CLIENTS, CONSULTANTS AND THE SOCIAL COGNITION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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Abstract

Four footings of the consulting act are derived from a typification of the social constructionist perspective, and it is argued that consultants and consultees enact the social performances of (1) *Facilitation*, (2) *Tyranny*, (3) *Discourse* or (4) *Despair*. Consultancies are criticised for too often being tyrannical productions where the consultant (1) arrives with solution(s) in hand, (2) manipulates the consultee to generate suitable problems, (3) applies pre-patterned solutions to the problems so derived, and (4) abandons the scene after being paid. Reflections on this situation and preferred courses of action are discussed.

Introduction

The social science specialism known as Organization Development (OD) arose from a series of parallel events in the United States and Great Britain during the 1940s and 1950s. In the US, group dynamics[1] and survey feedback technology combined with the emergence of action research to form one important technical and theoretical base. Great Britain's Tavistock Institute, established shortly after World War I to assuage combat trauma, later formed OD's important second pillar by focusing attention on social dynamics and championing the sociotechnical and socioclinical approaches to organizations (French, Bell and Zawacki, 1989). As a summary definition of OD's purpose and process, none is better known than that penned by Richard Beckhard in 1969:

Organization development is an effort (1) planned, (2) organization-wide, and (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organization effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the organization's "processes", using behavioral science knowledge. (Beckhard, 1969: 9)

Over the ensuing twenty years OD grew in scope and influence, formalized itself, gained thousands of adherents, developed dozens of organizational improvement strategies and approaches, andCespecially since the mid-1970sChas attracted a truly unsettling array of praise and reproach.

Early proponents hailed OD as an important force for meaningful social and organizational reform. Working with concepts steeped in progressive Humanism and blended with a hopeful positivism, writers of the 1950's and 1960's seemed inspired by the conviction that now, finally, science would turn its energy to matters of importance: organizational democracy, learning, personal empowerment, the actualizing of human potentials through work (eg: Bennis, Benne & Chin, 1961). But history records that these aspirations overshot experience and searing criticisms have been levelled during the last decade:

- OD lacks political consciousness, and the role of power dynamics as they may inform intervention strategies has been virtually ignored (Marguiles & Raia, 1984).

- !OD can be viewed in terms of "brainwashing": the stress, anxiety and despair induced in organizational "participants" is assuaged only if they subscribe to the change agent's strategies (Rowlandson, 1984);

- Kirkhart & White (1974) found that many interventions could be framed as exercises in power and control, which "...become even more a means for providing the controlling elites of organizations with an enhanced capability to manipulate organization members." (1974: 130).

- White & Wooten (1983) write that, as a practice discipline, OD confronts no fewer than 31 major ethical dilemmas. Practitioners frequently violate individual rights and their victims have been known to subvert programmatic change efforts. The field has failed to specify an ethical Good and the theoretical models necessary for its realization.

- Some question the assumption that OD's principles apply cross-culturally and argue for a relativistic practice. In Europe, OD is said to be of declining relevance and in "crisis" due to its managerial bias and inadequate conceptual models (Harrison, 1984).

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[1] When used in an OD context this work generally denotes "laboratory training". "Sensitivity training" and "T-Group" ("T" for "training") are synonymous terms.

Taken as a whole these commentaries form a gestalt that plays in critical counterpoint to more laudatory (and often more technical) strains of writing. A prominent theme involves power, values and ideology: consultants are rebuked for abandoning traditional values (Humanism's), imposing mechanistic models, advocating those foreign to the client organization, or wielding power over the relatively vulnerable subjects of their work.

I recognize such critiques as valid and potentially important vehicles for arching toward a new understanding. In what follows I will propose that many of the dynamics fuelling these concerns can be clarified through a social constructionist model of interaction. This contemporary and cognitive formulation of the issues deserves attention because it is useful, provocative and has achieved limited recognition in the OD and consulting communities. Greater understanding of the social construction perspective should sharpen debates and elevate the conception and practice of all types of consulting.

Cognition and Social Construction

The terms "paradigm"[2], "cognitive map", "schema" and others like them are now common language in the social sciences. This, of course, was not always the case. While a long intellectual history preceded him, Kuhn (1962; 1970) is one of today's more visible champions of the "cognitive revolution" (Gardner, 1987) that focused scholarly attention on the power of paradigms in thought and action. Core epistemological premises, he wrote, drive the methodologies through which we first operationalize, and then comprehend physical and social reality. Morgan (1980), Burrell & Morgan (1979), Weick (1969; 1977), Eden, et al (1979), Hedberg (1981), Starbuck (1983; 1982), Benson (1977), Schwartz & Olgivy (1979) and others have carried this cognitive standard into the present day. A distillation of

these cognitive views is crystallized in Morgan (1986) and represented in this diagram:

Technologies
Linguistic Devices
Cognitive Maps
Paradigms
Philosophies of Science
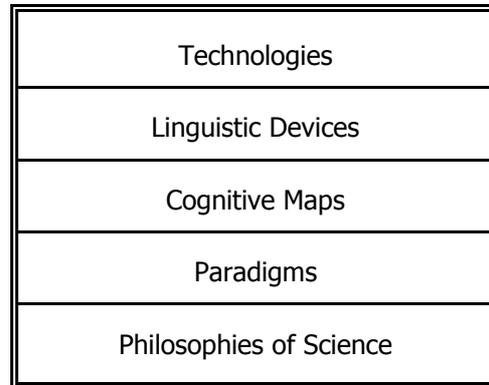
This figure indicates that the conception and practice of a science is a multi-tiered enterprise. A metaphysics that is ultimately rooted in some *philosophy of science* underlies and informs the basic assumptionsCmore pointedly, the beliefs and belief systemsCthat are held in a given domain. These *paradigms* are said to be elaborated by and embodied in *cognitive maps* that chart relevant conceptual nodes and the causal relations that link them together. Such maps lend meaning to the *linguistic devices (e.g., metaphor, metonomy, irony)* used in making the world understandable, and to the puzzle solving tools and *technologies* we use to plot a course of action in the social environment. While OD can be said to function with all these elements, the consulting act most visibly employs the latter three: cognitive maps, linguistic devices and change technologies.

As an example, Avedisian (1982) studied the "fit" between change problems and consulting paradigms. She postulated three broad paradigms that currently undergird consulting practice: (1) Human Relations, (2) Scientific Management, and (3) Open Systems. Unsurprisingly, she concluded that, "*To optimize effectiveness, the consultant's paradigm must be matched to the change problem*." Those working in the Human Relations paradigm tended to: (1) focus on internal systems rather than internal and external environments and their interface, (2) take the unit of change as a group or individual, (3) provide a unidimensional

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[2] For reference, the word "paradigm" (originally used to describe a grammatical example or pattern) has come to represent "*...the basic ways of perceiving, thinking, valuing, and doing, associated with a particular view of reality*." (Harman, 1988: 10).

rather than multidimensional approach to change, and (4) be concerned with people to the detriment of the person-task interface. This Human Relations paradigm described here derived from a certain philosophy of science and shaped the way Avedisian's consultants cognitively mapped the consulting situation, the language they used to characterize it, and the technologies they employed to deal with the change problem.

Basic and applied science are similarly understood to be activities that hinge on the paradigms in play. Greenfield (1978), Van Maanen (1979), Mitroff (1980), Morgan (1983a) and a host of subsequent theorists have argued that theoretical models are little more than constructed fictions that we invent to make sensible our situations.. The philosophy of science becomes a Postmodern "mazeway" of competing paradigms, wherein Morgan (1983: 368-76) has characterized the major intellectual thrusts as:

1. attempts to minimize the influence of "irrational" subjectivity ...the positivism familiar to most social scientists;

2. arguments for a relativistic phenomenology;

3. approaches to knowledge as the product of a subject-object union, one that is developed through a praxis that recognizes and explores the products of an emergent relationship.

The cognitive views espoused by these and other writers yield naturally to a constructionist theory of social interaction though, as Burrell & Morgan (1979) have shown, approaches to the matter are varied rather than monolithic. Some advance a moderated interpretivism (Pacanowsky, 1982), others a more trenchant solipsism, structuralists debate individualists (Mayhew, 1983) and critical theorists typically reduce the discussion to issues of power, ideology and signification (Hall, 1985). But in most cases there is an adherence to the representational character of human thought, the interpretive nature of understanding and action, and a recognition that social interaction-cum-communication is the vehicle that institutes a situated social reality (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

A sociology of knowledge (Kuklick, 1983) becomes the logical end point in this line of thinking. What counts as knowledge is as much the product of consensus and creation as of any unyielding, discoverable reality. Interaction is the productive domain wherein these cognitive elements are forged, modified or overturned.

Cognition and Organizational Science

Though the matter is far from settled, a sizable cohort today approaches the study of organizations with cognition as the cornerstone concept (Pfeffer, 1986): cognitive maps, schemata and related concepts are in common use. However labeled, the referents of these terms are elements of thought that cohere to assume the character of sometimes tightly-, sometimes loosely-connected conceptual nuggets that arise from experience, undergo editing with time, and serve a "sensemaking" function with regard to action (Weick, 1979). Focusing on organizational cognition, Weick writes:

> *A cognitive map consists of the concepts and the relationships a participant uses to understand organizational situations. When we consider all possible types of relations among concepts, such as contiguity, proximity, continuity, resemblances and implications, then an exhaustive mapping of these relations can be called a cognitive map.* (1986: 106).

Of practical significance is that the assumptions guiding thought are a shadowy cognitive substrate: they are self-affirming, circular in logic and brought into awareness with difficulty. We see what we believe in and look for. To paraphrase the words of Karl Weick (1969), believing is seeing; to draw on those of Gregory Bateson (1967: 36), "Man lives by those propositions whose validity is a function of his belief in them."

It follows that as one maps a situation one "sees", experiences, and understands certain things. The metaphors used to inform experienced reality (eg: organic systems, mechanistic man, the business battleground) arise directly from cognitive mapping through the medium of language, labels, actions, routines, myths, and other modes of symbolic

communication. Considerable research and writing on organizational culture exists in this vein (Frost, et al., 1985; Smircich, 1983), motivated "...by the belief that organization members, as social actors, actively participate in the construction of organizational reality through organizational discourse." (Mumby, 1987: 113).

Accordingly, the organizational world is conceived as an arena of generally shared but always multiple realities. While it is possible to reduce organizational theory to that ultimate empirical base, the individual and his or her ideographic reality, most organizational scientists concern themselves with **shared** understandings, **shared** meanings, **shared** assumptions and similar collective phenomena. This argues for a focus on the processes that underlie the production of meaning(s), and stands in gross contrast to:

1. positivist positions which assume a unitary external world of lawfully related real objects, that are discoverable, and whose relationships are mediated by a real force termed causality;

2. conflict theories, which are concerned with the competing interests housed in a socially-authored organization;

3. the structural-functional tradition that objectifies and studies authority, roles, technology, professionalization and the like as causal realities unto themselves (Donaldson, 1985).

Consultants and Social Construction

If we accept these constructionist assumptions, then a conundrum presents itself. It becomes a given that consultants embrace, explicitly or otherwise, certain paradigmatic beliefs that shape the assumptions and methodologies they use to "make sense" of an organizational situation. The consultant's actions will be a function of cognitive maps that define a (frequently normative) reality. But the consultant's client will have engaged the very same process and developed a "reality" that is different from the consultant's, one unique to that client.

Consulting interventions start with a diagnosis of some kind. Diagnostic rationales are generally introduced by the consultant, are themselves paradigm-driven, and in most cases frame both the consultant's and the client's cognitive map: (a) of the "reality" in the situation, (b) of the antecedents and causes of the problem, (c) of the rational actions indicated to manage the problem, and (d) of the desired end state ...the goals for change.

I submit that the accumulating evidence suggests that consultants frequently impose their diagnostic models in a effort to shape the client system's reality. The exception seems to occur when a consultant's model fits a client's reality with little or no discrepancy. The norm appears to be that a negotiation occurs, whereby the client is urged or cajoled into adopting the consultants' models as Reality and Truth. Too often, the practice many managers associate with consulting practice today is that:

1. The consultant arrives with solution(s)-in-hand;

2. The consultant manipulates the client situation to generate appropriate problems (i.e., ones that "fit" his or her model);

3. The consultant applies a pre-patterned solution to the derived problems; and

4. The consultant abandons the scene after being paid.

The Diagnostic Dilemma

It would seem that the diagnostic interval is the most culpable phase of practice in this regard. After discharging the amenities of "entry" and beginning the "contracting" phase of a relationship, diagnosis becomes the realm where rationales for action are legitimated. What caused the problem? What didn't? What contributes to it now? What shall we do? How shall we do it? Whom should we involve? Stated or not, agreed upon or not, the answers to such questions define a course of action whose momentum, potentially, will propel actors and events into a shadowy future state.

Diagnosis achieves its power in consultation precisely because it is the point at which certain concepts are made significant, and others are not. These legitimations tend to hold sway throughout

a relationship and are matters of importance, precisely because thinking about how to change an organization is premised on thoughts which define the organization in the first place. Argyris issued a similar and penetrating caveat some twenty years ago: "...all descriptive concepts, once they are used to organize reality and guide behavior, become normative." (1973: 265).

I suggest that this dangles many OD interventionists on the horns of a dilemma: entering an already organized and normative reality (what we can loosely call the client's culture), the consultant who carries Truth can either find ways to impose his or her beliefs, or suspend these to wallow in the same dysfunctional logic employed by the client. This latter course of action is in obvious disfavour among those whose livelihood depends on a stock of ready solutions, poised to combat entrenched yet comfortably familiar problems. Such consultants "know nothing" according to Stanley Bing, who goes on to say that they write "unreadable" management texts and then hope to be "hired to come in an give slide shows at $20,000 a pop." (Black, 1993: 25).

But this is a sojourn into a thicket: invariant truths have proved that they do not apply across multiple settings, and this begs the question of whether or not they existed in the first place. Rather than a single reality that can be known in a value-free way, "...realities are multiple, constructed, holistic" (Lincoln & Guba, 1978: 73). Instead of universal prescriptions for change, an ideographic approach that recognizes the socially important elements of time and context is required. The next section brings these matters into sharper relief by unbundling the diagnostic phase of practice.

Diagnosis as Praxis or Power

A hallowed body of OD literature has ordained the diagnostic act as an important first step in the consultative process (French & Bell, 1984; Fordyce & Weil, 1971). Typically, certain procedures of choice are prescribed and the dire consequences of botching an initial assessment of the situation are outlined. There is little to be gained by retracing

these lines as they proceed logically from the assumptions which mould them ...what some have called the "medical model" approach to consultancy.

But something of value obtains in considering the antithesis: that diagnosis is a problematic an activity that inevitably fails the test of a single correct solution, a "single best way". There is relatively little written in this vein, though suggestive works do exist. In their landmark exposition on planned change, Lippitt, Watson and Westley (1958) asserted that every change agent adopts certain assumptions concerning:

> ...(1) the nature of the client system, (2) the process by which the client system got into trouble, (3) the nature of the trouble, (4) the process which will lead to an amelioration of the trouble, and (5) the way he himself [the consultant] can contribute to bringing about desired change. (1958: 22).

Lorsch and Lawrence (1972) have pointed out that both (1) what data are generated, and (2) the interpretation of those data are critical elements in the diagnostic phase. Their view is that these two elements are often neglected in wholesale fashion as the consultant and client rush toward action:

> One limitation of these diagnostic attempts as usually practiced, is, that they tend to be somewhat cursory and often tend to be conducted in spite of the fact that the action program has already been well planned in advance by the change agent. ...For example, Seashore and Bowers indicate that the reason they decided to conduct their diagnostic survey was, 'to introduce a note of calmness and realism, while still advancing the intended work.' (1972: 219).

The organization's culture is obviously enmeshed in these issues, and a felicitous approach spotlights the myths that are part of any milieu as important elements in the change effort. Boje, Fedor & Rowland (1982) identify myth-making as "...an adaptive mechanism whereby groups in an organization maintain logic

frameworks within which to attribute meaning to activities and events." (1982: 18). They believe that OD interventions affect not just structure and process, but also "...the delicate fabrics of socially constructed realities." (1982: 19), and later identify two polar OD attitudes toward myth systems. The first is associated with those who advance myth-making as a legitimate OD function, and the second with French & Bell whom, they say, "...define OD as the application of behavioral science principles that completely demythify poorly understood organizational phenomena." (1982: 19).

Instead of a revelatory process, diagnosis should be an exercise in problem construction. Many of the difficulties referenced by the introductory citations can be understood in terms of consulting practices that fail to socially construct problems. As Hall (1983) writes, "Problems to some people are irrelevancies, opportunities and vested interests to others. Problem definition is a crucial social process." (1983: 88). In light of this commonsensical idea, it is surprising that the social definition of problems has received so little attention in the OD literature. Rather, the critics charge that consultants tend to impose theories and models with which they are comfortable, dismiss those of their clients, and ignore ones out of their awareness. Kelman (1965) presaged the resulting dilemma 20 years ago when he cited two dangers in consultancy:

> One is the failure to recognize that [the consultant] is engaged in the control of the client's behavior. The other is intoxication with the goodness of what he is doing for and to the client, which in turn leads to a failure to recognize the ambiguity of the control that he exercises. (1965: 37).

It can be asserted that interventions which fail the test of problem construction are exercises in power and control: Kelman's intoxication will encircle an intrusive (dare we say, political) relationship. Eden, et al (1981) target precisely this point when they argue for sensitivity toward both shared and idiosyncratic member understandings of the consulting situation. "Intersubjectivity" should be a focal point,

they argue, because too often interventions, "...do not take sufficient account of individual perceptions or definitions of situations and lead, consequently, to 'solutions' which no one likes because they relate to problems which no one owns." (1981: 38). They argue that the socially constructed nature of organizational settings augurs for **problem-finding** and **problem-constructing** as prerequisites to problem-solving.

A Pragmatic Model

While oversimplified and artificial, it is useful to build on this idea of problem construction and think in terms of two dynamics that operate in the diagnostic phase: (1) the degree to which the consultant constructs the situation and imposes a cognitive map, and (2) the degree to which clients construct the situation. Two polar conditions can be described for each and it is possible to develop a simple representation in this model:

Insert Figure 1

The idealized case for each quadrant is a follows: (9,9) is that area where a client accepts or "owns" a map developed in concert with the consultant; (9,1) is likely to occasion deceit and unauthentic behavior where clients feign acceptance of goals and programs; (1,9) indicates that a client will adapt to the consultant's non-directive style or work on indigenous premises; and (1,1) denotes those uncommon and unfortunate occasions where an aimless despair infects a purposeless relationship. In this model, and from the constructionist point of view, (9,9) holds the greatest promise for effective change. The central issue may be framed as one of psychological ownership: (1) of the problem, (2) of the relevant information, (3) of the means and ends for change, (4) of the cognitive map as a helpful way out of the conflict. Ownership can be understood in terms of the client's investment in these four elements, a formulation that is compatible with existing theory (Quinn & McGrath, 1982: 463-464; Pfeiffer & Jones, 1976: 230-232; Huse, 1975: 89-116). Especially since the late 1960's, one finds this

frequently expressed or implied among academics as a general hypothesis:

Construction ► Ownership ► Commitment ► Change

The "change" term indicates those transformations that alter a client system in meaningful ways. The proposition that change is a function of client commitment is itself premised on the client's ownership of the problem, data, means, ends and cognitive mapping in play. These, I submit, arise from the client's construction of the situation. If the client constructs the problem, the "is" and "ought" and the resulting "gap", then proper change is underway.

Assuming there is no escaping the intersubjective nature of collective action, a certain directionality is implied for the helping process. To assert that one paradigm-driven reality is better than or superior to another is to miss the point completely. To argue that OD is locked in endless circles of reductionism or relativism is to miss it partially.

Ultimately, Truth and Knowledge become articles of faith and the products of a constructed reality. The thoughtful consultant, sympathetic to these arguments, will recognize that there are multiple modes of engagement and understanding in the world and engage in the social construction of a change effort. If we broadly conceive of the consultant and client as two social actors who interpret different, if not unique, social realities, then four avenues for change present themselves. A Grid reformulated along these lines appears as follows, and is again overstated to make the point:

Insert Figure 2

The model indicates that client satisfaction and consultant effectiveness is optimized in two cases: (1,9) as in the case of process consultation where the client system is empowered to make explicit its own "reality" of the situation, and (9,9) where interpretations are put in (discursive, perhaps dialectical) contrast and the resulting synthesis produces a change-outcome. Despair represents those treadmill-like occasions when both client and consultant circle endlessly within an existing problem dynamic. Tyranny describes the circumstances that

provoked this article: the unflinching imposition of consultant-solutions on problems that clients fail to own.

Both the (1,9) and (9,9) quadrants imply a praxis that moves beyond objectivist and relativist concepts of the change situation. Rather than these, the imperative is to develop new knowledge, new ways of being through engagement with the active construction of a new reality. Heydebrand (1983) describes this perspective as follows:

> (Praxis implies) a conception of organization as a more or less continuous process of organizing, to be distinguished from an organization as a structured, more or less stable outcome of the organizing activity. ...praxis refers not only to the technical transformation of the environment and to the solution of practical problems, but also to the conscious self-transformation of collective actors. ...Thus organizing activity, cooperation, undistorted communication and domination-free interaction are central to the concept of organizational praxis. (1983: 306)

He goes on to distinguish between three types of change. The first may occur as the result of an interaction between the organization and its environment, and is considered an adaptation to changing conditions. Second, change can be the result of conscious attempts to transform the goal-directed activity of an organization, a purposeful adoption of new strategies, new technologies, new practices. Third, change may involve,

> ...a process of collective self-transformation or self organization. Mere reactive behavior [the first, above) and proactive strategy [the second, above] are subsumed under a self-active process of organizing for the purpose of minimizing external determination and mutual constraint or domination and maximizing the possibility of self-determination. (1983: 307)

Change on this third level is akin to cognitive transposition and represents the

spirit of empowerment, a concept that informs both traditional (Bennis, Benne & Chin, 1961) and contemporary (Pacanowsky, 1988) theory. Knowles (1974: 116-117), for example, has described an *androgogical* process where the client system-qua-learner is involved in a process that allows it to uncover its own knowledge, in contrast to the Tabula Rasa assumptions of *pedagogy*. Praxis in consultation enables clients to achieve more existential states of being: greater self and system-awareness, fewer blockages to the internal commerce of ideas and energies, an enhanced capacity to work through problem dynamics. While they have surfaced in the profession as expressions of Humanistic ideals, such ideas are not today in the mainstream of practice.

The model presented thus far is static but, of course, a *process* is required which unfolds over time. While it is perhaps obvious I should, for clarity, specify that clients and consultants devise together the course of their relationship. This occurs over time and the model can be used as a heuristic for thinking about the state of affairs at any given point, as in the following:

Insert Figure 3

In this case the client has been empowered to conduct a dialogue with the consultant. How is such empowerment achieved? In broad terms there are two avenues of approach. The first can be termed a "re-educative" model where the client struggles to understand & apply a consultant-map, as in (9,9) above. Practices deriving from this orientation should be familiar to practitioners and need no elaboration here. But I suggest that an alternative and perhaps, according to circumstances, preferable approach lies in the (1,9) area. This can be thought of as a "discovery" model where the client system maps its own situation, using its own language system, with facilitation offered by the consultant. The ideal is a process-based relationship that is minimally intrusive ...which allows the client system to define gaps between "is" and "ought" in its own language, using its own cognitive referents to facilitate the process of learning and change.

Several theorists have suggested ways of accomplishing this. Nystrom & Starbuck (1984), for example, frame organizational efforts to shake off old cognitive structures and adopt new ones around the concepts of crisis and unlearning / re-learning. Crises confront managers with inescapable evidence that their cognitive structures are dysfunctional in the present context, and unlearning these routines becomes a necessary prerequisite to re-learning and the adoption of a new way. They describe how this unlearning / re-learning can occur:

> *Top managers can stimulate their own unlearning and new learning in at least three ways: They can listen to dissent, convert events into learning opportunities, and adopt experimental frames of reference.* (1984: 59).

My own experience, however, is that it may be naive to expect individuals or systems in crisis to pull back and entertain competing frames of reference ...often the tendency is just the opposite. Weick (1977), Hedborg (1981) and others of the contemporary cognitive persuasion assert that organizations learn by observing the results of their acts. Hedborg (1981: 3) describes an acts - beliefs - acts cycle that remains stable unless change is triggered by "*scarcity, conflict or substandard performance*" (1981: 16), in which case he identifies three modal change situations:

> *"Adjustment learning is applicable when a world view (or cognitive map) remains the same and temporary changes can be handled inside the behavioral repertoire. Turnover learning involves modification of the interpretive system and development of new combinations of responses. Turnaround learning involves restructuring of one or both of the metasystems that handle stimuli and responses."* (1981: 10).

Conclusions

There is a cognitive revolution occurring in the disciplines that surround organization development, and the time has come for new theory in our field. As helpful and hallowed as he is, OD consultants must

somehow move beyond Lewin's legacy and his intellectual progeny. This article argues that change is best conceptualized as the product of cognitive transformation, and that the change agent's proper role lies in the realm of client empowerment and change-as-praxis. Two interesting questions arise from this view. First is the means - ends issue ...if praxis is the Good, does it matter how one achieves it? Second are those indelicate questions the pragmatists will pose: Does it work? Does it make sense? Is it realistic?

To address the latter, it seems clear that change may occur at different levels: Adjustment-Turnover-Turnaround and adaptive-strategic-transformational being just two ways of describing a continuum of possibilities. My arguments have addressed change of the more fundamental kind, though I recognize that penetrating change is inimical with many client-situations in the "real" world. One should always be mindful of the dilemmas and ethics of intervening beyond client needs or requests. The obvious advice is to achieve clarity, as a first contracting objective, regarding bilateral expectations. Where clients cannot or will not work within the consultant's ethics - practice nexus, the consultant should gracefully bow out. This, of course, is an ideal and ignores economic and other pressures in consulting situations.

As to the means - ends issue the reformulated grid suggests at least two broad avenues for work, one being of the process consultation genre (Facilitation) and the other a conversation of sorts (Discourse). Facilitation is a term loosely draped over diverse consulting events today, only some of which recognize and grapple with the intrusiveness that provoked this article. Conversation in the dialectical tradition carries at least two requirements that have been lacking in many OD situations: power equality and fully compatible languages (e.g., cognitive map identity). But there exists an ample and perhaps increasing proportion of clients who are both disinclined to superficial consulting relationships, and equipped to engage consultants in substantial partnerships. The structure of business is rapidly shifting and its institutional functions in society are now in hot debate. More than any other period in our history, this is a time which presents ODs clients and practitioners with the opportunity to chart new territory in a collegial way. The pre-packaged roadshow will always exist, no doubt, but let us recognize the evolution of this very desirable higher standard.

Figure 1
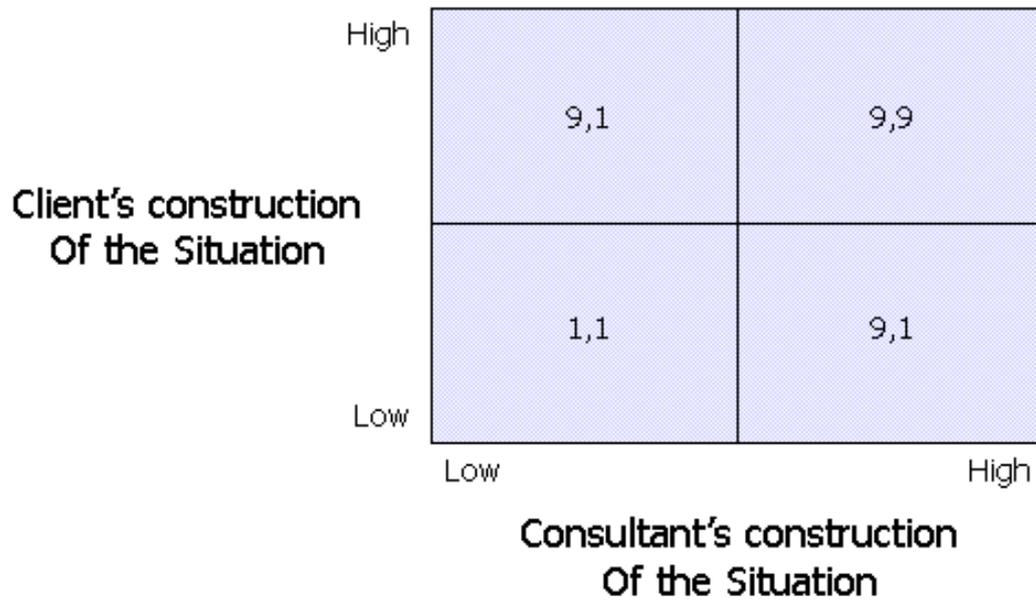
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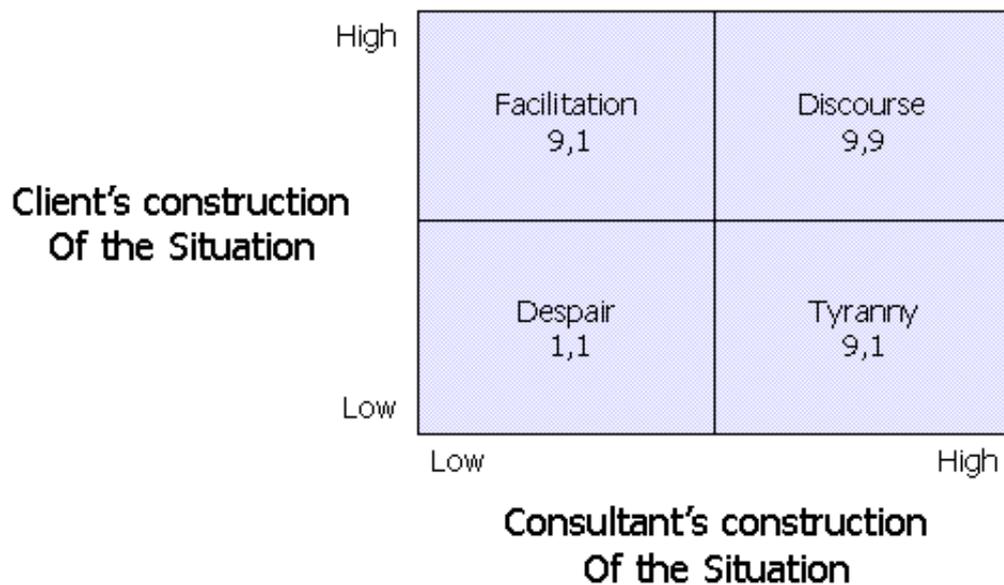
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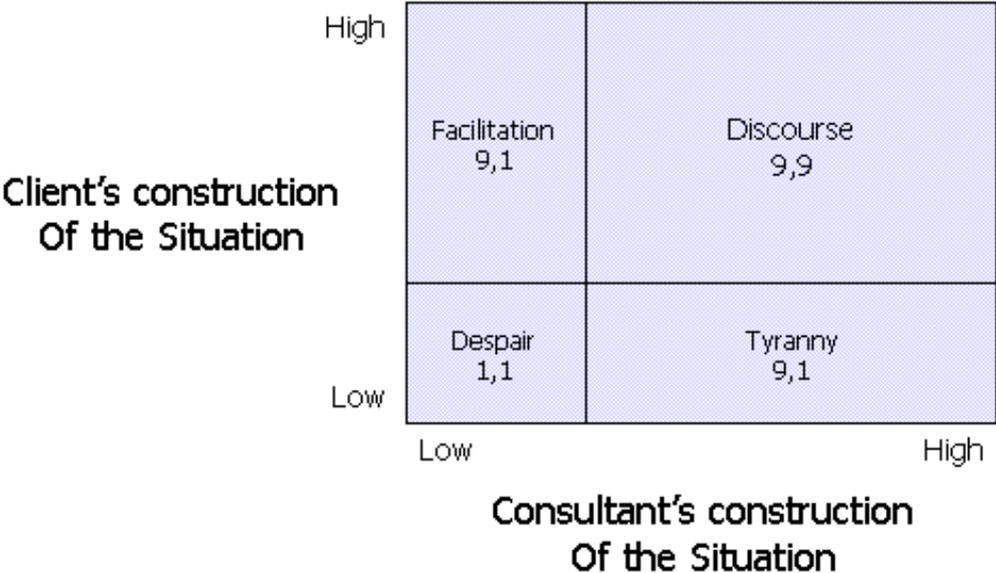
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