

**ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE MILITARY:  
A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE<sup>1</sup>**

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*OPSOMMING*

*Militêre organisasies in Afrika, wat as oop sisteme tipeer kan word, moet binne hul unieke sosio-historiese en sosio-politiese konteks bestudeer word. 'n Kort beskrywing van die militêre - siviele intervlak in Suidwes-Afrika (Namibië) word verskaf om bogenoemde beskouing te illustreer. Die interaksieproses tussen die militêre organisasie en sy omgewing vorm tans 'n brandpunt namate die land na onafhanklikheid beweeg. Organisasie-ontwikkelingsbeginsels en - tegnieke is geïmplementeer ten einde die militêre- en siviele subsisteme in staat te stel om die snelle pas van verandering, kenmerkend van kontemporêre Suidwes-Afrika (Namibië) effektief te hanteer. Die verskeidenheid van organisasie-ontwikkelingintervensies, wat oor 'n twee jaar termyn toegepas is, word uitvoerig beskryf.*

In contrast to the extensive body of knowledge in regards to the process of organization development (OD) that exists in civilian organizations, the application of OD principles and techniques to a military situation has received scant attention. The long range results of an OD team building effort (Patten & Dorey, 1977), OD in a military research laboratory (Manley & McNicols, 1977), a description of strategies utilized to initiate an OD effort in an Army command (Cahn, 1978) and a few other studies reported by French, Bell and Zawacki (1979) are the only results documented. All of these studies were executed in the United States military system.

Several factors in the consultant-military client relationship contribute to the paucity of reports on military OD. One such factor is the security regulations, existing in most countries, restricting the publication of classified military information that may be divulged to OD consultants. It is furthermore difficult for civilian consultants to gain access to the military. This stems from a belief on the part of the client that an outsider may not have a genuine and objective understanding of the functioning of their system. Furthermore Greenbaum (1979, p.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written while the author was attached to the School of Labour and Industrial Relations, Michigan, State University.

392) reports that some behavioural scientists contend that the military has "essentially malevolent aims" and as a result refuse to engage in consulting activities with them. Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976, p. 95) seem to support this viewpoint when they criticize some social scientists for being "more conservative and less critical of the military" and advocate a greater concern for the ethical and moral implications of military activities. The author contends that this essentially negative attitude generates resentment in the client system who then tend to be wary of consultants who do wish to render a service.

The OD consultant who enters the military client system not only has little information on current military OD programs, but also faces a dearth of integrated theories on the dynamics of the military itself. Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976, p.68) point out that while the study of military institutions has been a major focal point for a variety of academic disciplines, the sociology of the military "still occupies a marginal and ambivalent position within academic sociology". This is aggravated by a lack of methodological rigor in most studies in the sociology of the military and a lack of adequate integration of findings into a comprehensive framework. Apart from utilizing the sociology of the military as a data source for designing OD interventions, the consultant may use knowledge of group processes generated by studies performed in the military. Greenbaum (1979) notes that because of the debate regarding the similarity or dissimilarity between civilian and military organizations, much of the relevant information of group processes in the military is not utilized by behavioural scientists.

In addition to the abovementioned debate, a difference of opinion exists as to whether African military organizations can be adequately described in Western concepts. Lemarchand (1976, p. 271) contends that "the socio-historical context in which contemporary armies operate is not necessarily the same from one state to the next, or from one segment of the military to another". Socio-political factors in the Southern African context that have a differential effect on the functioning of certain segments of the military, can be viewed as supporting Lemarchand's viewpoint.

In view of the above factors it is evident that a change agent may find it difficult to construct an adequate frame of reference to facilitate his entry into a military system. This paper will attempt to contribute to the body of military OD knowledge by describing an OD effort in a specific branch of the military system, Namibia being a country in Southern Africa, distinct from South Africa. However, the Namibian military is currently a branch of the South African Defence Force. The unique characteristics of a specific military subsystem in

Namibia within a particular socio-historical context (a country moving toward independence) has a profound influence on the design of the OD effort. The focus of the paper will therefore be on how the OD program was designed to fit this organization in its particular time frame. The OD effort in the Namibian subsystems commenced in the second half on 1977.

It must be noted that the South African Defence Force may not necessarily agree with views expressed by the author of this paper.

### *AN OPEN SYSTEMS APPROACH TO THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION*

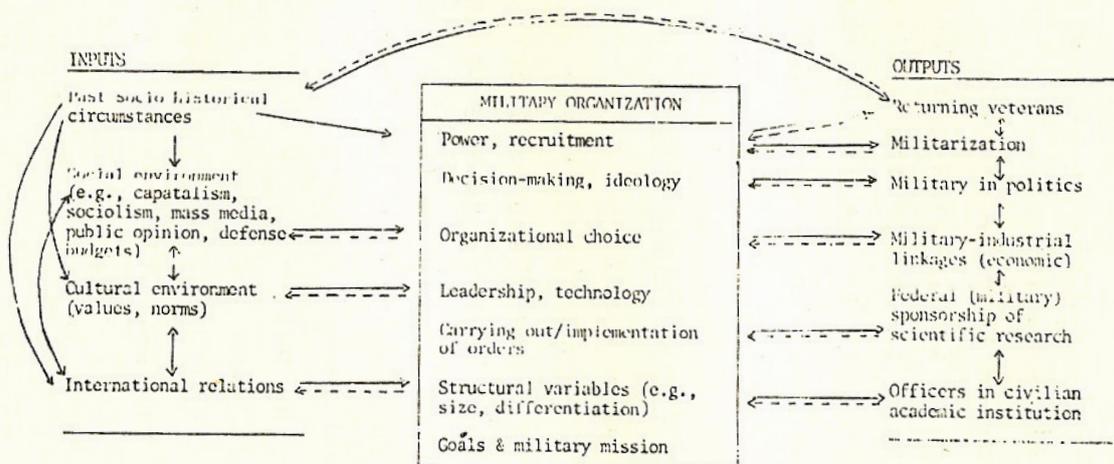
Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976) state that many writers tend to view the military as the prototype of a bureaucratic organization which reflects a closed systems approach. In contrast March (1970), Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976), Lemarchand (1976), and Greenbaum (1979) support an open systems approach to the military. They describe different interdependent and interacting subsystems, with goals that sometimes conflict, within the larger military system. Particular emphasis is placed on the view that the military organization itself is only a subsystem within a larger social system that is the particular community and the society. Huse (1975) states that viewing a particular organization as a system results in a different application of OD techniques than is usually the case. The intervention was not limited to only subsystem interaction between the military and other subsystems within the larger society.

Events in the external environment (the larger social system) which, according to the change agent's perceptions, necessitated an open systems approach to OD in the military will be described using the model of Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976). The data was gathered in interviews with key personnel during the diagnostic phases of the OD effort. Research of other writers was selected to further illustrate or confirm unique characteristics of military systems that were relevant for the Namibian situation.

#### *Societal inputs*

As shown in Figure 1 (Kourvetaris and Dobratz, 1976, p. 85) there are many factors that have an impact on the military organization which can be applied to the Namibian situation. When the socio-historical circumstances in which the OD effort took place, are examined, it is clear that many forces operated to facilitate change in the military subsystems as well as the larger social system. In 1977 a referendum was held in which voters backed a

plan for multiracial government leading to independence. This was rejected by the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO) who continued to conduct a guerrilla war for independence. In 1978 the South African government, who administers the territory, allowed Namibians to elect a constituent assembly to draft a constitution for an independent Namibia. SWAPO, who did not approve of the way in which the process was handled, escalated the war and sought help from Cuban forces in Angola. Both the war and the efforts toward a negotiated settlement between all parties are still continuing (Palmar, 1978). The social system therefore cannot be viewed as a closed system - its boundaries are permeated by the guerrilla war, the threat of international sanctions and the efforts to gain independence from South Africa. A reciprocal influence exists between the two countries for sweeping changes in Namibian laws have set examples and have facilitated change in South African society. Namibia faces the challenge of formulating a viable constitution and developing the vast untapped resources of the country.



Kourvetaris and Dobratz, 1976

Figure 1 : Some suggested lines of analysis of the military as an open-system.

The South African military presence in Namibia not only safeguards the larger society from the threat of guerrilla war, but also provides vital resources to build the infrastructure of the future independent state. Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976) note that many governments tend to charge the military with social and welfare roles. In Namibia it is inevitable that the military, because of its resources, will provide medical, educational and logistical services to civilians in the country. The extensive communication and transportation network has been utilized by the civilian sector to aid in development of certain regions of the country. Although the main reaction of the civilian subsystems to the military as a major societal force is positive, there are some ambivalent feelings. Sometimes military personnel are viewed as outsiders who do not understand the Namibian way of life.

Lang (March, 1970, p. 841) states that in recent years military leaders have become more involved in "the complex process of negotiation and accommodation among the competing and overlapping interests represented in the political system". He also points out that when a community is involved in a war, military expertise tends to be regarded as indispensable in more phases of the political decision-making system. Military advisors then may come to share some degree of political influence in that community. Although the military is tasked with maintaining internal stability, it has not tried to exert a major influence on the political system in Namibia. It cannot therefore be classified with the "coupmakers, rationalizers and usurpers of legal authority" that Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976) and Lemarchand (1976) describe as characteristic of the role of the military in other African states. The military in Namibia is still subject to the controls imposed on it by the civilian government but does have an advisory role in certain policy matters regarding national security. This low key approach of the military to internal politics contributes to a positive relationship between the military and civilian systems. The continuation of this positive relationship between the two parties is thus vital to the development of the country. These factors necessitated designing an OD intervention that focused on a) changes in the military system, b) changes in the larger social system, and c) the effect of such changes on the civilian-military interface.

### *The military subsystem*

The military organization in Namibia is in a unique position as it is both a subsystem of the South African Defence Force (SADF) as well as the embryo of a future independent defence force in the territory. Organization development in the SADF and concomitant

changes in the larger system preceded and gave impetus to the OD program in the Namibian military. In both cases the OD effort was initiated and actively supported by the top command. This command could provide the change agents with initial inputs as to the scope and direction of desired changes in these military systems.

The direction of changes had to be seen in the context of the goals and mission of both military systems. Janowitz (Little, 1971, p. 19) describes military goals as relating to "the management of instruments of violence". This is a limited view because it does not take into account that the process of defining military goals and strategy takes place in an increasingly pluralistic setting. Military strategy in that context has to consider the implications of military action on economic, political and human factors. Furthermore for the Namibian military the "possibility of hostilities" (Janowitz, in Little, 1971) has become a tangible reality. The suggestion of Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976) that military goals have to extend to include roles of deterrence, peacekeeping and advisory roles of civic action has been implemented in the Namibian military system. This new concept of military goals and its role in society was one of the crucial issues that had to be dealt with in team building seminars in the OD program.

Many writers describe the process of professionalisation of military personnel to deal with the increased role expansion and redefinition of the military profession. It is Lang's (March, 1970) view that professionalisation assures the military autonomy in internal management and in the area of their explicit technical competence. This is particularly relevant in the Namibian situation as that subsystem has to gain independence from the SADF and has to cope with an extremely complex social environment. The officer corps has to possess a high level of technological expertise to deal with modern guerrilla warfare. Furthermore, because the military is a major societal force, skills in negotiation, policy formation and administration and other interpersonal skills are needed to fulfil their expanded role. Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1976, p. 78) even suggest that the military profession is "more than a profession in the civilian sense of the term" as it has both a military and a civilian component. This expanded role in the Namibian situation obviously has an influence on the internal organization of the military in terms of structural differentiation, recruitment practices, et cetera. This dynamic approach to the military profession, affecting future personnel policies, was given much attention during group discussions in team building seminars.

### *The civilian subsystem - the South West African Administration*

As was previously mentioned a positive civilian-military interface in the Namibian context is of considerable importance for future developments. Military leaders in Namibia were concerned about the co-ordination of effort between the military and certain sectors of the civilian infrastructure. They approached key personnel in the SWA Administration to suggest discussions between the two parties to achieve greater co-operation and consolidation of resources. This suggestion was met with some initial reservations. However, after a series of interviews, all heads of departments in the SWA Administration agreed to take part in a team building seminar with key military and police personnel.

Peabody and Rouke (March, 1970), Zawacki and Warrick (1976), Giblin (1976) and French, Bell and Zawacki (1978) all describe some of the important constraints in the public sector that create specific problems relative to the application of OD in that system. Data gathered by the change agents during diagnostic interviews showed that many of these identified problems also initially existed in the Namibian situation. One of these problems was that a great number of interest groups, who wielded power over specific resources and had their own goals, existed. It was therefore imperative for these groups to try to reach consensus on the super-ordinate goals of the SWA Administration as well as tackling the problem of the civilian-military interface. Another relevant factor was that the Administration was an executive branch only executing the policy formulated by its headquarters in South Africa. At the same time it was, as in the case of the military, the nucleus of a future independent Administration. This autonomous body will be tasked with policy formation, program planning and execution for the unique Namibian situation. This necessitated a critical analysis of the relevance of existing policies as opposed to an uncritical acceptance of the dictates of another social system. The future role expansion of the SWA Administration again required members to reassess internal communications, work flow, power sharing and changed relationships.

Another characteristic the Administration shared with the military was that many of the personnel in the system were seconded from the Administration's headquarters in South Africa. This meant that certain executives only stayed in the territory for a specific length of time before returning to South Africa. Turnover rates for executives in the various branches therefore differed, which again created continuity problems in following up the initial

successes of the OD effort. A more serious implication was that this situation created different levels of commitment to both organizational goals as well as goals pertaining to the future development of Namibia.

### *THE OD INTERVENTIONS IN THE NAMIBIAN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SUBSYSTEMS*

One of the first problems facing the change agents after the initial diagnostic sessions was to choose the appropriate level of intervention. Guidelines in the OD literature offered by Harrison (1970) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) proved invaluable. As is evident from the previous section the relevant subsystems differ in terms of characteristics of participants, their goals, general resources and conditions. The interventions therefore had to be tailored to the demands of each system yet maintain a common core so that a positive interrelationship between the two subsystems could be facilitated.

Using the Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) model the target was selected to be "slight behavior change" involving altered patterns of interaction and role expectations in each of the subsystems. The change agents' approach was process-oriented (Friedlander & Brown, 1974) focussing on the human participants and organization processes such as communication, problem solving and decision making. Much attention was given to instrumental process analysis (Harrison, 1970) - how tasks are distributed in the organization, how functions are performed and the effect of an incumbent's work style on others in the organization. The interventions did not, however, utilize a techno structural approach such as job design, job enrichment or job enlargement. As in the US Army OD effort (Cahn, 1978) the interventions also did not move too deeply into interpersonal relationships between members but focused on functional work relationships. The interventions therefore consisted of family group team building meetings, intergroup confrontation meetings, a form of survey feedback was utilized and a leadership development seminar was conducted. The overall strategy may be classified as a "planned change effort" consisting of "scouting, entry, diagnosis, planning, action, evaluation and termination" (Huse, 1975). This planned change effort is represented by Figure 2. It had to be taken into account that, because of the interdependence, the intervention in the civilian subsystem had an effect on the military subsystem and vice versa.

The change agent teams consisted of two external consultants, who were registered psychologists with training and experience in industrial and counselling psychology, seconded from a large university in South Africa. The internal change agents were high

ranking military officers with training and experience in education and communications, respectively. All four change agents were involved in the OD effort in the SADF and took part in the initial diagnostic phases of the Namibian intervention. At this time one of the external change agents withdrew. The internal change agents were then assisted by the author in developing and conducting the interventions in the Namibian civilian and military subsystems.

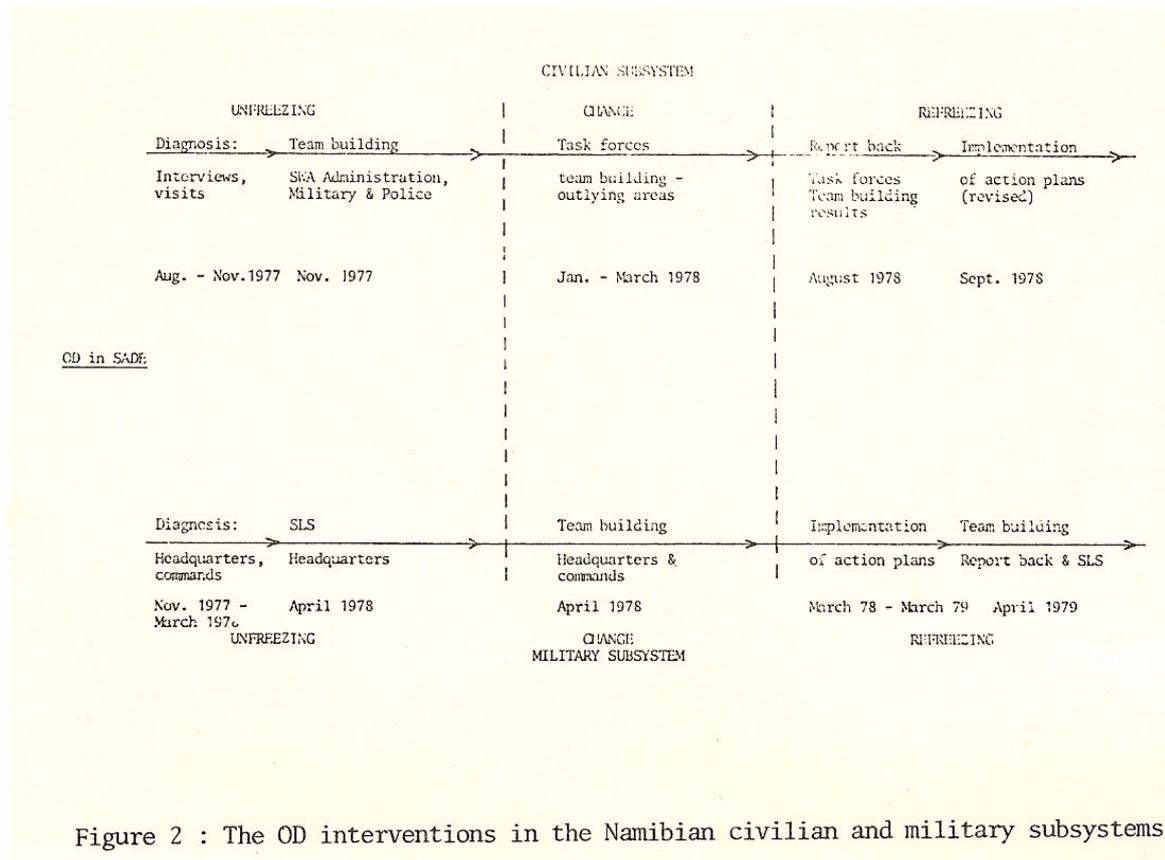


Figure 2 : The OD interventions in the Namibian civilian and military subsystems.

### *The OD interventions in the civilian subsystems*

The unfreezing phase commenced with diagnostic interviews with departmental heads of the SWA Administration headquarters. This was supplemented with visits to the outlying areas of the country to gain inputs from local Administration officials. Discussions were also held with key military and police personnel who attended the interventions. It was clear that the members, who were to attend the first intervention, did not see themselves as a team with "a singleness of mission and an absolute need to co-operate in order to achieve the expected output" (Patten & Dorey, 1977, p. 31). In solving such an OD problem in the public sector, Giblin (1976) would advocate that a structural-technical approach focussing on integrating the structure and improving task performance should be implemented. He does add that this

approach should be complemented by some efforts to alter the perceptions, values, communications and decision making processes in the organization. As the SWA Administration had not gained full autonomy, the change agents or members could not affect any immediate structural changes. A human processual approach was then followed in constructing a four day "team building" seminar.

Some of the major and well-known exercises used in the seminar are shown in Figure 3. These exercises followed in the sequence depicted and were interspersed with debriefings of the exercises in relation to the work setting and other relevant discussions. The organizational mission (reason for existence) was extensively discussed and the super ordinate goals that were then formulated were seen by the individuals involved as a unifying force. The assessment of current organizational functioning was used as a data base to evaluate future developments. Action plans specifying how organizational objectives will be met were also utilized as a data source for later evaluation of the actual achievement of the objectives. Some of these action plans called for the establishment of task forces to research development needs for the future of Namibia. These activities can be seen as the start of the unfreezing phase.

This intervention which took place at the Administration Headquarters in the capital was followed by similar team building sessions in key outlying areas. In each case senior Administration officials and military personnel were involved. Permission was granted to change agents to divulge certain data generated by each group to others involved in the OD effort. This shared data base facilitated understanding and communication between groups. A second team building seminar for the original group was then held in the Administration's headquarters. The data gathered by the groups in the outlying areas as well as the original team's own progress reports on the achievement of objectives were used as data sources. The achievement of objectives and general organizational functioning during the preceding nine months were reassessed. New action plans were formulated to deal with recent developments.

One of the major achievements of these OD interventions was the establishment of task forces whose integrated research resulted in a classified report dealing with future developments in the territory. Other results were increased communications between outlying areas and the central headquarters as well as improved relationships between military and civilian personnel. The latter result supports research by Clotfelter and Peters (1976, p. 47) that "officers with more contact with civilian society were less likely to perceive a civil-military gulf".

Exercises	Goals
Creative thinking and brainstorming	"Warm up" exercise to stimulate new perceptions of own unit and Namibian situation
Changes facing Namibia: Theory input and discussion	Realizing need for change. Anticipating effect of change on organization
Desert survival problem Intergroup discussion of solutions	Demonstrating synergistic outcomes of effective team work. Differences in perceptions of problems
Managerial In-basket exercise	Creative solutions to complex managerial problems
Intergroup discussion of solutions	Differences in problem solving strategies
Blue-green game	Destructive effects of intergroup conflict
Theory input on conflict in groups	Strategies formulated to lessen interdepartmental conflict
Discussion of organizational mission	Consensus on superordinate goals
Evaluation of organizational effectiveness	Current level of organizational functioning Data base for follow-up
MBO Theory input and exercises	Setting realistic goals for improved functioning and relationships

Figure 3 : Administration team building seminar : exercise outline.

*The OD interventions in the Namibian military subsystem*

*The situation leadership seminar*

Data for the structuring of OD interventions were gathered during diagnostic interviews with senior personnel in the Namibian military headquarters as well as with commanders in the outlying areas. In addition to this the change agent team used information and experience gained during OD interventions in the SADF as background for designing the Namibian interventions. On the basis of this analysis it was decided to utilize a seminar that had been constructed specifically for application in the OD interventions in the SADF.

This seminar was constructed a year earlier by the change agent team as an unfreezing device to phase in an OD effort in a military setting and had undergone considerable refinement to suit military needs. The name "Situation Leadership Seminar" (SLS) refers to its base in the contingency theory of leadership. Hersey and Blanchard's (1976) adaption of Fiedler's contingency theory was found to be more acceptable to the military than the Managerial Grid approach. As most of the top and middle command of the SADF had attended the seminar, it had gained a favourable reputation and provided a common frame of reference to the initiated. In spite of this the content of the seminar was not well known and a request for keeping the content of the exercises confidential was made at each presentation.

This particular SLS was attended by approximately thirty high ranking officers all working in the Namibian military headquarters unit. This group could be described as a team fulfilling a "collective task whose success absolutely requires both technical and interpersonal co-ordination as well as emotional investment" (Patten & Dorey, 1977, p. 32). One of the goals was to present the seminar in such a way as to promote a "primary group" relationship between members. This strategy was based partially on extensive research over two decades on primary group cohesiveness, normative commitment and performance in military settings. Two of the research findings were "the primary group set and emphasized group standards of behaviour and supported and sustained the individual in stresses he would otherwise not be able to withstand" and "commitment to the goals of the army and society provide preconditions for the formation of primary groups" (for summary of research see Greenbaum, 1979).

Extensive use was made of many other behavioural science theories to construct the SLS. Although some existing structured exercises were designed by the change agent team. The basic design of the SLS is depicted in Figure 4. However, some debriefing and filler exercise are not included in the chart as these exercises were modified to suit the needs of the group at the time. The "learning by experience" model, that is dilemma-action taken to cope with the dilemma-feedback as to the effectiveness of the actions-generalization and application to the work situation (Johnson and Johnson, 1975) was followed in sequencing the exercises. The objectives of the seminar were disclosed to the participants on the first day and discussed. These objectives were similar to objectives formulated for the Managerial Grid seminar (see Huse, 1975, p. 154).

Intergroup competition, which was developed during the first two days, was effectively dissipated by the intergroup conflict exercise and its extensive debriefing on the third day.

This was generally regarded as one of the highlights of the seminar. The film exercise, structured peer evaluations and the communication exercise were also seen as particularly valuable learning experiences by the participants. The exercises on the last day formed a bridge between the SLS and the other interventions in the civilian subsystem as well as the following military team building.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
8 AM Learning Style Inventory	Intergroup competition on case study tasks	In-basket exercise : Managerial roles & time management-group work	Theory input : Individual behavior and feedback	Evaluation of organization/unit's current level of functioning
Team formation	Analysis of team's functioning	Intergroup conflict exercise	Questionnaire : personal life orientation	Input on MBO
Concept questionnaire on prescribed readings : individual and group tasks	Film : Individual and group analysis of leadership behavior	Debriefing of exercise	Structured team peer evaluations	MBO exercise on formulation of job related goals
Intergroup competition	Intergroup competition	Theory input on effects of conflict	Utilizing feedback on the job	Evaluation of learning experiences
Analysis of team's functioning	Review of team's functioning	Strategies of conflict resolution on the job	Communication exercise	Research questionnaires
Input on contingency theory of leadership	Exercise : Differing value systems	Mixed group solutions to in-basket exercise	Debriefing & application to job	
Case study : Leadership styles		Discussion and relation of exercise to job		
Individual and group tasks				
10 : 30 Closure	Closure	Closure	Closure	Closure

Figure 4 : Basic design of Situation Leadership Seminar.

Research questionnaires, which were completed individually a week prior to the SLS, were again completed on the last day. These questionnaires were utilized to assess the impact of the SLS on the individual's life orientation and achievement motivation. Three months later the participants again completed the questionnaires to establish whether those changes were relatively permanent. Research data for this particular group were integrated with the research on the SLS in the SADF. The research results indicated that the SLS has a positive effect on the participant's life orientation and motivation that was relatively permanent in both cases.

### *The team building seminar*

In the Namibian situation the team building seminar followed seven days after the SLS whereas there was usually a period of several months between the two seminars in the SADF.

The short time lapse was a contributing factor in fostering a team spirit in the Namibian context. The team in this context consisted of all the members of the SLS group as well as other key military officers in the territory. All these new members had had the SLS experience previously and some of them also participated in the team building seminars in the civilian subsystem. The command element that was now present did provide a valuable input in respect to the co-ordination of effort between outlying commands and the headquarters. Both the SLS and the team building seminar were held in the capital city in a building which had great historical significance for the people of the territory. The duration of the team building was three days.

This was a task-centered team building as was the team building in the US Army (Cahn, 1978). As much of the material dealt with classified information only a brief outline of certain exercises can be given:

- Critical analysis of organization's mission and super-ordinate goals,
- Individual tasks and functions within the total organization: role clarification and negotiation,
- Interdependency between units in headquarters and headquarters in outlying areas,
- Communication networks in total organization and flow of information,
- Analysis of societal forces influencing the organization,
- Future strategies for development of organization and environment.

The role clarification exercise did not include the restructuring of jobs or changing the organization's structure. Rather, the objective of these discussions was for the incumbents to identify with their jobs and become cognizant of gaps in their own functioning. Role negotiation took place to clarify expectations between superiors and subordinates and between peers. The interdependency of individual tasks was discussed. This fostered a greater understanding of the content and relevance of other's jobs in contrast to one's own, as well as creating better communication between units. Force Field Analysis (see Huse, 1975, pp. 48-52) was used as a conceptual tool to examine the myriad of stressful environmental factors having an impact on the organization. During the team building seminar inputs were received from the civilian sector task forces as well as other interested parties. Reports on the civilian-military interface as well as other developments in the territory were studied, so as to gain perspective on the organization's role in the society. The issue of commitment to organizational goals and societal values was also discussed.

Organizational effectiveness questionnaires (based on Schein, 1969) were used to plot the current level of organizational unit functioning for future comparison purposes. Action plans also provided a data base for later evaluations of achievements. The interventions were considered so successful that the team managed to conduct follow-up seminars, independently. However, one of the internal change agents revisited the territory to give feedback on the research questionnaires and to assist on structuring discussion groups. The internal change agents also conducted a SLS for new senior members of the military subsystem a year after the initial OD interventions. Another team building was held at that time, to assess the progress made over the year, to re-establish priorities and to develop new action plans so that the organization could effectively cope with changes.

In analyzing the achievements of the team over the year, the conclusion can be drawn that the organization did succeed in moving toward greater organizational effectiveness (as defined by Beckhard, 1969). The conclusion drawn by Patten & Dorey, (1977, p. 49) on their team building seminar in a military setting, is also relevant in the Namibian military context, viz.:

"Organization development through team building - seems to have great applicability for improving interpersonal relations and internal co-ordination in complex organizations that have as their mission goals depending on a large extent on marshalling and directing human energy toward goal achievement".

### *CONCLUSIONS*

The question may be asked whether a separate approach is really necessary to structure military OD interventions as opposed to interventions in private organizations. The literature provides no clear-cut answer to this question. Some writers, who stress the bureaucratic nature of the military organization, may argue that the OD interventions must be structured in the same way as Greenbaum (1979), argue that the continual necessity for combat readiness and the stressful situation in which it operates create organizational characteristics in the military that is not found in any other organization. The author, who supports the latter viewpoint, attempted to describe the socio-historical factors in the Namibian context which had an impact on the military system. It is also the author's contention that the unique characteristics of that situation necessitated an open system's approach to the application of OD techniques. A brief outline of the OD interventions in the military and civilian subsystems has been given

to support that viewpoint. However, by giving a general overview, many of the results of the interventions in both subsystems could not be described in detail. Furthermore, citing the change agent's reasons for choosing particular exercise or sequencing exercises in a particular manner was beyond the scope of this paper.

In spite of its various successes the author should, in retrospect, point out some of the limitations of the reported OD effort. One of these was that the planned change strategy that was followed did not provide an adequate research design to evaluate all the actual changes. A traditional pre- and post-questionnaire method was followed to evaluate the impact of the SLS and action plans and an organizational effectiveness questionnaire were used to evaluate team building results. This design does not adequately meet Beer's criteria that "the evaluation process needs to be embedded in the change process itself and - the richness of the data requires the obtaining of information from a wide variety of sources, such as interviewing, observation, organizational records and similar means" (Huse, 1975), was followed, all of the above criteria could have been met.

Another factor to be considered was that a few competent individuals continued to provide an impetus for change in the civilian subsystem. These individuals received some guidance from the internal military change agents in leading discussion groups. However, had the civilians received specialized training as change agents, the OD effort in the civilian subsystem could have been extended to have a wider impact (which would have strengthened the military OD effort).

As was noted earlier, the change agents followed a human processural approach. Friedlander and Brown (in French, Bell and Zawacki, 1978, p. 52) state that "since process and structure are embedded in each other, it is almost impossible to create lasting change in one without modification of the other". Therefore, the changes achieved by implementing the human-processural approach could have been strengthened had it been possible to affect certain structural changes in both the military and civilian systems.

This overview of the OD effort in the Namibian military has been reported here in the hope of contributing to the body of knowledge on the application of OD principles to a military system. The author intends to follow-up this overview with papers clarifying the rationale utilized in the selection and sequencing of exercises in military OD interventions. It must be realized that more needs to be done in the field of military OD, especially in emergent nations where the need for civilian military co-operation is of paramount importance.

## ABSTRACT

*African military organizations can be studied in their unique socio-historical and socio-political contexts. Furthermore, these military organizations should not be viewed as closed systems, but as open systems interacting with other subsystems within the larger society. To illustrate these views a description is given of the military-civilian interface in South West Africa (Namibia). The process of interaction between the military and its environment has become a focal point as the above-mentioned country is moving towards independence. Organizational development principles and techniques were implemented to enable the military- and civilian subsystems to cope with the fast rate of change characteristic of contemporary South West African (Namibian) society. The various organizational development interventions are extensively described as a paucity of reports on military organization development exists.*

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