Tutorial letter 102/3/2012

WORKGROUP DYNAMICS AND DIVERSITY

IOP3095

Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology

Semester 1 and 2

This tutorial letter contains important information about your module.

Extracts from Wheelan, S.A. (2005). *Group processes: a developmental perspective* (2nd edn.*)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, (AOD), Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. (Copyright for duplication obtained).
Summary of Wheelan, S.A. (2005). *Group processes: a developmental perspective* (2nd edn.*)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, (AOD), Chapter 11.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Dear Student

In this tutorial letter we provide you with relevant **extracts** for your studies from:

Wheelan, S.A. (2005). *Group processes: a developmental perspective* (2nd edn.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Chapter 4 – STAGE ONE: DEPENDENCY AND INCLUSION

Chapter 5 – STAGE TWO: COUNTERDEPENDENCY AND FIGHT

Chapter 6 – STAGE THREE: TRUST AND STRUCTURE

Chapter 7 – STAGE FOUR: WORK and STAGE FIVE: TERMINATION

We also provide you with a **summary** of certain sections of **Chapter 11 – GROUP AND TEAM ANALYSIS**

The extracts from these chapters are primarily about the group structure and processes of the different stages of Wheelan's integrative model of group development. We also provide you with a summary of Chapter 11 about group and team analysis.

The content of this tutorial letter should be studied in conjunction with the relevant units in the study guide for IOP3095.

Your lecturers
Dr MS May (Course Leader)
Ms EC Coetzee

2. CHAPTER 4
STAGE ONE: DEPENDENCY AND INCLUSION

2.1 Introduction

Various cultural and structural elements exist throughout the life of a group but manifest in different ways depending on the developmental stage of the group at that time. A major characteristic of the first stage of group development is the significant amount of member dependency on the designated leader. Since members have not yet interacted sufficiently to establish relationships with each other they cannot rely on each other for support or structure. At the same time members are testing the waters with regard to initial attempts to get to know each other and to determine what the rules, roles and structures of the group will be. The following sections describe the emergence and maintenance of group culture and structure and group processes, as these aspects are manifested during the first stage of group development.

2.2 Group Structures

The Communication Structure

In the initial stage of group development, the communication structure is being determined. During stage one, the establishment of this structure is as important as the content of communication, since the adoption of a communication structure signals the beginning of order and provides the medium in which all future processes will occur. As we have seen, the type of communication structure that is adopted does much to determine the status and leadership hierarchy, group morale, problem-solving efficiency, cohesion, and group integration (e.g., Frey, 1999; Kano, 1971; Lawson, 1965; Leavitt, 1951; Schein, 1958*).*

The fact that this structure stabilizes during the earliest stage group development poses some potential hazards for the group. For example, at this stage, members have not interacted long enough to develop rational views, based on experience, about each other's leadership potential, competence with regard to the group task, or social skills. Preliminary determinations are frequently based on status and credentials external to the group (Ridgeway, 1993; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986). Early member self revelations, obvious membership and reference group identities such as race, sex, and class, and initial behaviors form the basis for assigning members status and roles in the new group. If the group judges incorrectly, difficulties may ensue later on. Also, the type of communication structure chosen limits or enhances the group's future problem-solving ability***,*** and at this stage the group does not have enough goal clarity to determine the complexity of the problems it will face in accomplishing its goal. As a result, the group may establish a communication network that proves inadequate to facilitate goal achievement or group integration.
The establishment of a group's communication network occurs in climate of tension, anxiety, ambiguity, and dependency. Members tend to be overly polite and conventional in an attempt to ward off potential group rejection. These conditions are not the best for thoughtful consideration of future needs, since current concerns are so paramount. Thus, groups often choose conventional, societally established communication structures rather than assessing their particular group's

structural needs. As a result, groups tend to establish centralized communication networks in which information is filtered through one or two people. The choice of a centralized communication network, however, may limit a group's ability to solve complex problems and accomplish complex goals, since it limits input. Consequently, classrooms that could benefit from more student input may not be structured to allow for it. The same may be true of work groups, community groups, and the like. The communication network is critical, since it provides the medium for the development of group culture and social structure. Discussion of values, norms, goals, tasks, roles, leadership, and the like is only possible through communication. Who can talk, and to whom, will limit or expand the group's ability to clarify goals organize rules and roles, and develop a coherent culture.

Realistically, communication networks are usually flawed in some ways. Societal customs and traditions often impede the free flow of communication. For example, members with higher external status due to their membership or reference groups are likely to get more airtime in the group (Kirchmeyer, 1993). This will limit, from the outset, the input of lower-status members. The group may ignore some members even if their input might be valuable. This is especially true during the dependency stage of group development, when anxiety is high and the need for inclusion is paramount. Members do not wish to offend or appear to deviate from societal conventions. Lower-status members will usually not push to be heard. Most members will go along with prevailing group views and emerging rules. Our need to belong is extremely strong.

As a consequence of customs that we inherit and our overriding need for inclusion, we tend not to challenge our place in the communication network for fear of being rejected by the group. Valuable input may be lost to the group as a result. Also, since most people are unaware of how groups function, there is not likely to be any discussion of the importance of early group decisions regarding the communication network or any other group issues, for that matter.

IMPORTANT:
The section, Goals and tasks, has been summarised from Wheelan (2005, pp. 47-51).

Goals and tasks
All groups form to accomplish some goal or end. A group goal (which may consist of one or many goals) defines the level of performance that will be necessary to achieve that goal. Tasks and goals can be assigned by external parties, or generated by the group. Group goals require committed members to carry them out. Member commitment is higher if the group is cohesive. The person assigning the goal is viewed as a legitimate authority especially if members believe they are capable of achieving the assigned goal.

Goals and tasks are open to interpretation. A group's goal might be to increase the effectiveness of the production process. If the group consists of specialists in the area of employee satisfaction they might interpret an effective production process to be one where employees have a high level of satisfaction and pay little attention to the actual output of the process in terms of production. If the group is one of production specialists they might simply drive the production team harder, decreasing employee satisfaction, and still feel that the goal has been accomplished when production goes up and costs go down.

Goals can be in conflict. There may also be a difference between a group's overt and covert goals. For example, an organisation might, after reading Branson's autobiography, say that they put their employees first. However, in all the policies and procedures and everything the company does, production is still put first. The company has then set an overt goal but is covertly pursuing a different goal. It is therefore clear that determining a group's goals is not as straightforward as asking someone what they are trying to achieve, or seeing what is being measured.

In stage one, initial discussion of group goals take place. Discussion of goals provides a forum for initial exploration of many other issues. Member values, status, reference and membership groups, competence and trustworthiness can be explored using the discussion of goals as the vehicle to do so. Leader dependability and competence can be tested as well seeing that group members will put pressure on the leader to keep the group informed about its goals.

Commitment to goals at this point is tentative at best. Individuals may have varying ideas about group goals and tasks or methods to accomplish the goals. Members are likely to be concerned with personal issues at this stage than with the more rational task of goal clarification.

It is important to understand the difference between tasks and goals. Goals are the things a group wants to achieve, and tasks are the actions to be taken to achieve them. The group, at this stage, is still engaged in accomplishing more universal and primary goals related to the group itself. Members are attempting to establish a coherent group culture and structure and are far from being ready to work on goal accomplishment and its required tasks.

IMPORTANT:
The section, Status and roles, has been summarised from Wheelan (2005, pp. 51-54).

Status and roles
A role consists of a set of expectations shared by members about the behaviour of an individual who occupies a given position in a group. Position relates to the pre-existing personality and status of an individual, the role he or she occupies and the performance variables. In order for the group to function roles are assigned to individual members.

Most roles are not predetermined. It is up to the group to decide which member will take on what role. During stage one; members are sizing each other up. Sources of data that group members use to make role assignments include outside roles those individuals occupy. At this stage, information that members gain about each other is more limited than it will be later on in the group. Members are still behaving in a cautious manner in order to secure their membership position in the group.

Assignments are made covertly and may turn out to be good or bad matches later on. If mismatches occur roles can be shifted but with great difficulty.

Position in the group, which includes role, carries with it varying amounts of status. High-status members can more directly influence group goals and processes than low-status members. Once in a role members are perceived accordingly. Behaviour is viewed through the role and compared

with expectations for that role. For instance, role assignment is influenced by what one wears, what is revealed to group members and how a member behaves during initial meetings. The role assignment is thus based on limited information and first impressions

2.3 Group Processes

Conformity and Deviation

Research confirms that conformity and dependency are higher in ambiguous situations (Sherif, 1936; Asch, 1952; Sherif & Sherif, 1956*).* As a result, conformity will be high during the first stage of group development. A lack of structure, a lack of unified group culture, anxiety, and fear of rejection characterize this stage. Very little is clearly defined. In such an ambiguous situation, members tend to conform in order to reduce anxiety and to secure their inclusion in the group (Berger, 1975, 1979; Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Member dependence on the leader is high at this stage as well. The group focus tends to be on pleasing the leader. Much discussion of what is proper group behavior occurs at this stage (Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Teboul, 1997). Agazarian and Peters (1981) describe the stage-one group as dependent, conforming, and compliant. They add that the most conforming and controlling member or subgroup, often dominates group discussion.

Pressures on individual members to conform to prevailing beliefs and behaviors will be high at this time. Conformity is easy to achieve, since members are unlikely to risk group rejection by deviating in any way. Those who do deviate are likely to do so unwittingly. That is, others may see members as deviant because they display attitudes or behaviors that are unacceptable in that group. However, the member labeled as deviant may be merely displaying attitudes or behaviors that have gained him or her acceptance in other groups. All of us have had this experience at one time or another.

We enter a new group and say or do something that would be acceptable in other groups to which we belong. However, in this new group we are met with disapproving looks. The emerging beliefs, values, or processes of the new group are different from those of other groups of which we have been a part. The culture and social structure of our other groups may be different in ways that elicit negative reactions in the new group. Most of us quickly learn to alter our behavior to match the expectations of the new group, since not to do so means to risk rejection.

The leader's beliefs and behaviors carry significant weight with group members at this point. This is so whether the leader wants to be influential or not. Members at this stage look to the leader for protection, safety, and stability. They are eager to please the leader and tend to watch for cues about what to say and how to behave. Members are anxious to determine what is acceptable to say or do in this new group. Since other member roles are not clarified yet, members tend to focus on the leader for direction (Bennis & Shepard, 1956; Bion, 1959; Rioch, 1975*).*

The degree of conformity expected during the dependency stage seems excessive. However, it may serve a very useful purpose. Conformity quickly creates a more predictable environment, which allows for discussion of goals, roles, and processes to begin. Of course, the discussion is

inhibited, since opposing views tend to be censored. A kind of false harmony develops which reduces anxiety and creates a sense of order. Differences of opinion are stifled in the interest of group conformity. As a result, tentative, polite exploration of the leader and other members ensues. Eventually, this enforced conformity of belief and behavior will reduce in intensity and the group will allow some dissension. If this reduction in conformity does not occur, the group may become stuck at this stage and remain dependent and compliant for a long period of time. Such a state of affairs certainly would inhibit the group's ability to meet goals or be productive.

At this stage, however, conformity and dependence may be necessary conditions for the establishment of order and some degree of safety. It may not be a condition to fix or cure. Many would argue that the degree of conformity and dependence at this stage is unnecessary and correctable. However, research and theory on group development speak to the universality of conformity and dependence during stage one. Efforts to push the river (that is, speed the process) may result in group disintegration rather than group development. Initial conformity may be a kind of member initiation rite. Perhaps we have to join before we have the right to challenge.

Cohesion and Conflict

Festinger (1950) defined group cohesion as "the resultant of all forces acting on the members to remain in the group" (p. 274). Cohesion is the result of member attraction to the group, interpersonal attraction, group morale, group effectiveness, methods of conflict resolution, and the timing of leader feedback. During the first stage of group development, cohesion is primarily associated with member attraction to the group, the timing of leader feedback, and interpersonal attraction. This is so because group morale, effectiveness, and methods for conflict resolution are not yet fully operational, since these processes take longer to emerge.

Member attraction to the group refers to the reasons people join a particular group in the first place. One reason people join groups is that human beings seem to have a strong need to affiliate with others. While this may seem obvious, there has been significant research in the area, and it supports this conclusion (Gewirtz & Baer, l958a, 1958b; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953; Pepitone & Kleiner, 1957; Schacter 1959; Singer & Shockley, 1965; Stevenson & Odom, 1962).

Another reason people join groups is that they agree with and value the goals of the group (Latane, Eckrnan, & Joy, 1966; Reckman & Goethals, 1973; Sherif & Sherif, 1953*).* People join groups whose goals are consistent with their values and beliefs. They also join groups whose activities are likely to be rewarding and attractive (Sherif & Sherif, 1953; Thibault, 1950*).* Finally, member attraction is enhanced if the group is perceived as being able to satisfy needs outside the group. If outside needs for status, economic security, and the like can be met through membership, individuals are more likely to join (Rose, 1952; Ross & Zander, 1957; Willerman & Swanson, 1953).

The leader also plays a role in increasing group cohesion. Schaible and Jacobs (1975) found that it is important that initial feedback from the leader to the group be positive rather than negative. If this occurs, cohesion is increased. This seems to relate directly to the importance members place on the leader at this stage. If the group is attempting to please the leader, then members will be

encouraged by positive feedback from him or her. This may have the effect of reducing anxiety and increasing feelings of safety.

Interpersonal attractiveness is another factor associated with the development of group cohesion. Once an individual joins a group, he or she is usually confronted with many new people. If the individual finds other group members compatible and attractive, and vice versa, cohesion is increased. Physical attractiveness has been associated with cohesion (Kleck & Rubinstein, 1975; Krebs & Adinolfi, 1975; Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, & Rottman, 1966). Attitude similarity among members increases interpersonal attraction and cohesion (Byrne et al., 1967; Griffitt, 1966; Izard, 1960b). Economic similarity (Byrne, 1961; Byrne et al., 1966) and racial similarity are associated with attraction and cohesion (Kandel, 1978; Thomas, Ravlin, & Wallace, 1996). Need similarity is associated with attraction as well (Rychiak, 1965).

Taken together, this body of research suggests that the more alike group members are, the more cohesive the group will be. Also, the more that members value group goals and activities, the more cohesive the group will be. Finally, leaders in this initial stage who give members positive feedback will effect an increase in group cohesion.

High levels of cohesion increase conformity in groups (Bovard, 1951; Lott & Lott, 1961; Wyer, 1966). High cohesion also increases the influence that the group has over its members (Berkowitz, 1954; Schacter, Ellerston, McBride, & Gregory, 1951). Thus, with reference to the earlier discussion of conformity as a characteristic of groups at this stage, it seems reasonable to assume that one function of conformity is to increase group cohesion. Conversely, a function of cohesion might be to increase conformity.

Perhaps the essential goal of increasing cohesion and conformity during this early stage is group survival. In order to develop and mature, an organism must first survive intact. Maslow (1962) described this as the most basic individual need. The same appears to be true of groups. To survive, group members must stay together. Thus, cohesion and conformity and the avoidance of conflict become paramount at this early stage. Processes and procedures necessary for constructive conflict and disagreement are not yet in place. It is too risky for the group to allow conflict or disagreement. Group integration and the establishment of a coherent social structure that would allow for conflict and disagreement have not yet occurred. Thus, in order to survive, the major portion of the group's time and energy goes into increasing cohesion and conformity. Early deviation or conflict might be likely to cause the group to dissolve.

Groups at this stage are not yet in the position to solve complex problems, come to consensual and informed decisions, or work to their full capacity. However, such groups are often expected to do all these things. For example, it is common practice in industrial settings to put a team together to respond to an environmental demand. Such groups may be charged with developing a proposal, creating a new product, or generating new processes or procedures. Usually the teams are composed of individuals who are thought to be experts in the various tasks necessary to accomplish the goal. They are often from different departments and may not have worked together before. A project manager is selected to lead the team. Almost invariably, the team is given a

deadline for completing its work. Given the pressures of the business world, the time allotted for project completion tends to be short.

In this situation, the group is forced into premature decision making, role and task assignment, and the like. Outcomes in such circumstances tend to be inferior, since there is no time for the development of the group's culture and social structure that will facilitate the free flow of ideas. Unfortunately, there are many examples of this in work situations, community groups, and other kinds of groups. Understanding the process of group development and the time necessary for it to occur might help organizations to improve the effectiveness and productivity of project teams.

The previous statement brings up an important question. How long does the dependency and inclusion stage of group development last? Until very recently, there was no answer to that question. Although scholars have been studying group development across time for years, the length of time it takes for groups to develop was not investigated. The first study on this topic was published in 2003 (Wheelan, Davidson, & Tilin, 2003). The results suggest that the first stage of group development lasts two to three months and groups can reach the fourth, or work, stage of group development in five to eight months. Since this is the first study on this topic, more research will be needed to verify these findings. However, the study has provided a tentative time frame for group development. Of course, like people, not all groups reach maturity. Some groups remain in the dependency and inclusion stage for many months or many years.

3. CHAPTER 5
STAGE TWO: COUNTERDEPENDENCY AND FIGHT

3.1 Introduction

The events of stage two are hostile and conflictual. The conflict provides the energy needed by the group to continue to develop and clarify its culture and social structure. The group is working to establish a coherent culture and social structure that allows for communication and participation from all members. The group may or may not succeed in establishing a participatory, interdependent social structure. For the group to be successful, members must create a unified group culture and structure, as well as work with group processes. The following section describes the group structures and processes relevant to stage two, counter-dependency and fight.

3.2 Group Structures

The Communication Structure

It is during the conflict stage of group development that group members attempt to clarify, and agree on, goals, norms, roles, power distribution, and the like. All of this is accomplished through communication (Feldman, 1981; Trujillo, 1992). If the communication structure established during stage one does not allow sufficient participation in these discussions, agreement is unlikely. For example, in some groups only certain influential members speak. Decisions that are made do not necessarily represent a convergence of the views of all members. Consequently, commitment to these decisions may not be shared (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Locke & Latham, 1990). This can seriously affect commitment to goals, group morale, and productivity. Crucial to the successful resolution of the inevitable conflict of stage two is a communication structure that allows for participation and discussion of different member values, goals, and strategies for goal achievement. The communication structure must allow members the freedom to express their views and to disagree with each other. If it does not, member alienation, resentment, decreased attraction to the group, and decreased motivation to accomplish goals will be the results.

Unfortunately, examples abound of communication structures that inhibit the free flow of ideas and emotional reactions. At the macro level, elected officials who do not faithfully represent the views of citizens breed apathy and feelings of powerlessness among the electorate. Hierarchical communication structures in organizations often reduce and inhibit the upward flow of information. Decisions are made with less input from members, resulting in poor or uncreative decisions and apathy or hostility among organization members.

At the level of the small group, committee members may feel too unsafe or inhibited to express their views. After such a meeting, it is common to hear participants asking each other why no one spoke up at the meeting. “Why didn’t you say something?” is frequently heard. Such behavior outside the meeting suggests that the communication structure of that committee acts to instill fear of reprisals or rejection in lower-status members, which will inhibit the committee’s ability to

successfully deal with the naturally occurring conflict of stage two. The communication structure continues to enforce dependency and conformity. It also acts to maintain an excessive amount of anxiety about group membership and fears of rejection or reprisals. The group will be severely limited in its ability to develop a culture and social structure that will meet the emotional needs or achievement requirements of group members.

Such a state of affairs is often attributed to the malevolent intentions of the leader or the more powerful high-status members of the group. Members often feel that the power elite of the group is consciously trying to inhibit lower-status members' participation. While this undoubtedly is true in some cases, an inhibiting communication structure is often due to the unconscious choices made by group members during stage one. The communication structure is established very quickly and without much conscious thought. Thus, the type of structure established by the group may not meet the group's future requirements. Often the type of structure chosen is based on the past experiences of members or on the social conventions of the day (Anderson, Riddle, & Martin, 1999). As stated previously, no modern group begins from scratch to develop its culture and social structure. Therefore, a new group forming within an institution or culture that tends to be autocratic and hierarchical will, most likely, establish a hierarchical communication structure. All members, not just the leadership, will expect this to occur, and so it will. Even if the leader and higher-status members want increased member participation, it may not occur. Members, based on their past experience in that institution, may not trust the motives of the leadership and will not participate in a more egalitarian structure.

Goals and Tasks

The agreement concerning group goals that appears to exist at stage one generally disappears during the second stage of group development. This early agreement about goals is usually superficial, since disagreement is not considered safe at stage one. The discussion of group goals at stage one provides a context for tentative exploration by individual group members. It allows for the establishment of a communication structure and preliminary role assignments. These structural tasks take precedence over actual goal clarification. Establishing certain elements of the social structure helps to create a less anxiety-ridden and more predictable group environment. Members begin to feel a bit safer and more certain of their group membership. At the same time, members begin to feel constrained by the strong pressures to conform imposed by the group in order to facilitate the establishment of an initial social structure. These two elements, a feeling of increased safety coupled with a growing feeling of discomfort regarding the degree of conformity, provide members with the motivation to disagree and to challenge initial group decisions. Conflict is the inevitable result.

Wheaton (1974) stated that there are two types of conflict. *Principled conflict* focuses on disagreements about basic values. *Communal conflict* occurs when there is agreement about basic values but not on specifics. Wheaton noted that principled conflict negatively affects group cohesion. Communal conflict, however, positively affects cohesion. Essentially, once agreement on basic principles and values takes place, conflict over how to enact those principles and reach goals serves to remind members of their consensual values. This aids cohesion, cooperation, and group integration.

The conflicts that erupt at the second stage of group development tend to be both principled and communal. Basic values, ideals, and goals are explored. The group is seeking to establish the degree to which members agree or disagree about these basic issues. Group members hope to establish a consensus regarding basic values and group goals. The more divisive and severe the conflict is at this stage, the less likely it is that the group will become cohesive and integrated.

The search for agreement about basic values, goals, and commitment to these goals is a critical one. Agreement about goals and, ultimately, the paths to those goals affect many other aspects of the group. Cohen (1959) found that when goal-path clarity is poor, members report less motivation and security. Members also evaluate themselves more poorly and work less efficiently. Raven and Rietsema (1957) noted that high goal clarity is associated with increased attraction to group tasks and increased member conformity. Anderson (1975) reported that when goal-path clarity is high, so are cohesion and liking. More recent research has confirmed these findings (e.g., Locke & Latham, 1990; Weldon & Weingart, 1993). Vague or unclear goals have negative effects on group performance (Klein, Whitener, & Ilgen, 1990). Groups with a specific, difficult goal perform better than groups with unclear goals (Locke, Shaw, Sarri, & Latham, 1981).

The process by which goals are determined at stage one and redefined und clarified at stage two is critical to group success. If members feel that they have participated in these processes, they will be more committed to the goal and more determined to reach that goal (Klein & Mulvey, 1995; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Deutsch (1949a) defined a competitive group as one in which the goal achievement of one member hinders to some degree the goal achievement of the other members. In contrast, a cooperative group is one in which the goal achievement of one member facilitates the goal achievement of other members. In essence, Deutsch equated cooperation with homogeneous or consensual goals. Cooperative groups have consensual or homogeneous goals. He also reported that productivity is higher in groups with homogeneous goals than in other groups (Deutsch, l949b). It appears that the time and effort expended in seeking consensus and clarity about goals are well spent. If the group achieves consensus and clarity about goals, many other aspects of group culture and social structure will be positively affected.

Status and Roles

Role assignments are made early in the group. As a result, individual role assignments may or may not be useful to the individual or to the group. Also, it is important to remember that individuals are unlikely to initially disagree with their assigned roles. This is so, in part, because individuals tend to be unaware of the process of role assignment in groups. It also is due to the fact that even if a role feels particularly inappropriate and the individual is aware of his or her role assignment, the climate of stage one makes it very risky to challenge the group. Individual members fear rejection or punishment if they do not conform and go along with their role assignments.

At stage two, however, conflict and disagreement become more permissible. During this stage members try out their roles. A member may object to his or her role assignment and argue for another. Other members may be dissatisfied with an individual's enacted role and press the individual to conform to the expected role. These discussions and disagreements usually are more

indirect than direct discussions of roles. Since most people are not consciously aware of the role they are occupying in a particular group, discomfort with a role is often expressed as anger with the expectations of others regarding one's behavior.
Many of us have found ourselves in rather uncomfortable situations in which others seem to expect something of us that we either cannot or do not wish to do. Other members may be looking to us for advice and direction, and this makes us uncomfortable; they may expect us to know things that we do not know; or they may expect us to be silent and subservient when we do not wish to behave that way. These are examples of group role assignments and expectations for behavior. When the fit between the role occupant and the role is not a good one, the occupant will feel uncomfortable, and some occupants will begin to express this discomfort during the second stage of group development.

The individual is unlikely to say, "I am uncomfortable with my role assignment. Can I have another?" More likely, an individual will say, "You seem to think I know things that I don't." Another might say, "I keep feeling pressured to be quiet and agreeable." These are examples of individual role occupants' attempts to alter their role assignments by expressing their discomfort.

On the other hand, a role occupant may be comfortable with his or her role assignment. However, the group may not be happy with his or her performance. When this occurs, the group tends to communicate a great deal with the role occupant at first. If that person continues not to conform, however, he or she will be shunned or ignored by other group members (Hackman, 1992).

At stage two, then, members try out their role assignments. The fit between the individual and the role may be a good one or a source of tension and conflict within the individual. He or she may try to influence the group for a role change. Also, if the individual's enacted role does not fit the group's expectations, group members may try to influence the role occupant to change his or her behavior to conform with group expectations. Conflict and disagreement about role assignment or role performance are likely at this stage. It affords the group the opportunity to correct blatant errors in role assignments. It also allows individuals the opportunity to fine-tune their roles to fit them better. Keep in mind, however, that role shifts and changes do not occur very easily. Once a group member is in a role, it is difficult to get out of it. However, some shifts and changes do occur.

Leadership

In the first stage of group development, leaders have considerable influence. Members tend to be dependent on the leader for direction and safety. Leaders have a good deal of influence with regard to initial definition of goals and preliminary decisions about the types of group structures being established. The leader is expected by group members to provide direction, safety, order, group goals, and structures. During stage two, however, member expectations and reactions to the leader change markedly. Members begin to resent what is now perceived as undue influence on the part of the leader. The leader's competence may be challenged. Some members may feel manipulated by the leader. Members question the leader's competence and ability to provide safety. Suspicion of and challenges to, the leader's authority begin to take place.

Not all members become disenchanted with the leader. Some remain loyal. Bennis and Shepard (1956) reported that the group splits into two factions over this issue. One faction is supportive of the leader, and the other is not. These two factions often fight about their expectations of the

leader and his or her performance with regard to these expectations. Some of this conflict may be due to actual leader behavior in the group. Much of the conflict, however, is about things that go beyond the role of the leader. In essence, the conflict with and about the leader is a way for the group to discuss who can have input into decisions. Roles, decision making, power, status, and communication structures are being clarified in this process. Efforts to redistribute power begin to occur as well.

During the first stage of group development, the role of the leader is the most differentiated and important role. Other roles are just being assigned. The role of the leader, however, is either predetermined or assigned very quickly. The leader role is necessary to the establishment of some sense of safety and order. In effect, the role of leader and members' reactions to that role are the impetus for the emergence of other roles and structures in the group. The prominence of the leader at stage one and member dependence on the leader allow for initial structures to form. Once these are in place, the group can begin to define its structure even further. A major way that the group does this is by redefining the leader's role and reducing, to some extent, the power associated with that role. This redistribution of power clears the way for other structures and roles to emerge.

Coalitions and Subgroups

A sign of increasing organization and maturation at this stage is the appearance of coalitions and subgroups. During the first stage of group development few if any coalitions or subgroups form. Individual members tend to focus their attention on the leader as the source of safety and reward. Members do not know or trust each other enough to align themselves with some members over others. However, this changes during the second stage of group development. The necessary but confining conformity of stage one allows members to begin to explore each other's views and behavior.

Anxiety over inclusion lessens to some extent, and individuals begin to reveal themselves and their opinions more readily. These events herald the beginning of stage two and the advent of subgroups and coalitions that members will form for a variety of reasons.

Bennis and Shepard (1956) stated that subgroup formation occurs first in relation to the leader. The group tends to split into two subgroups based on their view of the leader. The dependent subgroup maintains its loyalty to the leader, while the counter-dependent subgroup begins to challenge the authority of the leader. These two subgroups debate their positions until some resolution is reached regarding how the group-as-a-whole will view the leader.

Subgrouping occurs when "two or more members develop ties with each other on the basis of some common understanding, feeling, or mutual need" (Luft, 1984, p.35). For example, a particular subgroup may contain the members of the group who are most similar with regard to their membership or reference groups. Mutual attraction may serve as the basis for a subgroup. Similarity of assigned group roles or the need to work together to accomplish part of the group's task may also serve as a basis for a subgroup. Emotional or communication style might be the criterion for membership in a subgroup. Similarity of goals or values is another possible reason for subgroup formation.

Whatever the reason for subgroup formation, it undoubtedly threatens the existing order of conformity and unity established at stage one. Thus, subgroup members are often challenged by other members and accused of exclusivity or disloyalty to the group. Regardless of how benign a subgroup may be, it upsets the group's infant structure and disturbs the newfound safety achieved during stage one. Issues of inclusion and exclusion resurface as the group-as-a-whole tries to cope with this new phenomenon.

In fact, the emergence of subgroups does signal a change in the group, but not necessarily a negative one. If the group is to develop a social structure capable of accomplishing its goals, it will be necessary for the group to allow subgroups to form. Mills (1967) stated that one of the criteria for group growth and development is the capacity to differentiate into subgroups while maintaining a feeling of group-as-a-whole unity. Luft (1984) stated that subgroups grow out of the need to organize to do work. Groups are systems made up of subsystems that are governed by relational ties and the requirements of the groups' goals and tasks (p. 16).

While the emergence of subgroups is perceived as threatening to total group unity, it is essential to group development. The group's social structure will remain primitive unless members are allowed to organize in ways that will facilitate goal achievement and morale. People must be allowed to be different and to establish different relationships with other members. Otherwise, work and emotional requirements will not be met.

Subgroups and membership in subgroups are subject to change over the course of the group. The basis for their formation will vary depending on the prevailing conditions and phase of group development. The interaction among different subgroups is thought by many to be an indicator of group development. Thus, when friendly relations exist among subgroups, the group-as-a-whole is at a higher level of development than when relations are strained or hostile.

During stage two, relations among emergent subgroups are likely to be tense and strained. This is due to the fact that the existence of any subgroup threatens the tentative unity so recently established. The emergence of subgroups also signals the beginning of a period of conflict, which group members would rather avoid. However, there is no avoiding the conflict and anxiety engendered by the overt expression of individual differences and allegiances.

Some see a subgroup as identical to a coalition. Borgatta (1961), for example, defined a coalition as joint activity. Mills (1953) described a coalition as providing mutual emotional support. These definitions are not unlike the description of a subgroup provided earlier. However, most researchers define a coalition as the joint use of resources to affect the outcome of group decisions (Gamson, 1964). According to this definition, a coalition is a special type of subgroup formed to influence group-as-a whole decisions. Other types of subgroups exist for a variety of reasons but not primarily to gain advantage in influencing group decisions. Forming a coalition is a very effective way to influence other group members (Chertkoff & Esser, 1997; Putnan 1986).

Coalitions involve two or more people who join forces against at least one other person. The assumption is that this joint action will produce a better result than would individuals acting alone (Bond & Vinacke, 1961; Caplow, 1959; Garnson, 1961 l961b, 1964; Komorita & Brinsberg, 1977; Lawler & Youngs, 1975; Pearce, Stevenson, & Porter, 1986; Vinacke & Arkoff, 1957). Like other

types of subgroups, coalitions are usually not permanent and shift with internal and external group condition. They are influenced by group norms and structures and the attitudes of group members. While any subgroup causes anxiety and potential conflict, coalitions are always associated with conflict. Those excluded from the coalition respond with hostility toward coalition members. Frequently, the excluded members attempt to forge their own coalition to counteract the influence of the original coalition. Another reason the hostility of excluded members is that coalitions tend to form and work outside boundaries of the formal group structure (Cyert & March, 1963; Pearce et al., 1986; Stevenson, Pearce, & Porter, 1985). For example, coalition discussions may take place outside of the group or on breaks rather than within the hearing of other group members.

Coalitions may contain members who disagree about other things but join forces to influence the direction of the group on some issue that they agree is important (Murnighan, 1978). In some cases, considerable bargaining and negotiation occur within the coalition in order to maintain the alliance (Murnighan, 1986).

Given the task during the second stage of group development, coalitions are inevitable. The task of the group-as-a-whole is to develop a unified group culture and social structure. Inevitably, individuals will differ in their views on the group's mission and goals and how the group should organize to meet these goals. It would be difficult for an individual member acting alone to have much influence on this process. However, by forming temporary coalitions, group members increase the probability of influencing decision making. Coalitions form to influence group goals, norms, structures, power distribution, roles, and many other issues. Coalitions, for and against a particular position, work to impose their views on the group. Ultimately, compromise on a particular issue may be reached. Current coalitions may then be dissolved and new ones formed based on differing views of another decision facing the group.

Coalitions form to gain power from or the power to resist unwanted influences being exerted by the leader, other high-status members, or other coalitions. As was stated earlier, if the content of the divergent views is extremely divisive, coalitions will battle for extended periods of time, often with no resolution. This will seriously impede group development. Group morale, cohesion, and productivity will be negatively affected as a result. Subgroups and coalitions present a special challenge to groups. They are necessary to group growth and development in that they allow for differentiation and organization essential to goal achievement. On the other hand, if coalitions cannot reach agreements and subgroups cannot be tolerated by the group-as-a-whole, group effectiveness and development will be seriously compromised.

3.3 Group processes

Conformity and Deviation

One of the hallmarks of the conflict stage of group development is a reduction in the amount of conformity required of group members. Decreased conformity is necessary to allow freer communication and discussion of different perspectives. It is also necessary for the establishment of a more democratic form of leadership. Finally, a reduction in conformity is essential to the formation of a social structure that can tolerate the subgroups and role differentiation necessary to do work.

Even though a reduction in conformity is necessary for further group development, individual deviators are met with considerable pressure to continue to conform. Thus, one reason for the emergence of subgroups and coalitions is to provide strength in numbers and protection for individuals with views different from the views of others. It is more difficult to reject or shun a subgroup or coalition than it is an individual. The task of the group at stage two is quite delicate. The group must allow deviation in order to promote group development and achievement. On the other hand, if deviation does not lead to coordination and unity, the group may disband or become dysfunctional.

Cohesion and Conflict

At this point, the reader may have come to the conclusion that cohesion is seriously impaired by the conflict that occurs at stage two. Many would agree (e.g., Axelrod & Dion, 1988; Messick & Mackie, 1989). While this can be the result, cohesion also can be positively affected by conflict. Although this sounds paradoxical, it is important to note that in any relationship, the freedom to be oneself and to disagree without fear of rejection or retribution increases rather than decreases cohesion and trust. Also, as was stated earlier, conflict provides energy to the group and allows for clarification of group values, goals, and structures. Conflict has been found to be associated with increased cohesion and member satisfaction with the group (Witteman, 1991). Cohesion and conflict are inextricably linked. You can't have one without the other, so to speak.

Of course, how conflict is dealt with is the crucial factor in determining its effect on cohesion and other group processes and outcomes. Researchers have described two kinds of conflicts. *Substantive conflicts* are disagreements about such things as goals, norms, and other task-related issues. *Interpersonal conflicts* are generated by incompatibilities or animosities between people (Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954). Other researchers refer to these two types of conflict as task versus socioemotional (Priem & Price, 1991; Wall & Nolan, 1986).

Interpersonal conflicts have negative effects on cohesion, communication, and cooperation (Baron, 1991). These conflicts decrease member satisfaction as well (Peterson, 1983). Finally, interpersonal conflicts negatively affect group productivity (Argyris, 1962; Jehn, 1995). Substantive, or task, conflicts have the opposite effect (Amason & Schweiger, 1994; Tjosvold, Dann, & Wong, 1992).

Inevitably most conflicts are resolved. How they are resolved will determine whether group cohesion is positively or negatively affected. Two strategies to handle conflict have been described in the literature. Conflict resolution is based on the premise that conflict is destructive. Therefore, the strategy focuses on ending conflict as quickly as possible or avoiding it altogether. This strategy encourages cooperation and quick resolution of disagreements that arise (e.g., Heitler, 1990; Messick & Mackie, 1989). Conflict management is based on the idea that conflict can be positive and constructive. Therefore, the strategy is to engage group members in constructive dialogue (e.g., Folger & Poole, 1984; Pace, 1990; Tjosvold, 1991).

It is possible that conflict resolution might be the best strategy for interpersonal or socioemotional conflicts since this type of conflict always seems to have negative effects on groups. Conflict management seems to be the best strategy for dealing with substantive or task conflicts since

these conflicts can have quite positive effects if they are handled correctly. Some groups navigate their conflicts well, and others disband or become dysfunctional by dealing with their differences ineffectively.

4. CHAPTER 6
STAGE 3: TRUST AND STRUCTURE

4.1 Introduction

The third stage of group development is a time when norms are defined and redefined. This stage portrays a period of integration – adjusting group structure in order to increase the likelihood of goal achievement and productivity. It is also a period in which trust and cohesion are solidified. Group development is characterised by more mature negotiations about goals, roles, organisational structure and procedures. The following sections provide a more in-depth discussion of these group structures and processes.

4.2 Group Structures

The Communication Structure

Tuckman (1965) stated that during the third stage of group development, communication becomes more open and task oriented. Feedback tends to be more straightforward, readily given and received. The communication structure, which allowed for successful resolution of conflict at stage two, is altered further by the events of stages two and three. That is, if conflicts over goals, roles, values, and leadership are reasonably resolved, then group structures, including communication, are adjusted to increase the probability of goal achievement and group productivity (Hare, 1976). The struggles encountered at stage two could not have been resolved unless the communication structure allowed expression of different opinions and points of view. Thus, communication at stage three will be more open and freer of hidden agendas. The increased clarity about group goals attained at stage two also helps to facilitate the communication process (Shaw, 1976).

As was stated previously, a centralized communication structure enhances early group development and the establishment of stable leadership. However, this type of communication structure also impedes problem solving with regard to complex tasks and reduces member satisfaction as well (Shaw, 1981). Ideally, then, groups need to shift communication structures to manage different group tasks and goals. The reader will recall, however, that groups tend to resist changes in the established communication structure (Cohen & Bennis, 1962; Mills, 1967). What this suggests is that groups that arrive at stage three either had a more flexible communication structure from the start or managed to alter the existing communication structure enough to allow for a freer flow of information and a more decentralized communication network.

The content of communication is also altered during stage three. Member communication becomes more task oriented. Many of the socioemotional needs of members have been addressed by this time. Needs for inclusion, safety, affection, status, and the like have been dealt

with to some extent. Therefore, members can focus on group tasks more directly without being overly concerned about their emotional needs. Of course, emotional needs are ever present. Human beings always require reassurance, praise, support, and the like. Maintenance, or supportive, statements continue to be essential to successful individual and group functioning. Supportive statements do not decrease in frequency at stage three. In fact, they may increase in this more open climate. The number of task statements, however, significantly increases at this stage (Wheelan, Davidson, & Tilin, 2003; Wheelan & Williams, 2003).

This increased focus on group tasks is the hallmark of stage three. The group is preparing to work on goal and task accomplishment. Stage three groups have two primary tasks to accomplish in order to prepare for work. Members must continue to build trust and cohesion among themselves. They also must decide how to accomplish their recently clarified goals. That is, group members must determine the best methods to reach their goals. Division of labor, steps to goal achievement, problem solving, idea generation, decision-making strategies, and other organizational structures must be reevaluated and altered, if necessary, to ensure group success. The newly renovated communication structure facilitates this process.

Goals and Tasks

As a result of the group's struggles at stage two, goal clarity has increased. Raven and Rietsema (1957) found that goal clarity increases member attraction to group tasks. Member conformity also increases as a result. When goal-path clarity is high, liking among members is also high (Anderson, 1975). These studies lend support to the necessity of stage two, where time is spent and effort is expended to clarify goals. Studies also suggest relationships among goal acceptance, goal clarity, trust, and cohesion (Greene, 1989; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Ahearne, 1997). The group enters stage three with a shared vision of its mission and, as a result, is more trusting and ready to work cooperatively. Deutsch (1949a) described a cooperative group as one in which the goal achievement of an individual member is perceived as furthering the goal achievement of the group-as-a-whole. Homogeneous group goals, then, facilitate effective group functioning (Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 1995). This is due, in part, to the positive effect of a shared vision on cohesion (Locke & Latham, 1990). It becomes easier to establish a workable group social structure, which members conform to willingly.

A group's level of aspiration is raised following a success (Shelley, 1954*;* Zander & Medow, 1963). Resolving conflicts and developing a shared sense of mission and goals constitutes a major success experience. This provides the group with actual evidence of their ability to perform as a group. Zander (1971) stated that when group performance is unknown, a group is likely to choose tasks that are too difficult for the group to achieve. Stage one groups tend to make this mistake, since they do not have any way to gauge the group's performance level. However, as a result of a group's performance at stage two, it can be more realistic in determining the degree of task difficulty that it can manage.

The greater members' desires for group success, the more likely the group is to choose tasks of intermediate difficulty (Zander, 1971). High levels of group cohesion also lead to the choice of tasks of intermediate difficulty (Zander, 1971). If the group must choose difficult tasks, performance is improved if members can openly communicate their feelings about the group's progress (Maier, 1950; Shaw & Blunt, *1965).* Events at stage two tend to expand channels of communication,

allowing for increased member input. As a result, group decisions about tasks and organizational structures made at stage three are more likely to be based on input from more people. This makes the establishment of a more realistic and efficient organizational structure possible.

Members of groups that reach the third stage of development, then, tend to be enthusiastic about participating and hopeful about the likelihood of group success. Member commitment to, and interest in, group goals and tasks is high as a result of an emerging sense of shared goals. A sense of "we-ness" has replaced individualism as a common value.

Status and Roles

It sounds as if there is smooth sailing ahead for a stage-three group. Much work remains to be done, however. For example, a group's social structure begins to form and solidify from the very beginning. Thus, a stage-three group may have developed, albeit unwittingly, a social structure that could inhibit its further development. Some alterations of that structure undoubtedly occurred at stage two. In the process of clarifying values and goals, the group inevitably alters various elements of group structure. The communication structure, for example, is altered to allow for the expression of differing views. Role conflicts and ambiguities are identified and discussed. At stage three, the group has the important and difficult task of redefining or reassigning roles that have been identified as problematic.

Role conflict and ambiguity have been found to increase tension, decrease job satisfaction, and increase turnover among employees (Kemery, Bedeian, Mossholder, & Touliatos, 1985). Fisher and Gitelson (1983) reviewed forty-two studies of role conflict and ambiguity and found that increases in either factor resulted in member tendencies to leave the group. Lowered commitment, involvement, and job satisfaction were also noted. Participation in decision making also decreased as a result of role conflict or ambiguity.

Having identified role conflicts and ambiguities during stage two, group members must resolve these conflicts and clarify role ambiguities at stage three. As has already been stated, however, role redefinition or reassignment is an arduous task. Sometimes it is difficult to change the perceptions of the role occupant, and it can be equally difficult to change the expectations of other members regarding an individual's role assignment. Position in the group, you will recall, results from one's role and status in the group. Role reassignment, then, may result in decreased status and position. Individuals may resist reassignment as a result. Other members may resist the reassignment of an individual if this is perceived as threatening to their own positions.

Since trust and cohesion are higher at stage three than previously, role redefinition and reassignment are more likely. However, the process remains difficult. Unfortunately, little research has been done on how this occurs when it occurs. Clues to this process, however, can be found in research on factors that produce changes in the group status of women and minorities. Women and minorities tend to be assigned lower status in groups (Berger, Wagner, & Zelditch, 1985; Haslett, Geis, & Carter, 1992). Minorities and women report dissatisfaction with their lower status, and other group members report uncertainty about the status of minority and female group members (Asante & Davis, 1985; Cianni & Romberger, 1991; Haslett, Geis, & Carter, 1992).

Group performance suffers when member role and status assignments are inappropriate. Potentially valuable contributions are overlooked, and goal achievement and productivity suffer as a result (Kirchler & Davis, 1986). Researchers have identified individual strategies and group conditions, however, that increase the status of women and minorities in groups. These results may also apply to individuals whose group role or status is not commensurate with their abilities.

Leadership

It may be apparent to the reader that member perceptions of the role of the leader change at different stages of group development. In stage one, group members perceive the leader as benevolent and powerful. He or she is seen as the source of member safety and reward. At stage two, members begin to challenge the leader's authority and control. In order for the group to mature, such challenges are necessary. The role of the leader must be redefined if the group is to move into stage three. Power is redistributed, and all leaders of groups experience some loss of influence and prominence at stage three.

Groups that successfully move into stage three do so, in part, by changing the relationship between members and the leader. The leader, once benevolent and authoritarian in the eyes of members, emerges in stage three in a more realistic way, as a group facilitator or coordinator. Earlier mythic qualities ascribed to the leader by members are stripped away, and a human being with a job to do emerges. Leader prominence is less necessary at later stages of development, since goals and roles have become clearer. Member roles have emerged that take over aspects of the leader's role. The elaborated group social structure makes leader prominence unnecessary and potentially disruptive. The leader moves into a more consultative role with the group. Leadership is still necessary for coordination; however, the role no longer carries the symbolic qualities it had at earlier stages.

These changes in status and perceptions take their toll on the bravest of leaders. Since most people who assume a leadership role are not aware of these naturally occurring group processes, they may feel defeated as a result of stage two. However, in order for the group to develop further, the leader's perceived, expected, and enacted role must be altered significantly.

To this point we have focused on group members' perceptions of, and reactions to, the leader and how changes in these reactions facilitate group development. How should the leader behave during these stages? Logically, the enacted leader role can facilitate or impede group development. The leader and the members form an interacting system. Each part of the system affects the other parts. It is reasonable to assume, then, that some leadership styles will be better than others. The question is which style is best?

Research results concerning the best leadership style are not clear. In fact, results tend to be contradictory. Leadership styles have been identified, but debate continues about which style is best. One reason for the confusion is that most investigators have not taken the stages of group development into account in researching this question. If they did, the research question would change from "What leadership style is best?" to "What leadership style is best at what stage of group development?" Fortunately, there is some research that addresses this second question.

Coalitions and Subgroups

The prevalence of coalitions during stage three, tends to be less that at the previous stage. Since coalitions form to influence the resolution of conflict, their presence during stage three reminds us that not all group conflicts were resolved during the previous stage. Because a primary task of groups at this stage is to decide on strategies for goal accomplishment and group procedures, conflicts are inevitable. Coalition formation, therefore, is equally inevitable.

Subgroups in which two or more members form a bond based on some shared understanding, need, or feeling also continue to emerge during stage three. What changes at this stage is the group's response to coalitions and subgroups. In previous stages of development, coalitions and subgroups were met with considerable hostility from other group members. Their existence seemed threatening to the tentative unity that the group was attempting to forge. Coalitions or subgroups were seen as a threat to the group's survival. They were perceived as potentially capable of splitting the group apart. At stage three, however, coalitions and subgroups are met with less negativity and more tolerance.

Mills (1967) stated that the capacity to form subgroups while maintaining group-as-a-whole cohesion and unity is essential for group development. Luft (1984) concurred and added that the group system is made up of subunits, of which subgroups are one, which are connected to the system as a whole by relationships and task requirements. Without subgroups, the group-as-a-whole could not organize to get its work done. Imagine a society in which there was no division of labor. How would its needs be met? Who would do what? Subgrouping is needed in order to-organize and subdivide the work necessary for goal achievement. Coalitions, while less long lasting, are also necessary to group functioning in that they provide members with a way to influence the group-as-a whole.

The more tolerant response of other group members to subgroups and coalitions during the third stage of group development seems to be due to the fact that they are perceived as less threatening than they were at earlier stages. The group at this stage is more solid and cohesive. Members have dealt with conflict successfully in the past without breaking apart. In fact, members have learned that coalitions may influence the group in positive ways.

Subgroups are also trusted more. Other group members assume that the sub-group will conform to the group's norms and will work for the good of the whole. Of course, as with all group processes and dynamics, there is always the potential for a coalition or subgroup to negatively affect the group. They may not act in the best interests of the group or may gain enough power to return the total group to the dependency stage of group development. Thus, while essential to group development coalitions and subgroups continue to be a potential threat, albeit to a lesser extent. Given the pressures to conform, however, the risks are worth it, since the benefits usually outweigh the risks.

4.3 Group Processes

Conformity and Deviation

As Tuckman (1965) and others have demonstrated, norms are reworked during this third stage of group development. Norms that inhibit group development are altered to increase the likelihood of goal achievement. The reader will recall that pressures to conform were very high during the first stage of group development. During stage two, pressures to conform are reduced, which allows for the expression of differences of opinion and disagreements. This reduction in conformity at stage two is essential. It allows conflicts hidden at stage one to surface and be addressed. As conflicts are resolved, a more consensual, unified group culture emerges. Members forge agreements about goals, roles, and group processes during stages two and three. These agreements result in a shared sense of direction and increased commitment to the group and its goals.

During the third stage of group development, pressures to conform increase again. While this may seem regressive, there is evidence to support the reemergence of conformity and a rational explanation for the increase. We know from research that conformity increases with increasing member unanimity (Asch, 1951; Morris & Miller, 1975). Stage three groups have struggled to gain agreement on goals, roles, procedures, and the like. Thus, it is logical that pressures to conform to these revised norms and agreements would increase.

In addition, decentralized communication networks produce more conformity (Goldberg, 1955; Shaw et al., 1957). Stage-three groups tend to establish more decentralized communication networks in order to prepare for work on group goals and tasks. Decentralized communication networks increase member satisfaction with the group and a sense of unity. They also make the solution of complex problems more likely. Thus, members are more willing to conform.

Conformity increases as member attraction increases (Goldberg, 1955; Shaw et al., 1957). Conformity also increases as cohesion builds (Bovard, 1951; Lott & Lott, 1961; Wyer, 1966). Increases in trust, member attraction, and cohesion are all typical of stage-three groups. Increases in pressures to conform are a logical outgrowth of these dynamic changes.

Finally, conformity increases with group success (Hollander, 1960; Kidd & Campbell, 1955). The resolution of conflicts that emerged at stage two is a major group success. It is logical, then, that pressures to conform to the norms of the more unified group would increase in strength.

The reader may have determined already that the conformity being described here is different from the conformity described as typical of stage one. Conformity at stage one is based on fear of exclusion, needs for safety, and concern with the ambiguity inherent in a beginning group. Stage-three conformity is based on shared agreements and a sense of belonging. In short, members more willingly conform and encourage others to conform to the requirements of the culture they have built together. It is qualitatively different to conform to a norm because you want to and agree with the norm's requirements than to conform out of fear of rejection.

Deviation during stage one is dealt with quite harshly. However, deviation that occurs later in a group's development is subject to less severe sanctions (Wahrman & Pugh, 1974). Thus, while conformity increases at this third stage of group development, punishment for deviation does not.

In fact, it lessens. This, too, is different from the process surrounding conformity and deviation during stage one. Perhaps some additional research findings will shed some light on why this is so. In general, member deviation or nonconformity with group norms eventually leads to exclusion or rejection by the rest of the group (Schacter, 1951). Group members will attempt to get the deviant to conform, but if he or she does not comply, serious consequences will accrue to the deviant (Hackman, 1992). However, if the task is facilitated by a member's deviance, group sanctions are lessened (Kelley & Shapiro, 1954). Since stage-three groups have experienced the positive effects of deviation during stage two, such groups are more likely to allow deviation that proves to be helpful in moving the group toward its goal.

Prior conformity also reduces the severity of sanctions that a deviant receives (Hollander, 1960; Katz, 1982). Individuals who have been together for a period of time and have not been previously rejected or shunned for deviance have a record of prior conformity. Members of a stage-three group are less likely to receive severe sanctions for deviance, since they have conformed to group norms in the past. Finally, if group norms encourage innovation, then deviance will be more tolerated (Moscovici, 1976). Again, stage-three groups are more likely to have norms that encourage innovation than groups at earlier stages.

We see, then, that while conformity increases during the third stage of group development, its effects are not debilitating. Rather, conformity at this stage is based on trust and agreements reached by the group-as-a-whole. While conformity in its extreme can result in coercion or even unconscionable group actions, the conformity described here supports coordination of group activities, order, and altruism when individuals place the good of the group above their own. Members can be more socially responsible due to positive pressures to conform (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963).

Cohesion and Conflict

An increase in group cohesion is a main feature of the third stage of group development. There are a number of reasons for this increase. First, research tells us that when goal-path clarity and goal acceptance are high, cohesion will be high (Anderson, 1975; Greene, 1989). As a result of the efforts expended at stage two to clarify and agree on the group's goal and efforts being expended at stage three to determine the path to goal achievement, cohesion logically increases.

Second, successful resolution of conflicts at stage two reduces individual fears of rejection and increases intermember trust. A feeling of "we-ness" or cohesiveness results. Third, while it is rarely clear what causes what in an interacting system, increased communication is associated with increased cohesion and vice versa (Back, 1951; French, 1941; Lott & Lott, 1961). Given the increases in the types and amounts of communication allowed at stage two, increases in cohesion are a likely outcome.

What effects does increased cohesion have on the group? Increased conformity has already been cited as one noticeable effect (Bovard, 1951; Lott & Lott, 1961; Wyer, 1966). The group has more influence over its members when cohesion is high (Berkowitz, 1954; Schacter et al., 1951). Member satisfaction with the group increases as cohesion increases (Exline, 1957; Gross, 1954; Marquis, Guetzkow, & Heyns, 1951; Van Zelst, 1952). Increases in cohesion are also associated

with increased group productivity (Evans & Dion, 1991; Mullen & Cooper, 1994; Prapavessis & Carron, 1997). Finally, high levels of cohesion produce increased cooperation and facilitate group integration (Back, 1951; Elias, Johnson, & Fortman, 1989).

The significance of cooperation in groups cannot be overestimated. Cooperation, which js facilitated by cohesion and commitment to group goals, has many positive effects on group functioning (Deutsch, l949a). Deutsch, who spent his career researching the effects of cooperation (and competition) on group functioning, identified a number of characteristics of cooperative groups. These include (1) more effective communication, (2) a friendlier group atmosphere, (3) stronger individual desire to work on the group task, (4) stronger feelings of commitment to the group, (5) greater division of labor, (6) greater coordination of effort, (7) greater group productivity, (8) increased trust and the development of stable agreements, and (9) increased ability to resolve conflicts (Deutsch, l949a, 1949b, 1973, 1990a).
The stage-three group, with its increased levels of cohesion and cooperation, is ready and able to organize in effective ways to work on its tasks and to accomplish its goals. Cohesion is a significant catalyst in this process.

A word of caution with regard to cohesion is appropriate at this point. High levels of cohesion, in conjunction with specific additional factors, can have deleterious affects on groups. Groupthink, or “a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment that results from in-group pressures,” can occur under certain conditions (Janis, 1972, p. 9). That is, a group can make poor or, in some cases, dangerous decisions. When members know that others will evaluate their individual and/or group performance, social loafing virtually is eliminated (Goethals & Darley, 1987; Harkins & Szymanski, 1987). For these conditions to exist in natural groups, time and group maturation are required. What can be concluded, at this point, is that groups have the potential to surpass individual performance under certain circumstances. However, whether groups maximize this potential depends on their ability to create a culture and social structure that facilitate performance and goal achievement.

5. CHAPTER SEVEN
STAGE 4: WORK AND STAGE 5:TERMINATION

5.1 Introduction

During stage 4, work, ideas are converted into products by means of effective communication, awareness of time and utilisation of all the available resources and leadership (Wheelan, 2005).

During Stage 5, termination, group members are faced with the end of the group's life. Stage 5 is characterised by separation anxiety and reflection on life once the group is no longer there (Wheelan, 2005). The task of the group leader and the group member in stage 5 (Wheelan, 2005, p 188) entails assimilating the end of the group's activities: looking back on what has been accomplished and looking ahead at what comes next. Unconsciously this stage is compared with the process of dying and the attendant conflicts. On the one hand there may be an agreeable sense of satisfaction and completion. On the other hand there may be a sense of regret or sadness that it is all over, and fear of the future without the support system. Regression would mean that the individual or group reverts to earlier stages - that is, repeats past conflicts.

The following sections provide a more in-depth discussion of the group structures and processes evident in stage 4.

5.2 Group Structures

Communication

Communication among members of stage-four groups is significantly different from communication among members of groups at other stages. Bales (1970) proposed that in highly effective groups, 60 percent of member communications are work, or task, oriented. More recent research found the percentage of work statements in stage-four groups to be, on average, 76 percent (Wheelan & Williams, 2003).

In contrast, members of groups in the early stages of group development generate less than half the work statements generated by stage-four groups. Also, members of groups in the early stages of development generate significantly more fight, flight, and dependency statements (Verdi & Wheelan, 1992; Wheelan & McKeage, 1993; Wheelan & Williams, 2003). Differences are also apparent between stage-three and stage-four groups. Members of stage-three groups generate significantly fewer work statements than members of stage-four groups (Wheelan & Williams, 2003). It is evident that high-performance teams are very focused on their work.

Communication Patterns in Groups at Different Development Stages

	Stage 1 and 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Work	38.20%	63.90%	75.70%
Fight	3.60%	0.35%	0.24%
Flight	28.30%	9.20%	3.0%
Dependency	6.36%	2.40%	1.50%

Approximately 17 percent of the statements made by members of groups at any stage of group development are supportive or positive maintenance statements (Verdi & Wheelan, 1992; Wheelan & McKeage, 1993; Wheelan & Williams, 2003). Positive, encouraging communications have been described as key to establishing a supportive, as opposed to a defensive, communication climate (Gibb, 1961). Group members see a defensive, or negative, communication climate as a barrier to group effectiveness and productivity (Broome & Fulbright, 1995). However, since the proportion of supportive statements does not seem to increase or decrease significantly at different stages of development, it may be that decreases in fight, flight, and dependency statements may be responsible for the creation of a supportive communication climate during stage four.

In stage-four groups, communication is predominantly task oriented. Feedback also increases at this stage. Effective groups get, give, and utilize more feedback about their performance (Ketchum, 1984; Kolodny & Kiggundu, 1980). Work-related disagreements continue to occur, albeit at lower levels, and these conflicts tend to be brief. There are also moments when the group is off task. However, stage-four groups, or high-performance teams, remain intently focused on accomplishing goals and tasks.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

One of the distinguishing features of stage-four groups is their emphasis on task-related problem solving and decision making. Utilizing the plans, strategies, and methods for problem solving and task accomplishment established during stage three, the stage-four group's primary task is to implement these strategies to resolve problems, make decisions, and accomplish tasks.

Effective methods for decision making and problem solving have been studied by a number of researchers. Their results are, in general, overlapping. For example, Shaw (1981) stated that effective group problem solving and decision making consists of four steps: recognizing the problem, diagnosing the problem, decision making, and accepting and carrying out the solution. Maier and Solem (1952) suggested that productive group problem solving begins with a brief discussion of each member's views on the issue. Next, important factors related to the problem are listed. Finally, the list is used as a guide in determining the final solution.

Others have outlined a process similar to Shaw's description, including an orientation phase, a discussion phase, a decision phase, and an implementation phase (Fisher, 1980; Hoffman; 1982; Simon, 1976; Zander; 1982). Each of these phases has significant impact on the quality of a group's solution and/or its overall productivity and effectiveness. For example, during the orientation phase the problem is defined, and strategies are outlined for solving the problem. Strategies include such things as ways to gain needed information about the problem, how to analyze the information, and how to make the final decision. Research tells us that groups that outline these strategies in advance are more successful than those that do not (Hackman, Brousseau, & Weiss, 1976; Hirokawa, 1980; Senge, 1990; Vinokur, Burnstein, Sechrest, & Wortman, 1985). Unfortunately, many groups spend little or no time planning strategies for problem solving and decision making. Some groups consider it a waste of time, even if members have been made aware of the fact that planning improves solution quality and group performance (Hackman & Morris, 1975).

The amount of time spent in the discussion phase of the decision-making process improves the quality of the outcome (Harper & Askling, 1980; Katz & Tushman, 1979; Laughlin, 1988). Member participation relates to the quality of the group's solution and overall effectiveness as well (Harper & Askling, 1980; Salazar, Hirokawa, Propp, Julian, & Leatham, 1994). The quality of the decision is enhanced when the decision making process is a collective effort (Janis & Mann, 1977).

The discussion phase is more effective if group members have sufficient information about the problem or issue at hand (Kelley & Thibaut, 1969). Better decisions result if groups contain members with effective critical thinking skills (Janis, 1982). Generating and evaluating potential solutions is key to effective decision making. Evaluating both the negative and positive aspects of potential solutions has been associated with effective decision making (Hirokawa & Rost, 1992). Again, many groups do not spend adequate time discussing or evaluating possible solutions. In some cases, group members will only discuss a few alternative solutions and evaluation is cursory at best (Janis & Mann, 1977; Stasser & Titus, 1985).

Groups can make the actual decision in a number of ways. The group may delegate the responsibility for the final decision to an individual, subgroup, or expert. Member inputs could be averaged to form the basis for the decision. Group members can vote on alternative proposals or may choose consensus as their decision-making method (Davis, 1982; Kerr, 1982). *Consensus* refers to reaching a decision that is agreeable to all members. Efforts to determine which of these methods is best have been unsuccessful (Hirokawa, 1984; Rawlins, 1984). Individuals like the consensus method, but it does not necessarily produce better decisions. In general, people tend to like any method as long as they agree with the final decision (Miller, Jackson, Mueller, & Scherscing, 1987).

It is certain, however, that participation in the decision-making process does increase member satisfaction. It may also improve performance to some extent (Miller & Wong, 1986). Sashkin (1984) stated that nonparticipation might have negative physical and psychological effects on individuals. He concluded that since participation increases member satisfaction and may improve, or at least not degrade, performance, it would be unethical not to advocate participatory decision making.

Implementing group decisions and evaluating the outcomes of group decisions are key elements in the process. Ideally, evaluation is built into the process, and the results of the evaluation form the basis for the group's next problem-solving process (Lewin, 1943; 1951). Many of us have sat on committees and made recommendations that were never implemented. This is often the case when the group making the decision does not have the authority to implement its solution. Nothing is as demoralizing to a group. It is incumbent on the group, then, to interact with other groups that will be involved in implementation throughout its deliberations. This increases the likelihood of successful implementation of group outcomes.

Most of us are also aware of decisions that were not evaluated after implementation and were not having the desired effect. Problem solving and decision making, especially in the workplace, are not finite processes. Decisions require monitoring to ensure their continued effectiveness. If new problems are identified, the problem-solving and decision-making process begins again.

The findings outlined in this section suggest that problem solving and decision making are enhanced when groups outline, in advance, the strategies they will use to solve problems and make decisions. Lengthy discussion and assessment of alternative solutions, ensuring implementation and evaluation, and involving all members in these processes are also associated with quality problem solving and decision making. These steps, supported by research, seem reasonable and are likely to help groups make better choices, but other factors must be considered as well.

Goals and Tasks

While it is not quite accurate to identify one factor in an interactive and interdependent system as more important than others, it is fair to say that a high level of goal consensus is crucial in determining the ultimate level of group productivity (Crowne & Rosse, 1995; Weldon & Weingart, 1993). Homogeneity of goals is not enough to ensure productivity, of course. Many other factors can interfere with group achievement. For example, a number of researchers remind us that high goal consensus must be accompanied by high levels of agreement about member and leader status in order to ensure group productivity (Heinicke & Bales, 1953; Klein & Christiansen, 1969; Melnick & Chemer, 1974). However, homogeneous goals significantly increase the likelihood of effective group functioning and productivity (Deutsch, 1949b; O'Leary, Kelly, Martocchio, & Frink, 1994).

Group tasks also influence group productivity. The reader will recall that tasks represent the kinds of work that must be done in order to accomplish the group's goal. With increasing task difficulty, group performance tends to decrease (Lanzetta & Roby, 1956, 1957; Shaw & Blum, 1965*).*

Group performance will be better than individual performance on some tasks and not on others. Common sense tells us that this is so. For example, certain tasks only require one person to accomplish them. Only one person is needed to paint a picture. More than one person would, most likely, reduce overall performance. To paint a house, however, more than one capable house painter would be helpful. Thus, factors to be considered in predicting group performance and productivity include the inherent demands of the group's task. Task demands include whether a task is divisible or unitary, the type of output required, and the methods used to combine member contributions to the task (Steiner, 1972).

Divisible tasks, as their name implies, can be broken down into subtasks to be accomplished by an individual or subgroup. *Unitary tasks,* such as portrait painting, cannot be divided. If the output desired is quantity, Steiner (1972) refers to the task as *maximizing.* If quality output or performing up to a given standard is required the task is *optimizing.* Finally, the methods for combining member inputs vary with different tasks. *Additive tasks* require adding member inputs to determine the group's productivity. *Compensatory tasks* require the averaging of all member inputs to determine the group's solution or product. *Disjunctive tasks* require a yes-or-no solution. *Conjunctive tasks* require each member to complete certain behaviors or actions before the task is finished. Finally, in some cases, the group is free to choose its own method of combining member inputs. Steiner refers to these tasks as *discretionary.*

Roles and Status

High consensus about group goals and tasks, in and of itself, is not sufficient to ensure group productivity. Member agreement about their roles is another important factor. In Chapter 4, the early process of role assignment was described. The reader will recall that role assignments are not necessarily made on the basis of individual competencies. As a result, individuals may find themselves in unaccustomed or unacceptable roles. Role conflict is usually the result. Also, role ambiguity, or a lack of clarity about what is expected of a person in a particular role, is possible. Another potential hazard for the group is that role assignments may have resulted in the wrong man or woman occupying a particular role. That is, the role occupant may not have the abilities necessary to perform his or her assigned role.

Role conflict or ambiguity can result in tension and lower satisfaction (Kemery et al., 1985). It can also result in high turnover in work groups. Lower commitment, involvement, and participation are other potential effects of role conflict or ambiguity (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983). All of these outcomes will negatively affect a group's ability to be productive in, or even to reach, the work stage of group development.

Groups must be careful to match member abilities and skills with their roles. Group effectiveness is enhanced when member role assignments relate to the group's tasks (Steiner, 1972). Then, when tasks are subdivided, member task assignments can be made on the basis of ability with regard to specific tasks. If, however, a member's role does not allow for effective task assignments, group productivity will be compromised.

An example of inappropriate task assignments due to role occurred at a large university. Racial tension had erupted at the school. In an attempt to work to resolve the tension, a task force consisting of students and administrators was formed. However, faculty members with expertise in intergroup conflict were not asked to work on this task. Perceptions of faculty roles were a clear factor in their exclusion. That is, the resolution of this conflict was seen as the role of administration rather than faculty. The task force, as a result, reduced the likelihood of successful task completion by excluding important resource persons. Unfortunately, this is a far too frequent occurrence in all types of groups.

Status, a consequence of role and position in the group, must also be acceptable to group members if productivity is to be high (Klein & Christiansen, 1969). If the role and position of a member does not confer status that is acceptable to him or her, or to other group members, group effectiveness may be compromised.

Stage-four groups, or high-performance teams, have resolved role and status conflicts at an earlier time. However, members would be wise to continue to monitor the group for role and status concerns. Reemergence of these issues may occur as tasks are completed and new tasks need to be tackled. This may require role shifts in order to match individual abilities to the demands of the new tasks.

Leadership

Some researchers have found that, for some kinds of tasks, groups don't need leaders (e.g., Howell, Bowen, Dorfinan, & Kerr, 1986; Watson & Behnke, 1990). However, from a practical perspective, there are group tasks and functions that must be attended to, especially early in a group's life. Scheduling meetings, assigning tasks, dealing with the external environment, supporting and encouraging members, and monitoring group performance and progress are examples of such tasks and functions. Typically, one person performs these tasks and functions early on, but should it stay that way? What is the relationship between members and leaders? What makes a good leader? Can good leaders be identified and selected for that role? Do leaders that have been selected actually improve group performance? This section will address these questions. It begins with a discussion of leadership style.

There has been considerable argument over the years about what style of leadership increases group productivity. For example, a number of studies have found that a democratic leadership style facilitates group productivity (e.g., Argyle, Gardner, & Ciofi, 1958; Lyle, 1961). Other studies, however, conclude that an autocratic leadership style increases group effectiveness (e.g., Lyle, 1961; Mahoney, 1967; Shaw, 1955). Still other studies found that democratic leadership had no effect on productivity (e.g., Adams, 1952; Anderson, 1959; Mahoney, 1967; Snadowsky, 1969). To confuse things even further, another set of studies determined that an autocratic leadership style had no effect on group productivity. A democratic style, however, has been consistently associated with increased member satisfaction and group cohesion (e.g., Foa, 1957; Mullen, 1965; Shaw, 1955; White & Lippitt, 1960). Gastil (1994) conducted a metaanalysis of thirty-seven studies of the effects of democratic versus autocratic leadership on group productivity and member satisfaction. The results were that neither democratic nor autocratic leadership was more productive. In addition, the link between democratic leadership and member satisfaction was minimal. However, democratic leadership was associated with increased productivity but 'only in studies- of naturally occurring groups as opposed to groups constituted in laboratories.

Stogdill (1974) conducted an extensive review of time relationship between leadership style and group productivity. He concluded that productivity was associated with a leadership style high on consideration for members and high on initiation of structure. His conclusion was supported by other studies as well (e.g., Blake & Mouton, 1982; Nicholls, 1985).

Vroom and Jago (1978) concluded that the most effective leadership style varies with the current situation in the group. The situations they describe generally correspond with the stages of group development. For example, an autocratic leadership style can be effective during the first stage of group development but not at later stages. A consultative style would be more appropriate at stage two. Depending on the circumstances, either a consultative or a group-centered leadership style seems best at stages three and four.

5.3 Group processes

Conformity and Deviation

Conformity remains high during the work stage of group development. The increased consensus about group culture and structure gained at stage three results in increased conformity, which

persists at stage four. This type of conformity, which is based on member agreements, supports the work of the group. Deviation is also more tolerable to a mature group, if the deviation is task related. Innovation is important if a group is to be successful, and innovation usually requires stretching or breaking norms in some way. Deviance from accepted norms may result in changes for the better. Mature groups are more tolerant of task-related deviant behavior as a result. Other forms of deviance are also tolerated at this stage due, in part, to familiarity among members, group cohesion, and past conformity on the part of the current deviator (Hollander, 1960; Katz, 1982). Member eccentricities, for example, that grated other members at stage two seem less annoying at stage four.

The question arises at this point: What are members of a stage-four group conforming to? That is, what norms encourage productivity? Norms that encourage high performance standards and effectiveness increase group productivity (Bassin, 1988; Hackman, 1987). Shared expectations of success also support productivity (Shea & Guzzo, 1987a). A group culture that encourages innovation increases the likelihood of higher productivity as well (Cummings, 1981; Moscovici, 1976). Peters and Waterman (1982) concluded that norms and values that support superior quality, service innovation, and attention to detail significantly increase group effectiveness and productivity.

Cohesion and Conflict

Cohesion has been found to increase group productivity (Evans & Dion, 1991; Greene, 1989; Littlepage, Cowart, & Kerr, 1989). However, most researchers agree that cohesion in conjunction with high performance norms is more predictive of group success than cohesion alone (Hare, 1976; Stogdill, 1972). Interpersonal attraction has also been shown to increase group effectiveness (Goodacre, 1951; Hare, 1976; Husband, 1940). Cohesion aids the development of cooperation, and cooperation increases group productivity (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1973, 1990a).

Group size affects this process, however. For example, the addition of unnecessary members to a group reduces the level of cohesion and, as a result, may negatively affect productivity (Gladstein, 1984; McGrath, 1984; Hackrnan, 2002). The presence of extra members results in increased difficulties in coordination that may affect cohesion (Steiner, 1972). Social loafing occurs more frequently in groups that are larger than necessary (Latane et al., 1979). This, too, may negatively affect cohesion.

Sundstrom, DeMeuse, and Futrell (1990) concluded that cohesion does facilitate group performance if it is accompanied by high performance norms and effective decision-making methods designed to avoid groupthink. Groups at the work stage of group development tend to have relatively high levels of cohesion. However, high performance norms are not guaranteed outcomes of group development. Skill in decision making is also not automatic. Stage-four groups need to pay attention to these areas in order to maximize their chances of success. Training in decision making strategies may help some groups to avoid groupthink and increase their productivity (Sundstrom et al., 1990).

Conflict continues to occur throughout the life of a group. Mature groups experience frequent periods of conflict. Conflict or tension occurs during periods of significant disagreement. Bormann

(1975) noted that well-functioning groups have frequent brief periods of tension or conflict. Stage-four groups have developed conflict-management strategies, however, that help to resolve these episodic conflicts before they escalate or continue beyond the group's established tolerance level. Periodic conflicts have positive results, such as clarification of issues, increased member interest, and increased understanding among members.

Conflict can escalate and threaten group effectiveness or survival at any stage of development. Item also have many positive outcomes, if managed well. A group at any stage of development must learn to handle naturally occurring conflict in ways that will support group cohesion and performance. Conflicts are natural, but human beings do not have innate skills in conflict management. Thus, a successful group is one whose members learn and practice good conflict-management skills throughout the group's life.

6. CHAPTER ELEVEN
GROUP AND TEAM ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

Group and team analysis has as its purpose the study of group development and other group processes. Group and team analyses are done by implementing various strategies and methods. Many theories of group development were developed from early research based on the observation of observers and group leaders by means of different strategies. Today these strategies and methods are used, to a lesser or greater extent, to analyse group development and processes for the purpose of making appropriate interventions. In addition, group and team analyses are used to research group development and processes and, in so doing, to add to the pool of knowledge of group development and processes. In the following sections some of the methods of group and team analysis has been summarized from Wheelan (2005, chap. 5).

6.2 Instruments designed to measure group development

Since there are difficulties involved in research studies with groups, it is helpful to have access to an instrument that accurately measures group development at a given point. A number of ways that attempt to directly or indirectly measure group development are discussed below.

Team Development Inventory

The Team Development Inventory was developed by Jones and published by University Associates in 1982. Its primary purpose is to help members think about how their group is functioning and determine ways to improve effectiveness. The instrument requires each member to rank all members of a particular group according to eight dimensions associated with teamwork. These dimensions are participation, collaboration, flexibility, sensitivity, risk taking, commitment, facilitation, and openness. These dimensions do not measure group development since they only aid investigation of the interpersonal dimension of group functioning. Another problematic issue is that no attention was paid to reliability and validity during the inventory's development. No norms are provided. This is a hindrance to those who use it as an instrument to understand their results in relation to other groups who have completed the same measure.

Group Development Assessment

The Group Development Assessment is published by Organisational Design and Development, Inc. It is a forty-item aid and attempts to directly assess group development. This measuring instrument is based on Jones's theory of group development that suggests that groups develop along two dimensions: task and process. The task dimension includes four phases: orientation, organisation, open data flow and problem-solving. The process dimension consists of phases characterised by dependency, conflict, cohesion and interdependence. No evidence of reliability or validity is presented and norms have not been established.

Group Development Stage Analysis

The Group Development Stage Analysis was created by Carew and Parisi-Carew and published by Blanchard Training and Development, Inc. The goal is to determine a group's stage of development. This analytical instrument utilises eight characteristics associated with high performance teams. These characteristics include: productivity, empathy, empowerment, roles and goals, flexibility, open communication, recognition and morale. Four options are listed under each characteristic, which correspond to a four-stage model of group development. The stages include orientation, dissatisfaction, resolution and production. No reliability, validity or norms are reported.

Reactions to Group Situations Test

This test is titled to Stock Whitaker and was published by University Associates in 1974. It is a fifty-item questionnaire and assesses individual member preferences for certain behaviour in groups. Preferences for work, fight, flight, dependency and pairing are assessed. The theory underlying the instrument is that of Bion, where Stock and Thelen collaborated in developing the initial test. Findings concerning reliability and validity were not very good and the test was not altered to strengthen them. This testing instrument appears to have another problem, in that individuals are asked to assess their preferences rather than to assess the group's functioning. This is awkward, since individual preferences may or may not relate to what is occurring in a particular group at a certain point.

Group Attitude Scale

The Group Attitude Scale is a twenty-item scale developed to measure member attraction to a particular group at a certain time. While it does not measure group development specifically, the authors suggest that if the instrument is administered several times over the course of a group's life, group development can be inferred, since member attraction to the group differs at different stages of development. This 'instrument' provides good evidence of reliability and validity.

Group Development Questionnaire

This instrument, based on Wheelen's integrated model of group development, is a sixty-item Group Development Questionnaire and contains four scales that correspond to the fist four stages of group development. Each scale contains fifteen items. Scale one measure the amount of energy the group expends in attempting to deal with issues of dependency and inclusion. Scale two seeks to ascertain the degree of group focus on issues of conflict and counter-dependency. Scale three is related to issues associated with the third stage of group development. Scale five assesses the characteristics of the fourth developmental stage (work). This 'instrument' meets all the criteria for reliability and validity.

6.3 Ethnography: a participant-observation research method

Purpose

Participant observation is employed to study the cultures of groups, organisations or societies. This method is referred to as ethnographic research. Ethnography requires the researcher to describe in great detail the group or organisation under investigation. This approach attempts to see the

group through the eyes of its members, and therefore requires the researcher to get close to those members.

Description

Ethnography has a process orientation - examining group or organisational processes across time. The observed social system is studied in context, and efforts are made to understand the relationships amongst the various aspects of the system. Another characteristic of this method is that the research design is flexible. The researcher enters the system with a rudimentary plan on how the research will be conducted. As the study proceeds, the plan may change in order to accommodate the events and behaviours that are encountered.

In ethnography the research plan can be altered during the study. In order to compensate for changes in the research plan and to ensure that future researchers will be able to replicate a particular study, ethnographers provide very detailed descriptions of how a study was conducted and what the researcher actually did to obtain the results.

Ethnographic research is a qualitative approach to research in that it generally does not employ quantitative research methods such as questionnaires, surveys, tests, coding systems, or other measurement systems. Ethnographers focus instead on gaining an understanding of the group, organisation, or society as a whole (Bryman, 1992).

Emerson (1987) developed a set of criteria to evaluate the quality of ethnographic research:

- Good ethnographic research should be based on extensive observation of the group or organisation being investigated.
- Ethnographic research should have a theoretical focus. That is, the initial research plan should be based on a theory of group or organisational behaviour.
- Finally, Emerson stated that quality ethnographic research provides very detailed descriptions of how the study was conducted, what was observed, and how the researcher interpreted the results.

Anthropologists have employed this strategy for some time. Whyte is noted for his detailed descriptions of what he referred to as ’anthropological methods‘(Whyte, 1961, 1969; Whyte & Whyte, 1984).

Previous studies

Perhaps the most highly regarded participant-observation study was conducted by Whyte (1943a, 1943b, 1943c, 1955). It was a three-year study of a poor neighbourhood called Comerville. In the study Whyte attempted to gain a picture of the neighbourhood as a whole by interacting with individuals and groups while observing how different segments of the community related to each other. In order to accomplish his study Whyte essentially became part of the community. He attempted to build a description of the structure and culture of Comerville through intensive examination, observation, and interaction with its people and groups. He asked questions, listened to people, observed interactions among them, and attempted to discover the beliefs, values,

norms, and structures that defined the culture of the community as a whole. He also attempted to describe cultural differences among the various groups within the community.

Advantages

- Participant observation is used extensively in studies of organisational culture (e.g., Jones, 1990; Jones, Moore & Snyder, 1988; Siehl & Martin, 1988; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). It has also been used to study groups (e.g., Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979; Schwartz & Schwartz, 1955).

- Ethnographic studies are helpful, especially in studying the complexities of systems such as groups and organisations. They provide very detailed descriptions of the inner workings of these systems and can facilitate the development of theories capable of explaining their intricacies.

- Whyte believes that ethnography can be a reliable and valid scientific method, but that this kind of research must be carefully conducted. He also advises that ethnographic methods be combined with other methods, such as systematic observation, questionnaires, and other quantitative procedures, in order to strengthen their reliability and validity.

- Ethnographic studies enable us to learn things that are typically hidden from view. By participating in the group or organisation under investigation, the researcher becomes an insider. Insiders are enabled to see things and hear things that outsiders do not.

Disadvantages

- The presence of an additional person, especially a researcher, may change the dynamics of the observed system and lead the researcher to formulate misconceptions.

- By entering the system, the researcher becomes a participant in the culture that he or she is studying. Over time the researcher becomes part of the culture and may begin to interpret events in ways that other members of the system do. This is positive in that the researcher begins to see things through the eyes of members. However, since many aspects of culture are outside the conscious awareness of members (Schein, 1990), the participant observer may also become unaware of these hidden aspects of culture.

- Whyte (1992) cautions ethnographers, however, to be careful to base their analyses on observations and descriptions as opposed to interpretations. Participant observation can be problematic, since the observer's biases may taint the findings and their interpretation.

6.4 Clinical description

Purpose

Schein (1987) advocated the use of a clinical descriptive research method for the study of groups and organisations. Consultants employ this method of researching group and organisations while they are helping groups or organisations to resolve problems and increase their effectiveness.

Description

Consultants observe the social system; thereafter they collect information utilising a variety of means, and make interventions aimed at facilitating positive change in the system. A consultant does not encounter the same problems with access to groups as an observer does, since the group or organisation has asked for the consultant's assistance. Consultants are often supplied with access to information and groups that have been inaccessible to researchers (Schein, 1985, 1987).

This research strategy requires the consultant to carefully think through, in advance, how information will be collected and recorded. Any consultant has to prepare data collection strategies that he or she will employ when assisting a client system. However, if the consultant also plans to use the opportunity to conduct clinical research, more careful preparation is necessary. For example, audiovisual equipment might be necessary to allow additional data analyses.

If the consultant conducts surveys or interviews before and after the consultation, he or she might need to identify responses in some way in order to match the responses of individuals or sub-groups. More detailed notes might be required. Most consultants do many of these things anyway, so the amount of work involved in turning a consultation into a research opportunity is usually minimal.

Advantages

- Consultants often have access to powerful top- and middle-management groups, since members recognise that it is in their best interest to be open with a consultant (Schein, 1990).

- A number of clinical studies of these powerful organisational groups have been conducted (e.g., Hirschhorn, 1987; Jacques, 1951; Schein, 1983). They have added to our understanding of how culture is created and changed. The data that consultants collect can also add to our understanding of group and organisational processes and development.

- The consultant does not join the group or organisation with which he or she is working. Consultants move in and out of the organisation and frequently work with more than one organisation at a time. Consequently their objectivity may not be as subject to compromise as that of the ethnographer who becomes immersed in one system.

- Consultants consciously attempt to change the ways groups and organisations operate. Their results can help us to understand what the effects might be of various strategies designed to change the operations or culture of groups and organisations.

- Ethnographers attempt to gain a picture of the group or organisation as a whole. To the best of their ability they try to observe all aspects of a system.

- The clinical research method has provided insights into many aspects of group and organisational processes and development.

Disadvantage

- The scope of clinical research conducted by consultants is usually more limited, since what is to be observed and who the consultant has access to, are defined by the group or organisation.

6.5 Observation

Purpose

The goal of observation is to watch and record group behaviours, interactions, and events in order to answer research questions or to test hypotheses (Kidder, 1981; Weick, 1985). Observation can consist of overt, covert, unobtrusive, open and systematic observation and the participants have varying degrees of being aware of the observation

Description

Overt observation is when group members are aware that they are being observed. One drawback of overt observation is that the presence of an observer may change the behaviours of members and the dynamics of the group. This change of behaviour in the presence of an observer is known as the Hawthorne effect.

Covert observation refers to situations in which group members are not aware of being observed. From an ethical standpoint, covert observation is problematic, since it violates individual and group privacy (Cook, 1981; Douglas, 1976; Reynolds, 1979). In order to gain more accurate observations, then, researchers attempt to conduct unobtrusive observations.

Unobtrusive observation refers to situations in which group members are aware of being observed. However, the researcher has taken steps to ensure that the observation process is as inconspicuous as possible. For example, concealed videotapes or audiotapes are less disturbing than visible observers. One-way mirrors are considered unobtrusive as well, since group members cannot see or hear the observers. The goal of unobtrusive observation methods is to increase the likelihood that observed behaviours would be the same whether observation was happening or not. Another strategy is to observe over long periods of time. Over time, group members become used to the observation process and behaviours tend to normalise.

The extensive use of audio- and video equipment in the society at large may prove helpful to researchers. These days, people are videotaped at family gatherings and parties, in school, and at the office. This may reduce the tendency to alter behaviour before the cameras or for the tape recorder.

Open observation research is useful especially in new areas of study. It is also effective in areas in which we know more but are interested in studying something that cannot, at least at this point, be predicted in advance. For example, if a researcher were interested in observing a rare species of

animal that was recently discovered on a remote island, what should he or she observe? Would it be best to go in and just watch for a while or to determine what to look for beforehand? In this case, the researcher would most likely choose to just watch for a period of time.

Content analysis is a research technique used to determine the unmistakable content of communication (Holsti, 1969). Researchers observe the content of communication (in this case, simultaneously listening to and reading) and ultimately place it into conceptual categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As words and phrases occur in the discussion, they become associated with each other, and categories or themes emerge. Thus, the categories or themes arise from the data rather than being developed in advance by the researcher (Spradley, 1979),
Systematic observation requires the researcher to determine, before the study is conducted, what behaviours will be observed. For example, in a recent study of developmental processes in same-sex and mixed-sex groups, the researchers were interested in whether developmental patterns in all-female, all-male, and mixed-sex groups were similar or different (Verdi & Wheelan, 1992). The seven categories represent the types of verbal statements associated with the various stages of group development outlined in the research literature. Here the researchers audio-taped and transcribed a number of groups. Instead of using a content analysis system, however, the researchers analysed each complete thought and placed it in one of these seven categories. If a complete thought did not fit the definition of any category, it was placed in a category entitled *unscoreable*.

Advantages

- Structured observation is one of the strongest research methods available to group researchers. Well-constructed systems produce reliable and valid information about group dynamics and development.

- The quality of the obtained information depends on how well the system can test theories of group development. The more directly categories are related to theory and previous research, the more useful they are.

- Structured observation limits the number of variables or factors that the observer looks for in a group. This advantage increases reliability and objectivity when viewing a group.

- If categories are defined in sufficient detail, observers will see similar things. However, if the categories guide the researcher to look for mistaken aspects, or for behaviours that are not related to group development, they are of little use.

- While no research method in the social sciences is perfect, structured observation is a very good research tool. If structured observation is well conceived and well designed, observational systems may help to answer some of the critical questions in this area.

Disadvantages

- Most available systems were not directly designed to study group development. As a result, phases of group development have to be inferred from the obtained behaviours.

- Observation systems are typically designed for use in groups with a specific kind of task. Their usefulness in groups with a different task is often questionable. The PASS system (Mann, 1966), for example, is useful in therapy or self-analytic groups such as T-groups. However, it is not well suited for studies of workplace groups.

- A researcher interested in similarities and differences between groups with different tasks would be hard pressed to choose an observational system capable of accurately observing both types of groups.

- Detailed descriptions of available systems are difficult to find. For example, Babad and Amir (1978) briefly described a coding system that appears to be similar to that developed for use in the Verdi and Wheelan (1992) study described earlier. However, a detailed description of Babad and Amir's (1978) system is unavailable. Therefore, creation of a new system was necessary.

- The lack of standard systems used in a number of studies and capable of directly recording behaviours associated with group development impedes progress in this field of study.

- Since research on group development is time consuming and labour intensive, knowledge in the area is greatly enhanced when standard observation systems are employed by collaborating researchers.

Other methods described in this chapter are useful as well. Structured observation does not provide the breadth and depth, for example, that ethnographic research delivers. Also, structured observation does not take into account the experiences and reactions of group members. Interviews, questionnaires, and the like are needed to yield a balanced picture of group functioning.

THE END