those of the behavioral scientists ~~and their technology~~, the greater is the probability that the program objectives will not be achieved and that adverse consequences will be incurred.

To illustrate the importance of careful program evaluation, a review of the literature and an evaluation of the effectiveness and the problems of sensitivity training, a relatively popular technique in some management circles, comprise the body of the discussion. The article concludes with the prescription that the failure to face squarely the value issues of behavioral technology may result in the degradation of an organization's ability to survive, thereby defeating the purpose for which the particular program was instituted in the first place.

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: AN EXAMPLE AND A NORMATIVE PRESCRIPTION

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In the decade of the 1970s, we will witness a trend toward the increased application of behavioral science technology in business, industry, and government. In part, this trend will be spurred by an expanding consciousness of the need for social and personal responsibility on a number of dimensions, not the least important of which will be the creation of opportunities for individuals to strive for human dignity in their working environments. Before adopting any specific technique or program, however, managers should carefully evaluate and compare their own objectives, values, and assumptions about the nature of man with those of the specific program under consideration. The central hypothesis of this article is: the greater the degree of incongruence between the objectives, values, and underlying assumptions of the leaders in a given organization and those of the behavioral scientists and their technology, the greater is the probability that the program objectives will not be achieved and that adverse consequences will be incurred.

To illustrate the importance of careful program evaluation, a review of the literature and an evaluation of the effectiveness and the problems of sensitivity training, a relatively popular technique in some management circles, comprise the body of the discussion. The article concludes with the prescription that the failure to face squarely the value issues of behavioral technology may result in the degradation of an organization's ability to survive, thereby defeating the purpose for which the particular program was instituted in the first place.

In the decade of the 1970s, we will witness a trend toward the increased application of behavioral science technology in business, industry, and government. In part, this trend will be spurred by an expanding consciousness of the need for social and personal responsibility on a number of dimensions, not the least important of which will be the creation of opportunities for individuals to strive for human dignity in their working environments. Before adopting any specific technique or program, however, managers should carefully evaluate and compare their own objectives, values, and assumptions about the nature of man with those of the specific program under consideration.[1] The greater the degree of incongruence between the objectives, values, and underlying assumptions of the leaders in a given organization and those of the behavioral scientists and their technology, the greater is the probability that the program objectives will not be achieved and that adverse consequences will be incurred.

To illustrate the importance of careful program evaluation, let us review and evaluate the effectiveness of

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[1]For some discussions pertaining to the underlying assumptions about the nature of man in the management literature, see Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1960; Henry P. Knowles and Borje O. Saxberg. "Human Relations and the Nature of Man," Harvard Business Review, March-April 1967; and William G. Scott and David K. Hart. "The Moral Nature of Man in Organizations: A Comparative Analysis," Academy of Management Journal, June 1971, pp. 241-255.

one of the many techniques which have been popular among some behavioral scientists for many years. Our example, sensitivity training, is a controversial process which has gained a great deal of attention, support and criticism, from behavioral scientists as well as from members of a variety of organizations. In this article, let us focus primarily on two related questions. First, has sensitivity training been effective in accomplishing its intended goals? And second, if these intended goals were attainable, would sensitivity training contribute to improved organizational effectiveness? Before we address these questions, however, we will briefly describe what sensitivity training is and what its intended goals are.

What is Sensitivity Training?

Sensitivity training is a learning experience based upon the premise that individuals can modify their underlying value systems and their resultant behaviors in such a manner that they may become more effective group members working to accomplish organizational objectives.[2] Sensitivity training is a central element of the broader concept of laboratory education, which may be defined as those "personnel and organizational development and training courses which combine traditional training methods--such

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[2]Leland P. Bradford, Jack R. Gibb, and Kenneth D. Benne. T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964.

as lectures, group problem-solving sessions, and role-playing--with T-group or sensitivity training."[3] Sensitivity training and the "T-group method" are used synonymously here.

The T-group method normally consists of unstructured group situations in which people are encouraged to openly and honestly explore their personal emotions and motivations and to evaluate the mutual impact and interaction of personalities during the "here-and-now" experience of the training sessions.[4] Sensitivity training sessions and analyses of the dynamic interactions among individuals participating in them have been described and discussed in great detail.[5] So also have there been several interesting selections which describe the historical developments of the T-group method from the early advances in 1947 at the National Training Laboratories (NTL) at Bethel, Maine, to the present time under its more recent name, NTL Institute

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[3]Marvin D. Dunnette and John P. Campbell. "Laboratory Education: Impact on People and Organization," Industrial Relations, October 1968, p. 3.

[4]Edgar H. Schein and Warren G. Bennis. Personal and Organizational Change Through Group Methods: The Laboratory Approach. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965.

[5]Bradford, et al,; op. cit.; Chris Argyris. Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1962; Schein and Bennis, op. cit.; Robert Tannenbaum, Irving R. Weschler, and Fred Massarik. Leadership and Organization: A Behavioral Science Approach. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961; among others.

for Applied Behavioral Science.[6] Both of these aspects of the subject are beyond the scope of the present paper.

The Goals of Sensitivity Training

In order to assess the effectiveness of the T-group method, it is necessary first to understand its intended goals and to determine the criteria against which researchers have compared their results for the purpose of evaluating its effectiveness.

Argyris, a leading proponent of laboratory education, broadly envisions the objectives in terms of improving "inter-personal competence," which he defines as "(a) being aware of human problems, (b) solving them in such a manner that they remain solved, without deteriorating the problem-solving process...."[7] Bradford, Gibb and Benne define the goals more specifically as areas of learning which are important to most participants in their efforts to achieve concurrent growth in personal autonomy and social effectiveness; these include:

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[6]Bradford, et al, op. cit.; Leland P. Bradford. "Biography of an Institution," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, April-June 1967, pp. 127-143; Alfred J. Marrow. "Events Leading to the Establishment of the National Training Laboratories," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, April-June 1967, pp. 144-150.

[7]Chris Argyris. "T-Groups for Organizational Effectiveness," Harvard Business Review, March-April 1964, p. 61.

1. ...increased awareness of and sensitivity to emotional reactions and expressions in himself and in others.

2. ...greater ability to perceive and to learn from the consequences of his actions through attention to feelings, his own and others'.

3. ...to stimulate the clarification and development of personal values and goals consonant with a democratic and scientific approach to problems of social and personal decision and action.

4. ...the development of concepts and theoretical insights which will serve as tools in linking personal values, goals, and intentions to actions consistent with these inner factors and with the requirements of the situation.

5. ...foster the achievement of behavioral effectiveness in transactions with one's environments.

6. ...recognition that continuing opportunities to apply new learnings will occur in back-home situations, though removed from the supportive environment of the laboratory.

7. ..."learning how to learn."[8]

Bennis briefly reiterates these explicit goals of laboratory training but emphasizes the need for a clear understanding of the implicit, underlying "meta-goals" (or "values") which he says describe the real essence of the training experience.[9] These "meta-goals," as he defines them, include (a) expanded consciousness and recognition of individual choice, (b) the spirit of democratic and

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[8]Bradford, et al, op. cit. pp. 16-18.

[9]Warren G. Bennis. "Goals and Meta-Goals of Laboratory Training," in Warren G. Bennis, Edgar H. Schein and D. E. Berlew (Eds.), Interpersonal Dynamics: Essays and Readings on Human Interaction. Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, pp. 692-698.

scientific inquiry, (c) authenticity in interpersonal relations, and (d) a collaborative conception of the authority relationship. These goals appear to be widely accepted explicitly and implicitly throughout much of the literature concerning sensitivity training and will provide the basis for much of the subsequent discussion.

Effectiveness: The Problem of Criteria

There is little evidence that a concerted effort has been made to establish operational criteria to use in evaluating the degree to which sensitivity training has achieved its intended goals. Some authors focus on the nature of the individual experience gained during the T-group sessions, while others emphasize broader aspects of organizational change resulting from the increase in the interpersonal effectiveness of the participants. Additionally, individual researchers have undertaken many studies using a wide variety of measurement devices and have obtained a diversity of results depending upon the particular criteria chosen. Several extensive studies have been completed which report in detail the findings of many of the individual researchers working either independently or in conjunction with the NTL Institute.

Three of the significant studies are by Stock, House, and Dunnette and Campbell.[10]

Dorothy Stock evaluated a wide range of research pertaining to the T-group method.[11] In concluding her extensive review of the research literature, she conceded that there has been a multitude of methodological problems in the research to date and that much needs to be done before many of the findings can be validated. Drawing, nevertheless, from the data of many studies, she concluded that there have been several areas in which T-group training has demonstrated positive influence. She contended that all of the following have been influenced by laboratory training: various perceptions of the self, affective behavior, congruity between self-percept and ideal self, self-insight, sensitivity to the feelings and behavior of others, role flexibility, sencitivity to group decisions, diagnostic ability, behavioral skill, utilization of laboratory techniques, self-confidence, and the approach to diagnosing organizational problems. She stated, however, that some of the most important changes may not be

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[10]Dorothy Stock, "A Survey of Research on T-Groups," in Bradford, et al, op. cit., pp. 395-441; Robert J. House, "T-Group Education and Leadership Effectiveness: A Review of the Empiric Literature and a Critical Evaluation," Personnel Psychology, Spring 1967, pp. 1-32; Dunnette and Campbell, op. cit.

[11]Stock, op. cit.

observable in some individuals' behavior and that the factors described have also been shown to affect different people differently under various conditions.

Robert J. House also provided an extensive review of the literature in which he dealt with some of the controversial issues surrounding sensitivity training.[12] He identified studies which provide confusing and, in some cases, conflicting evidence regarding the effectiveness of the T-group method. He attacked the issues concerning the ethical basis for creating induced anxiety in individuals during and after the T-group sessions and raised further questions about the overall effects in terms of the "damage" that might be incurred both to the individual and to the organization. He concluded that the T-group is a potentially powerful tool for changing behavior which is differentially effective in a wide variety of situations with a wide variety of individuals. Because of the dangers involved to individuals and organizations and because of the unresolved questions pertaining to its use, he recommended that great care be taken in the continued, but limited, use of this method until further empirical evidence is obtained to justify its extensive commercial use.

Marvin D. Dunnette and John P. Campbell also undertook the task of investigating the behavioral effects of

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[12]House, op. cit.

laboratory education both on individuals and upon organizations.[13] After a review of the pertinent literature, they concluded that there is little firm evidence of any significant individual changes in attitude, outlook, value orientation or view of others as a result of T-group training. The thrust of their argument focused upon the methodological weaknesses in the studies as well as upon the magnitude of the evidence which has been collected. Regarding on-the-job behavior, they concluded that there is also little evidence to support a claim that T-group or laboratory education affects any substantial behavioral change back on the job for any large proportion of the trainees. "Whatever change does occur seems quite limited in scope and may not contribute in any way to changes in overall job effectiveness."[14] Regarding the changes in organizational outcomes, they concluded that concurrent T-group training is at least not incompatible with organizational benefits in terms of increased profits and overall operating efficiency, but they emphasized that this is a far cry from stating that laboratory education is the prescription for an organization's ills.

These three surveys of the literature provide examples of the varying reactions to the T-group method. Each approached the problems from a different perspective.

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[13] Dunnette and Campbell, op. cit.

[14] Ibid., p.20.

Stock, a proponent of the T-group method, reported various categories and results of experiments in the field which she concluded tended to support the basic, underlying goals of the method as specified by Bradford, Gibb, and Benne. House attacked the issues primarily from the ethical and philosophical standpoint. Dunnette and Campbell critically evaluated the research in terms of the methodological deficiencies and the questionable magnitudes of the results which have been used to support the conclusions of many of the researchers in the field.

The critical reviews and conclusions have elicited ardent counter-attacks from supporters and critics alike. One particularly important aspect which frequently enters into the debate deserves brief mention here--the problem of methodological deficiencies. One main thrust of the Dunnette and Campbell argument focused upon this sticky problem of the precision of research methods and study design. Argyris, although recognizing these problems, countered by pointing out some of the conditions which make the measurement of the complex individual and organizational phenomena very difficult.[15] Harrison pointed this out very clearly in his discussion of some of the key issues in research methods applied to sensitivity training including such factors as the problem of control

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[15]Chris Argyris, "Issues in Evaluating Laboratory Education," Industrial Relations, October 1968, pp. 28-40.

groups, the temporal change in training outcomes, the dimensions and directions of the changes, the variability in the training experience, the timing of the data collection, the experimenter-participant relationship in the laboratory setting, and statistical problems in training research.[16] Nevertheless, he stated, "When all is said and done, scientific progress has never been stimulated by an unwillingness to launch investigation in the face of uncertainty or the lack of elegant tools."[17]

It seems, then, that both the advocates and the critics fully acknowledge the need for more rigor in the application of adequate research methods to validate the existing assumptions and conclusions.

To summarize, the intended goals have been listed, the problem of establishing operational criteria has been discussed, and the critical problems of measurement and research methodology have been briefly mentioned. At present, the effectiveness of sensitivity training in achieving its intended goals remains mainly an open question. Much research has been done in the field as well as in the laboratory, and there has been a wide range of conclusions drawn from the "evidence." The problems of

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[16]Roger Harrison, "Problems in the Design and Interpretation of Research on Human Relations Training," Explorations. A Report on Human Relations Training and Research Prepared for the NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science (NEA), Washington, D.C., 1967.

[17]Ibid., p.1.

measurement have proven to be one of the major barriers to the efficient study of this process and have been key issues of debate. There seems little doubt, nevertheless, that the T-group method induces changes in some individuals in various ways, more often than not in the direction of the goals outlined by Bradford, Gibb, and Benne.[18] These goals, however, are primarily concerned with changes within the individual trainee. Regarding changes in terms of the on-the-job behavior and organizational effectiveness based upon the use of the T-group method, the tentative conclusions seem to be that some change in individual behavior has been transferred to the working environment, that these changes often have had both beneficial and detrimental effects, and that at present there is very little significant evidence upon which to base firm conclusions about the transferability phenomenon.[19]

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[18]Bunker, Douglas R., "The Effect of Laboratory Education upon Individual Behavior," in Schein and Bennis, op. cit.

[19]Douglas R. Bunker and Erick S. Knowles, "Comparison of Behavioral Changes Resulting from Human Relations Training Laboratories of Different Lengths," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, October-December 1967, pp. 505-523; Michael I. Valiquet, "Individual Change in a Management Development Program," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, July-September 1968, pp. 313-325; for a discussion of the effects of this and other training methods, also see John P. Campbell, Marvin D. Dunnette, Edward E. Lawler,III, and Karl E. Weick, Jr. Managerial Behavior Performance and Effectiveness. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1970, pp. 287-326; for a good brief review, see William G. Scott and Terrence R. Mitchell. Organization Theory: A Structural and Behavioral Analysis. Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin and The Dorsey Press, Inc., 1972, pp. 300-304.

Sensitivity Training and Organizational Effectiveness.

Our second question is--if the intended goals were attainable, would sensitivity training contribute to improved organizational effectiveness? In order to deal with this question, two assumptions must be made. First, let us assume that the intended goals of sensitivity training can actually be accomplished. Second, let us assume that the individual trainee's on-the-job behavior can be significantly affected by changes in the direction of the goals specified by Bradford, Gibb, and Benne. The crux of this problem, in my opinion, lies in the consumer's definition of "organizational effectiveness" and in clearly understanding the underlying assumptions and value judgements which support their definitions.[20] To demonstrate this point, the relevance of sensitivity training will be explored in relation to two models of organizational effectiveness. The two "philosophical" models developed here are not designed to represent complete, integrated value systems, but rather to represent somewhat simple conceptual frameworks built upon extrapolations from various, familiar, existing points of view. These two conceptual systems will be referred to as (a) the democratic model and (b) the utilitarian model.

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[20]The "consumer's" in this case are those organizations which use or are considering the use of a behavioral technology--sensitivity training in this specific example.

The Democratic Model.

The democratic model, which would absorb inputs from such people as Argyris, Bennis, Herzberg, Likert, and McGregor incorporates leadership by consent of those led and could be described by such familiar leadership terms as "participative," "equalitarian," and "group-centered."[21] Endorsements of this type of philosophy are not difficult to find in either management or social and behavioral science literature. Scott, in summarizing the general theme of this type of model, stated that proponents of this philosophy would believe that people work better, are happier, and are more apt to accept change in an environment in which they are allowed to have some say in the matters that affect them directly.[22] Advocates of this model would recognize, however, that there is variation in the degree of employee participatory involvement which is feasible or desirable in different types of organizations with different technologies. Most proponents of this model

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[21]Argyris, 1962, op. cit.; Warren B. Bennis, Changing Organizations, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. 1966; Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Snyderman, The Motivation to Work, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966; Rensis Likert, New Patterns in Management, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961; Douglas McGregor, op. cit.

[22]William G. Scott, Organization Theory: A Behavioral Analysis for Management, Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1967, p. 337.

would also view the organization as an environment which ought to support the satisfaction of individual employee needs. Scott concludes his discussion of democratic leadership by synthesizing some of the concepts which would apply to the present model:

> Democratic leadership in an organization involves far more than participation. Democratic leadership implies a "climate" where employees have a chance to grow and develop, where formal supervision is considerate and the application of sanctions is not arbitrary, and where employees attitudes are sincerely respected and solicited. Thus, democratic leadership is a "state of mind" in which management is committed to the recognition of the dignity of employees as men and not merely as factors of production.[23]

Organizational effectiveness, when defined within the framework of this democratic model, would be dependent upon the degree of accomplishment of several co-objectives. These might be, for example, (1) accomplishment of the organization's economic and technological objectives, (2) the facilitation of member interaction, and (3) the satisfaction of some of the group members' higher order needs.[24] Figure 1 is a visual representation of this model of organizational effectiveness which stresses the mutuality of goals.

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[23]Ibid., p. 338

[24]Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Motivation," Psychological Review, July 1943, pp. 370-396.

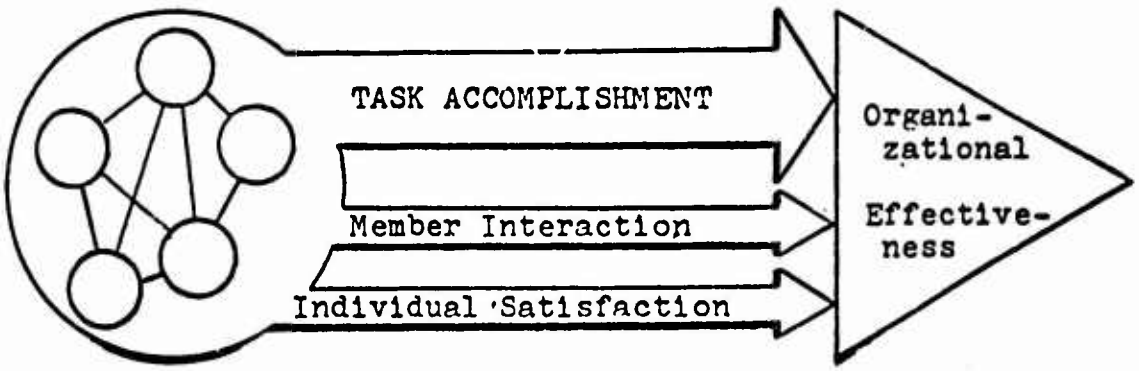

Fig. 1. The Determinants of Organizational Effectiveness in the Democratic Model.

Within this conceptual framework, organizational effectiveness would be defined in relation to the multiple determinants and would depend upon contributions of most group members. In this model, then, organizational effectiveness would not only be a function of the degree of successful organizational goal accomplishment, but also would be a function of the leaders' abilities to assure and maintain the group's interactional stability and to support the satisfaction of the individual member needs. Failure to achieve any of these functions would be a failure to achieve organizational effectiveness.

The Utilitarian Model.

In contrast, the utilitarian model places the primary focus of the organizational philosophy upon the achievement of the specific, predetermined, economic and technological objectives of the group. The criterion of organizational effectiveness would be some objective measure, or set of

measures, of the group's task performance relevant to those objectives. Familiar descriptors which would be applicable to this model are "task-oriented," or "production-oriented."

The proponents of this model would recognize the need to maintain at least a working relationship between group members, but would emphasize that organizational effectiveness would be measured by an objective evaluation of the group's primary task output. Member satisfaction and the facilitation of group interaction would only be beneficial in terms of their contributions to this end. A visual representation of this model is shown below, and is designed for comparison with figure 1.

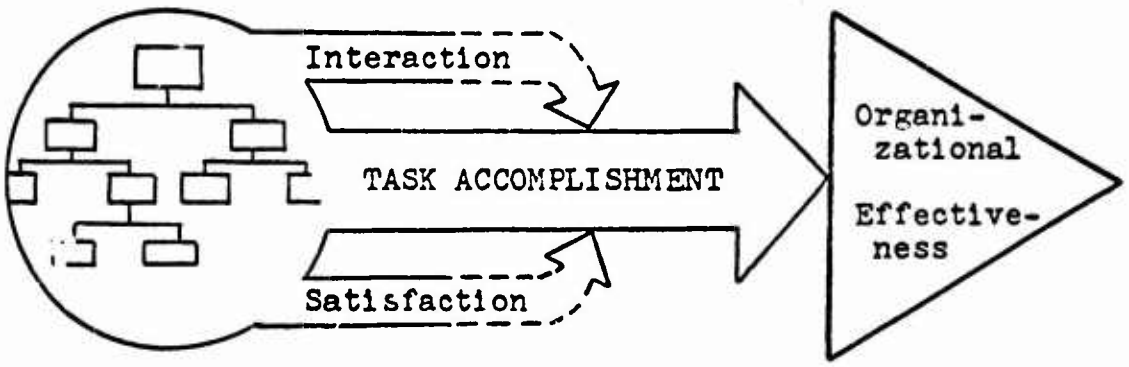

Figure 2. The Determinants of Organizational Effectiveness in the Utilitarian Model.

This visual model demonstrates the point that group interaction and member satisfaction would be contributing but peripheral factors, and they are not always essential to the final determination of organizational effectiveness.

How would proponents of each of these two models view sensitivity training?

It is not unreasonable to predict that people who would profess to build their individual philosophy of management upon a foundation similar to that of the democratic model would find sensitivity training, if effective, very relevant to leadership effectiveness. Scott pointed this out:

> That democratic leadership and the goals of laboratory training go hand in hand is obvious. Individual self-awareness can stem only from a work situation to which an individual feels he has some commitment and involvement. It cannot come from that which, as Argyris says, goes counter to his psychological needs as a mature adult. The democratic climate, therefore, is supportive of and necessary to the development of individual aspirations along higher motivational lines. The realization of greater personal potential stems from an organizational atmosphere which allows its participants freedom to decide and act. If this is stifled by restrictive authoritarianism, the individual as well as the organization suffers.[25]

Proponents of an organizational philosophy similar to that developed in the utilitarian model would probably perceive sensitivity training from a different perspective. For example, advocates of this model would probably believe that the test of the value of the T-group would lie in the improvement of the members' ability to achieve the economic goals of the organization.[26] This orientation differs in the emphasis on the importance and the nature

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[25]Scott, op. cit., p. 338

[26]A.H.Kuriloff and S. Atkins, "T-Group for a Work Team," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 1966, pp. 63-93.

of the contribution of interpersonal effectiveness found in the democratic model. Not only are there differences in emphasis between these models, but there are also differences in the perception of both the practical and philosophical applicability of some of the T-group research findings. Proponents of the utilitarian model would find support for their position in some of the confusing and conflicting research conclusions.

For example, Bunker, a proponent of the T-group method, stated that "organizationally relevant learning is not necessarily the same as personally relevant learning and in some cases may not be compatible."[27] House, in one of his conclusions, stated that there is evidence that the values learned through the T-group experience do not always lead to effective organizational performance.[28] Other authors have also discussed the divergence between the goals of sensitivity training and the goals of the organization. Some of these critics discuss the possible deleterious effects resulting from the trainee's personal anxiety and frustrations which may result from the T-group experience. Proponents like Argyris have been quick to counter these claims. One interesting example of the differences of

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[27]Douglas R. Bunker, "The Effect of Laboratory Education upon Individual Behavior," in Schein and Bennis, op. cit., pp. 255-267.

[28]House, op. cit.

opinion concerning group phenomena relating to sensitivity training concerns the dimension of "cohesiveness."

Blake, Mouton, and Fruchter developed eleven scales to describe a training group and collected data from one hundred and sixty participants.[29] An intercorrelation matrix was computed and a factor analysis revealed that three independent dimensions were significant; i.e. cohesiveness, group accomplishment, and "group development feedback." They concluded, among other things, that this independence of dimensions helped to explain why productivity is not a direct function of cohesion. The factor "cohesion" included the following elements: feeling joined up, being open and free, listening to others with respect, feeling one's group is a good one, and interacting according to the merits of the issue. (It is interesting to note the similarity here between these elements and the intended goals of sensitivity training.)

Stock, in her discussion of the course of events during T-group sessions, wrote:

> With reference to its ability to deal with problems there is some evidence that the group moves toward an appropriate balance among various kinds of affect and toward an effective interaction of work and emotionality. There also appears to be lawful relationships among emerging total group characteristics such as cohesiveness and productivity.[30]

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[29]Robert R. Blake, Jane S. Mouton and B. Fruchter, "A Factor Analysis of Training Group Behavior," Journal of Social Psychology, 1962, pp. 121-130.

[30]Stock, op. cit., p.400

On the other hand, Bass explored the idea of cohesiveness and concluded that the ideals espoused in sensitivity training are similar to those of early Spanish anarchism which was an extremely cohesive but ineffective movement.[31] He argued that there may be some lessons to be learned:

> In short, the "destruction" of the customary authority structure in the T-group in order to promote exploration and change in the individual participants, coupled with an emphasis on the values of democracy and consensus, may produce, in some participants at least, sufficient anti-authoritarian leadership attitudes to reduce their contributions to the organization at times when such directive leadership is required.[32]

He further stated:

> This emphasis on freedom is not usually matched by an equally important emphasis on the need for individual responsibility which may constrain the individual. This need to restrict one's freedom to maintain a more responsible stance for the good of the organization is seldom seen in the laboratory situation. Most emphasis is likely to be placed on tolerance of others' needs and on individual liberty rather than on the need for individual responsibility.[33]

To summarize, two conceptual models have been briefly developed; i.e. the democratic and the utilitarian models. These hypothetical constructs were used as a basis to develop two somewhat different conceptions of organizational effectiveness. Within the parameters of these

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[31]Bernard M. Bass, "The Anarchist Movement and the T-Group: Some Possible Lessons for Organizational Development," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, April-June 1967, pp. 211-227.

[32]Ibid., p. 216

[33]Ibid., p. 219

models, sensitivity training was hypothetically evaluated to determine its relevance to organizational effectiveness. This was done to answer the question which, if rephrased, was: if it could be proven that sensitivity training actually accomplished its intended goals, and if it could be proven that the on-the-job behavior of the trainees was significantly affected in the desired manner by the changes, would sensitivity training be relevant to improved organizational effectiveness? The answer simply seems to be:

> WHETHER OR NOT PEOPLE PERCEIVE SENSITIVITY TRAINING AS RELEVANT TO ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS DEPENDS UPON THEIR FRAME OF REFERENCE--UPON THEIR ASSUMPTIONS AND VALUE JUDGEMENTS WHICH SUPPORT THEIR PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF ORGANIZATIONS.

Conclusions and Comments

In the real world, a wide range of organizational philosophies which span a broad continuum encompassing many integrated dimensions replace the two simplistic models developed here. The importance of the seemingly simple conclusion above, in my opinion, becomes more apparent when we realize that much of the T-group research has been carried out and documented, in many cases, without any evidence that the implicit philosophical assumptions were even recognized. But, as Bennis pointed out, underlying values such as the "authenticity of interpersonal relations"

and a "collaborative conception of authority relationships" do provide the ideological foundation for sensitivity training.[34] The proponents of the T-group method implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) support such value judgements as:

> ...to achieve the intended goals of sensitivity training is "good."
>
> ...to strive for or encourage participatory management is "good."
>
> ...openness and honesty between people in the working environment are "good."

Whether or not such values are beneficial for individual development in an organizational environment is one question. Whether or not such values are beneficial for organizational effectiveness is another question.

To judge whether or not the advocates or the critics of the T-group method are "right" or "wrong" in basing their organizational philosophies upon such values is not my purpose here. My point is, however, that it seems that those interested in sensitivity training and in related research have not stepped back and critically re-evaluated their underlying assumptions and value judgements for the purpose of justifying their organizational ideologies based upon a rational comparison of alternatives. I feel that the tendency to adhere to these apparently rigid philosophical foundations has caused many behavioral

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[34]Bennis, 1964, op. cit.

scientists with the best of intentions to inadvertently interject ideological "researcher bias" into their conclusions. So also have the critics in some cases. This may, in part, account for some of the continued confusion and conflicting evidence emerging from sensitivity training research. In the final analysis, however, the usefulness of sensitivity training in preparing people for effective leadership or for meaningful group participation in pursuit of organizational objectives remains an open and controversial question which will only be answered by continued, but more objective, research.

My purpose in this discussion has not been to suggest that managers should stop searching for or discontinue the use of effective behavioral technologies. On the contrary, I personally believe that we are now entering an exciting era in which we will witness the increased use of behavioral technology both to improve the quality of life and to enhance our ability to accomplish the "work" of our society. My main purpose, however, has been to reiterate and emphasize the point that, when managers evaluate alternative behavioral technologies for possible use in their organizations, they must realize that each technology is built on a foundation of objectives, values, assumptions about the nature of man, and a conception of

a "good organization."[35] The failure to face squarely the value issues and basic assumptions of behavioral technology may result in the degradation of an organization's ability to survive, thereby defeating the purpose for which the particular program was instituted in the first place.[36]

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[35]Two examples of the increasing concern for the values and assumptions of behavioral technology are found in Wendell French, "Organization Development Objectives, Assumptions, and Strategies," California Management Review, Winter 1969, pp. 23-34, and Wendell L. French and Cecil H. Bell, Jr., Organization Development: Behavioral Science Interventions for Organization Improvement. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973.

[36]For one example of a recent failure see "Where Being Nice to Workers Didn't Work," Business Week, January 20, 1973, pp. 102-104.