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Chapter 7

The Group-as-a-Whole: A Systemic Socio-Analytic Perspective on Interpersonal and Group Relations

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents concepts that are central to understanding interpersonal processes and group relations in an organizational context. Emphasis is placed on interpreting interpersonal relations from the group level using what may be labelled a 'systemic socio analytic' perspective. Several case studies are used to examine interpersonal relations from the systemic socio analytic perspective. Heuristics are delineated which help agents of organizational change to better understand, interpret, and intervene in interpersonal and group relations.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

The present theoretical framework for understanding group and organizational processes has been heavily influenced by work of writers from the Tavistock Centre for Human Relations in London. These scholars have greatly influenced the author's conceptual development and largely account for the biases that colour his understanding of group and organizational phenomena.

The 'systemic socioanalytic' perspective for understanding organizational processes integrates:

- (1) Current thinking regarding the application of open system theory to group and organizational behaviour (Alderfer, 1976; Baker, 1973; Mant, 1976; Reed *et al.*, 1978; Wells, 1978b; Singer *et al.*, 1975; Astrachan, 1970).
- (2) Concepts associated with Kleinian psychoanalysis (Klein, 1932, 1955; Klein and Riviere, 1964; Jacques, 1955).

(3) Principles articulated by the psychoanalytic group psychology tradition (Bion, 1961; Gibbard *et al.*, 1974; Gibbard, 1975; Colman and Bexton, 1975).

Through the integration of these perspectives and their concepts, a more cogent framework is formed from which the complexity of interpersonal processes can more readily be discerned.

Traditional experimental and social psychological views of interpersonal relations represented by Cartwright and Zander (1968), Thibaut and Kelly (1959), Krech *et al.* (1962), Newcomb (1961) and Lott and Lott (1965) are eschewed in this discussion*. This does not suggest that traditional social psychological perspectives are not useful in understanding interpersonal relations, but that the perspective utilized here is novel for *most* applied behaviour scientists. The aim of this chapter is to provide another vantage point from which organizational processes can be understood.

On the other hand, work from the psychoanalytic group tradition (Gibbard, 1975; Bion, 1961) is often written in a form that is alien and meaningless to the reader who is 'untrained' in psychoanalytic concepts and concomitant jargon. Thus, the contribution that psychoanalytic group concepts can make to a better understanding of group processes goes unrecognized or is diminished. This chapter is an attempt to present psychoanalytically derived concepts in a schema that is helpful for organizational diagnosticians who are not familiar with the analytic tradition.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES

Organizational processes refer to actual working activities, formal and informal relations, and psychosocial phenomena that occur among individuals and groups in organizations. Groups and organizations are considered open living systems that exchange energy, material, and information with the environment (Miller and Rice, 1967; Alderfer, 1976; Baker, 1973). They are vehicles through which a variety of goals can be pursued.

Alderfer (1977a), using an open-system perspective, defines a human group as:

... a collection in individuals: a) who have significantly interdependent relations with each other; b) who perceive themselves as a group by reliably distinguishing members from non-members; c) whose group identity is recognized by non-members; d) who have differentiated roles in the group as a function of expectation from themselves, other members and non-groups; and e) who as group members acting alone or in concert have significantly interdependent relations with other groups.

Moreover, Singer *et al.* (1975) and Alderfer (1976) have described three

*An excellent discussion on interpersonal relations from the traditional social psychological perspective can be found in Albanese (1975, pp. 525-38).

levels of group processes. These perspectives provide the theoretical background for further discussion of group and organizational processes.

Wells (1978b) has described (extending the Singer *et al.* (1975), Alderfer (1976), and Astrachan (1970) models) five levels of organizational processes. They are: (1) intrapersonal; (2) interpersonal; (3) group-level (Group-as-a-whole); (4) intergroup; and (5) interorganizational (see Figure 1).

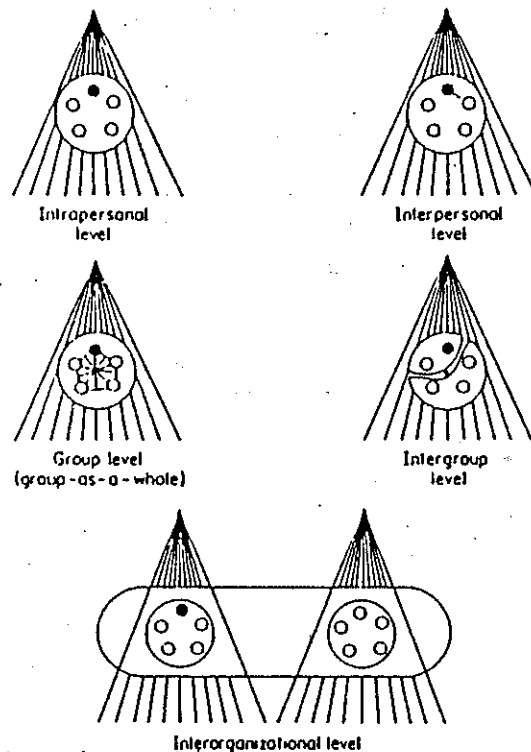


Figure 1 Five levels of organizational processes

(1) *Intrapersonal processes* in an organizational context refer to the co-actor's relatedness to him/herself. Analysis of *intrapersonal* processes focuses on the personality characteristics, character traits, mode of ego defence, ego ideal, and various need levels of the co-actors. In short, an intrapersonal analysis assumes that the behaviour emerges from the internal life or from within the co-actor (Astrachan, 1970).

Personnel departments and assessment centres typically evaluate behaviour of their employees or clients from an intrapersonal perspective. Personnel departments usually use a battery of psychological tests (MMPI, TAT, IQ, Sanford-Binet) to evaluate aspects of their employees' personality. Little attention is paid to processes that occur outside or between individuals. Emphasis is placed on the employees' personality, knowledge, and skills.

Additionally, gestalt therapy and personal growth groups focus on and use the intrapersonal level of analysis as the foundation of their work (Perls, 1970; Yalom, 1970; Weir and Weir, 1978).

(2) *Interpersonal processes* refer to *member-to-member* relations. The focus is on the quality and type of relationships that exist between co-factors. Emphasis is placed on communication patterns, information flow, level of conflict and trust, and relating styles of co-actors (Astrachan, 1970; Argyris, 1962). Interpersonal processes examine how well or poorly individuals relate to their peers, subordinates, and supervisors. Emphasis is placed on how well individuals listen and establish meaningful and viable alliances.

The 'T'-group examines interpersonal processes and focuses on increasing participants' level of social relating skills and interpersonal competence (Argyris, 1962).

(3) *Group-level processes* refer to the behaviour of the group as a social system and the co-actor's relatedness to that system. The focus is on the group-as-a-whole (supra-personal) (Bion, 1961; Gibbard, 1975; Rioch, 1970).

The unit of analysis is the *group* as a system. Groups can be considered more or less the sum total of their parts. Hence, group members are considered interdependent subsystems co-acting and interacting together *via* the group's life mentality. Group-level analysis assumes that when a co-actor acts he or she is not only acting on his or her-own behalf, but on behalf of the group or parts of the group. Co-actor behaviour from a group-level perspective cannot be simply examined by assuming that the motivation and genesis of the co-actor is merely a function of his or her idiosyncrasies. It must be viewed as a synthesis of and interaction with the *group's* life and mentality. Simply stated, the co-actor is seen as a vehicle through which the group expresses its life. (An in-depth discussion of group-level phenomena follows.)

Tavistock small study groups use the group-as-a-whole as the unit of analysis (Rice, 1965; Klein and Astrachan, 1972). Miller and Rice (1967) also use group-level analysis for work redesign strategies and autonomous work groups.

(4) *Intergroup processes* refer, in part, to relations among various groups or subgroups. The intergroup processes derive from the group memberships that co-actors carry with them into groups and their behaviour towards other groups. The basis for intergroup relations can develop from hierarchical and task position, sex, race, age, ethnic identities, and ideological differences

(Alderfer, 1977a). Intergroup relations: (1) determine in part how we treat and are treated by others; (2) profoundly colour our perception of the world; and (3) play a critical role in determining how co-actors form their personal sense of reality (Smith 1977). Experiential simulations are sometimes used to study intergroup phenomena (Wells, 1978c; Oshry, 1978).

(5) *Interorganizational processes* refer to relationships that exist between organizations and their environment and concern the set of organizations that make demands of, or have impact upon, the focal organization (Evan, 1966). Interorganizational analysis focuses on the ecotone and the causal texture of the environment (Emery and Trist, 1973).

Each of the five levels described above refers to behavioural systems conceptually different from, but not unrelated to or without connection to one another. Analysis of organizational processes at these levels moves towards a comprehensive view of individual and group dynamics.

Since behaviour is multidetermined, organizational processes can be examined and understood in terms of any or all of these levels. Organizational processes are analogous to a radio broadcasting band. If one tunes into 107.5 FM, this does not mean that 96.0 is not broadcasting, but rather that one has just amplified a particular station. Thus, if one focuses on interpersonal processes, it does not mean that group-level processes are not occurring, but only that one has selected a particular level of organizational process for attention. For the purposes of this chapter group-level phenomena are elucidated. In other words, group-level processes are amplified.

GROUP-AS-A-WHOLE (GROUP LEVEL) AS A UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Using a group-level perspective, a group is conceptualized as being more and less than the sum total of the individual co-actors (members) and their intrapsychic dynamics. Group life exists above and below that of individual group members, and the group has a life of its own distinct from but related to the dynamics of the co-actors who comprise the group membership.

Groups are living systems and group members are interdependent co-actors (subsystems) whose interactions form a *gestalt*. That *gestalt* is the '*élan-vital*' of the group, and becomes the object of study from the group-level perspective.

In this connection, Bion (1961) has postulated that a group's mentality*

*Bion's concept of group mentality and the concept of the group's *élan vital* (its quintessence, its existential core) are related in a very fundamental way. They both assert that there is a phenomenon that exists above or below that of individual group members. These concepts postulate that a group life exists distinct from the individual group members. Yet, Bion's group mentality and its conceptual cousin, basic assumption group, are helpful but often confusing (Sherwood, 1964). (For an excellent review of Bion's theory, see Gibbard, 1975.) In their present conceptual form they leave too many unresolved and knotty theoretical issues which cloud rather than clarify.

For conceptual simplicity, I will refrain from their use here. I will offer an alternative heuristic concept (projective identification motif) by which to understand the group-as-a-whole phenomenon.

exists beyond that of the individual group members. He suggests that the group's mentality connects (bonds) group members by an 'unconscious tacit agreement'. Gibbard (1975) suggests that the group's mentality is best understood as:

... a process of unconscious collusion ... 'a machinery of intercommunication' ... which is at once a characteristic of groups and a reflection of the individual's ability or even his propensity to express certain drives and feelings covertly, unconsciously, and anonymously. (p.7)

At this point it would be helpful to consider the following series of questions:

(1) Of what substance is the group's *élan vital* made?

(2) Using the group as the unit of analysis, why are co-actors considered interdependent? And, why are all of their behaviours conceptualized as mere manifestations and representations of the group's existential core?

(3) Do individuals have ultimate control over determining what they say, think, and do in groups?

These questions are only a sampling of the myriad that could be raised. The material below attempts to answer them and describes the theory upon which a group-level analysis using a systemic socioanalytic perspective is founded.

GROUP-AS-MOTHER

Competent individuals often behave as though they were deskilled, non-rational or lobotomized. When brought together in a group to perform tasks, capable human beings often lose their problem-solving facilities, become emotionally segregated, and blame others for their failure. Their behaviour in these instances is marked by an infantile, regressed quality.

Groups and group members can behave in effective problem-solving ways; yet, all groups regress at some point in their life. It is the group's *regression* to which this chapter addresses itself.

Bion (1961), Gibbard (1975), and Scheidlinger (1964) assert that the central issue for individuals, when joining or participating in groups, is the tension generated by the unconscious fear of being engulfed, obliterated by the group (fused with) at one extreme and becoming a person-in-isolation (estranged/separated) from the group at the other extreme. Both extremes are severely undesirable. This tension creates strong ambivalent (love/hate) feelings towards the group situation. The individual is conceptualized as possessing conflicting feelings about the same object (i.e. group situation) simultaneously. Moreover, these strong ambivalent feelings unconsciously return the adults to their infant roots.

An infant, too, struggles with ambivalence. On the one hand he seeks to be engulfed and fused with mother, while on the other he seeks to become separated from her. Indeed for the infant's survival both options are undesirable ends. Given this tension, the infant has strong ambivalent feelings about mother. In a word, infants have both conflicting love/hate feelings about the same object — mother. The infant's struggles with mother and the individual struggles with the group parallel. Bion (1961) states that the group-as-a-whole 'approximates too closely in the minds of individuals comprising it very primitive fantasies about the contents of the mother's body'. In short, the group represents the *primal mother* for the individual.

This tension and ambivalence experienced by the infant and individual-in-group create an unbearable psychological state of affairs. There is a need to resolve these ambivalent feelings, thus relieving the frustration about the same object—for the infant it is mother, for the individual-in-group the group.

Object-relations theory suggests (Klein, 1946; Mahler, 1972) that an infant initially is unable to make a distinction between what is inside the self and what is outside the self. Thus, the infant has no 'ego' to differentiate self from the world; he or she experiences self as the world; and to him or her everything is self. Concomitantly, the infant experiences self as omnipotent. This omnipotence is reinforced by continuous meeting of the neonate's needs. As time passes, the infant matures and some needs are gradually frustrated. Greatly troubled by the frustration, the infant develops a strategy to cope with this condition by projecting 'good' and 'bad' feelings onto outside objects. Rice (1965) suggests:

So far as it excites him and gratifies him, it is a 'good object' which he loves and on which he lavishes his care; so far as it frustrates or hurts him, it is a 'bad object' which he hates and which he vents his rage on. In his struggle to deal with these contradictory attributes he splits objects into good and bad, which represents their satisfying or frustrating aspects.

What complicates matters more is that the infant learns that the same object (typically mother) sometimes satisfies and sometimes frustrates—hence the same object is both good and bad. Yet, the infant wants to lavish the good object and wants to destroy (eschew) the bad object.

This condition creates a major problem for the infant—to take in the good object (mother), the infant also takes in what is bad—thus threatening to destroy what he wants most to preserve, i.e., good object. In this confusing state of affairs the infant is unable to cope with simultaneously conflicting feelings about the same object—then splits off the bad parts into others . . .

The infant both loves and hates object/mother. Unable to cope with the overwhelming ambivalent feelings, the infant uses splitting and projective identification to maintain psychological equilibrium and to cope with life-threatening anxiety generated by having both bad and good in the same object. Often the infant's solution to this ambivalence is to have a good mummy and

bad daddy. As infants progress, their solution then becomes good parents—bad strangers. Infants always act to maintain an *autistic pre-ambivalent state*. They seek an autistic state akin to intrauterine life.

Splitting is a primitive psychological mechanism used where individuals disown parts of self that are undesirable. *Projective identification* is a psychological mechanism by which individuals unconsciously identify with an object (person, event, attitude) by externalizing (projecting) split (disowned) parts of themselves.

Melanie Klein (1946) introduced the term projective identification to indicate a process by which parts of self are split off and projected into an external object or part object (Malin and Grotstein, 1966). Hanna Segal (1964), a colleague of Klein, remarks:

Projective identification is the result of the projection of parts of the self into an object. It may result in the object being perceived as having acquired the characteristics of the projected part of the self, but it can also result in the self becoming identified with the object of its projection.

Jacques (1955) suggests that adults in institutional and group settings often use infantile coping strategies, i.e. projective identification, to cope with overwhelming ambivalent feelings generated in the course of social relations. Illustrating the concept of projective identification, he states:

. . . the soldiers who take their leader for their ego, are in effect projectively identifying with or putting themselves into him. It is this common or shared kind of projective identification which enables the soldiers to identify with each other. In the extreme form of projective identification of this kind, the followers become totally dependent on the leader because each has given up a part of himself to the leader.

He goes on to cite Freud's (1922) case of how Assyrian soldiers became totally confused and acted as though they were brain-damaged. They retreated in confusion upon hearing that their leader, Holofernes, had had his head cut off by Judith. For not only had the commonly shared external object (the figurehead) binding them all together been lost, but the leader had also lost his head. Thus, every soldier had lost his head because each was inside the leader *via* projective identification.

Groups (families, work groups, classrooms, experiential learning laboratories) elicit strong ambivalent feelings in their members. Groups both nurture and scold. Groups are needed, yet resented, by individuals. Groups are experienced as both bad and good simultaneously. Groups create feelings of bliss and despair. Groups, like mothers, create strong, conflicting ambivalent feelings of love and hate.

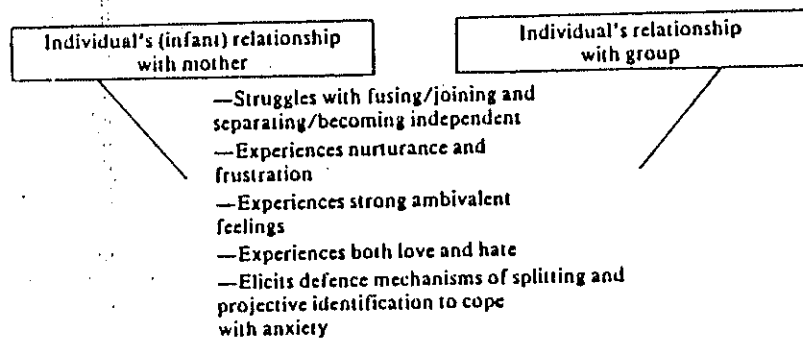
Gibbard (1975) aptly states:

The natural psychological habitat of man is the group. Man's adaptation to that habitat is imperfect, a state of affairs which is reflected in his chronic ambivalence towards groups. Group membership is psychologically essential and yet a source of increasing discomfort. (p.33)

Bion (1961) declares that:

The individual is a group animal at war not simply with the group, but with himself for being a group animal and with those aspects of his personality that constitute his 'groupishness'. (p.131)

Ambivalence is central for infant-mother relations and for individual-in-group relationship. Groups create the same range of feelings that are created in the infant-mother relationship. Moreover, both infants in relation to mother and individuals in relation to groups use projective identification and splitting to cope with overwhelming tension and ambivalence. Hence, the concept of group-as-mother is established.



It is the *group-as-mother* paradigm that underlies the group-level analysis. The interplay between projective and introjective identification* and splitting that brings group members together is being analysed in the group-as-a-whole approach. Moreover, it is the dynamic unconscious pattern or matrix shared by the group members that provides the substance of the group's *elan vital*. Thus, individual group members are considered connected to each other by an unconscious or preconscious tacit alliance.

This unconscious (tacit) alliance allows each member to use other members as objects to express split parts of him/herself. The unconscious alliance and

*Introjective identification is a psychological defence by which the individual identifies with an external object by taking the object into him/herself.

concomitant motif begins when the group members experience tension and ambivalence created by the struggle between engulfment or enstrangement by the group. This struggle unconsciously returns the adults to their infant roots—therefore to the infant-mother dyad, concomitant dynamics, and coping strategies used by the infant, e.g. projective identification.

Group-level analysis is an important perspective in understanding group and interpersonal relations. The integration of system theory and Kleinian concepts provides a helpful vantage point from which organizational processes can be discerned. Projective identification, role differentiation, and scapegoating are common manifestations of these dynamics.

PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION, ROLE DIFFERENTIATION, AND SCAPEGOATING IN GROUPS

Projective identification, role differentiation, and scapegoating in groups are defined and discussed in detail in this section. The premise is that excessive projective identification leads to rigid role differentiation which ultimately can cause scapegoating (a special and destructive form of role differentiation) in groups. Particular attention is given to analysing interpersonal (member-to-member) relations in groups from a socioanalytic perspective. Understanding these concepts and their relationships is central to the 'systemic socioanalytic' approach.

Projective Identification

The term projective identification was first proposed by Melanie Klein (1946) to describe a psychological process by which individuals project split parts of self into an external object. Zinner (1976) states:

Projective identification is an activity of the ego that modifies perception of the object and, in reciprocal fashion, alters the image of the self. These conjoined changes in perception influence and may, in fact, govern behaviour of the self toward the object. Thus, projective identification is an important conceptual bridge between an individual and an interpersonal psychology, since our awareness of the mechanism permits us to understand specific interaction among persons in terms of specific dynamic conflict within individuals.

Thus, projective identification provides us with a way to understand the psychosocial matrix that exists between individuals and groups.

Klein (1946) further defines projective identification as 'a combination of splitting off parts of the self and projecting them onto another person'. In her later work (Klein, 1959), she describes projective identification as the 'feeling of identification with other people because one has attributed qualities or attributes of one's own to them'.

As indicated earlier, projective identification is a coping mechanism—a defence—that infants use to manage anxiety and ambivalence that is generated in relation to the mother for being both a good (nurturing) and a bad (frustrating) object. Wanting only the good-nurturing object, the infant splits off bad parts and projects these out to others (non-mother). Hence, projective identification is the primary psychological defence mechanism employed by infants to cope with life-threatening bad objects. Projective identification entails some distortion of reality. It simplifies one's emotional life, e.g. making mother into an 'all good' object.

Zinner (1976), Jaffe (1968) and Malin and Grotstein (1966) all remark that projective identification is closely related to Anna Freud's description of Edward Dibring's concept of 'altruistic surrender'. Anna Freud (1946) describes 'altruistic surrender' as when the 'self finds a proxy in the outside world to serve as a repository for the self's own wishes', where the self can experience vicarious gratification of the projected impulse. There is an implicit willingness by the object to collude in providing vicarious gratification for the subject.

Malin and Grotstein (1966) suggest that projection cannot occur without identification with the object upon which the projection is thrown. They assert:

When we start with the projection it is necessary that there be some process of identification or internalization in general, or else we can never be aware of the projection. That is, what is projected would be lost like a satellite rocketed out of the gravitational pull of the Earth. Eventually, all contact with the satellite will be lost. Although the satellite has left Earth, it must remain under the influence of Earth's gravitational pull to remain in order for it to maintain some contact with Earth. A projection of itself, seems meaningless unless the individual can retain some contact with what is projected. That contact is a type of internalization, or, loosely, an identification. (p.27)

In short, a projection has an object with which the individual must identify, often unconsciously. The individual identifies with the object through projection. Projection implies an identification.

In further refinement, Zinner (1976) describes four ways in which projective identification operates within interpersonal and group relations. He states: (1) the subject perceives the object as if the object contained elements of the subject's personality; (2) the subject can evoke behaviour or feelings in the object that conform with the subject's perceptions; (3) the subject can experience vicariously the activity and feelings of the object; and (4) participants in close relationship are often in collusion with one another to sustain mutual projection, i.e. to support one another's defensive operations and to provide experiences through which the other can participate vicariously (p.285). Zinner (1976) further states:

For projective identification to function effectively as a defence, the true nature of the relationship between self and its projected part must remain unconscious. (p.286).

Projective identification not only functions as a defence, but it is also the psychodynamic basis upon which individuals are able to empathize with another. Projecting parts of self onto the other, then identifying with other allows the person to feel with the other. Yet, excessive identification seeks an autistic, pre-ambivalent state—akin to the life of the neonate.

Laughlin (1970) describes the King David reaction, which is closely related to excessive projective identification. The King David reaction is based upon the Biblical character King David and the Little Ewe Lamb parable (Samuel II, 11-12). Briefly, King David has laid with Bathsheba, the wife of his general Uriah, while Uriah was off at battle. Bathsheba conceived and sent word to David, saying, 'I am with child'. David then sent for Uriah from battle, hoping that he would lay with Bathsheba. Uriah, a committed general, would not lay with Bathsheba because his men could not rest and eat well. Uriah slept at the king's door, refusing to go home. David then sent Uriah back to the front lines so that he might be killed. Uriah was indeed killed. Then the prophet Nathan is sent to David, saying:

- (1) There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.
- (2) The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds.
- (3) But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.
- (4) And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to dress for the wayfaring man that was come to him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.
- (5) David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, 'As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing shall surely die.

And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and he had no pity.

And Nathan said to David, 'Thou art the man'.

David reacted with great contempt for the rich, selfish man. Clearly, he was reacting to a consciously unrecognized and disowned aspect of himself. Nathan poignantly points to this fact with 'Thou art the man'.

The King David reaction is operative when individuals respond to others with excessively strong positive or negative feelings, and evaluate them accordingly. The King David reaction often emerges from scant real data about the other. Powerful unconscious identification occurs with the other through projection of either approved or disapproved aspects of the self. The subject recognizes a part of self in the object.

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Laughlin (1970) defines the King David reaction as:

A complex intrapsychic defensive operation involving the cooperation and mutual interaction of repression, projection and identification; it is usually supported in some measure by rationalization and at times related to denial . . . Through this reaction consciously unrecognized and disowned elements of the self-appraisal which were often ordinarily present to some extent in the other person are also further ascribed to him through projection—and reacted to accordingly. This process has evoked the otherwise unexplained feelings which are experienced toward the other person. The King David Reaction may be negative or positive. (p.238).

As human beings we have a tendency to act in self-serving ways. We eschew parts of ourselves that make us uncomfortable, but readily see those parts in others. Projective identification in general, and the King David reaction in particular, are useful concepts that increase our understanding of interpersonal relations and group behaviour.

Zinner (1976) and Greenspan and Mannis (1974) cogently describe how projective identification operates in the marital relationship. Zinner and Shapiro (1972) articulate how projective identification affects families and their adolescents. Malin and Grotstein (1966) discuss the ramifications of projective identification in therapeutic relationships. Bion (1955, 1956) and Rosenfeld (1952a, 1954) use the concept of projective identification to understand and treat psychosis.

Scheidlinger (1964, 1968), Gibbard (1975), and Bion (1961) postulate that adults employ projective identification to cope with 'the threat of losing one's personal identity in groups'. In using the group-as-mother, individuals employ projective identification and splitting to defend against primitive anxiety and ambivalence that threaten the person's sense of self. Additionally, these writers assert that group members act as proxies in which to deposit disowned (split) parts of themselves. Hence, each group member can become a receptacle for the projected parts of their cohorts. Each group member is likely to elicit a particular kind of projection and is thus symbolized in unique ways. This process of symbolization differentiates group members and thrusts them into specialized roles within the group. Role differentiation results from splitting, projective identification (i.e. unconscious alliance), and symbolization among group members.

In essence, each member is called upon to assume role(s) (given how they are symbolized) that provide a service to the group. These differentiated roles divide and distribute expressive, cognitive, instrumental, mythical, and reparative elements within the group. Fundamentally, roles in groups, in part, serve to manage anxiety, defend against deindividualization or estrangement, structure the group's *élan vital*, and get work done.

Hence, each group member performs important functions on behalf of the group. In this regard all services and functions (i.e. roles) performed in groups

are interdependent. This individual role behaviour must always be analysed in the context of the constellation of roles distributed in the group. In short, individual role behaviour is *embedded* in the field of other roles. *All* roles serve meaningful and purposeful functions in groups.

Projective Identification motif in groups

The group's projective identification is the precursor for symbolization and role differentiation. The *projective identification motif* refers to the unconscious (tacit) alliance that forms among group members. It describes how individuals are connected to co-members—often in consciously unrecognized ways. Through projective identification group members are connected to each other by passion, indifference, silence, contempt, respect, love, guilt, hate, or other ways. The patterning of projective identification *bonds* group members together.

Myriad and recurrent patterns of projective identification occur within small groups. I ask, technological and environmental demands, and constraints interacting upon group members' valence bonds together with members' willingness to assume roles (although often unconsciously) determine various patterns that emerge in the groups.

The patterning of projective identification in groups is also dependent upon individual groups members' *valence bonds*. Individual group members elicit, introject, and collude with particular kinds of projections ascribed to them. The group member's valence bonds, or tendency to respond to certain types of projections and to adopt special roles, are analogous to the propensity that elements have to combine as in a chemical reaction (Bion, 1961). By definition, projective identification between individuals (subject and object) involves unconscious collusion. This *collusion* is based on a person's valence bonds and their relation to the group.

Valency or the propensity to collude, introject, and respond to projections by others is dependent upon: (1) the individual's object relations (i.e. how the individual relates to himself and to the outside world)—his or her psychological set; (2) the individual's identity based on demographic characteristics, e.g. socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, age and gender, and stereotypic attributions (i.e. projections, symbolizations, and imagoes) ascribed to these demographic characteristics by others. (For example, women are typically affective; men are cognitive and rational. Blacks are hypersexual; whites are non-sexual—see Kovel, 1970.).

These attributions ascribed to a particular demographic identity group make a significant contribution to the valence of the individual. Hence, valency is determined by the person's object relations and attributions ascribed to his or her identity group. Indeed, a person's object relations should involve how he or she responds to skin colour, gender, age, sex. Yet, it has not been

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extensively discussed in the literature how sociological characteristics affect psychological operations. Stated simply, the propensity to collude, introject, and respond to projections from others and to adopt roles in groups is dependent upon an individual's personal and group identity. This definition of valency includes an individual's psychological and sociological identity. For example, in a mixed-gender group men typically attribute affective-emotional qualities to women. Women are expected to play caretaking and maintenance roles in groups. Similarly, women often ascribe rational and cognitive qualities to men. Men are expected to play task-oriented aggressive roles. Through projective identification men and women maintain these affective/cognitive, caretaking/rational splits among and within themselves. Although progress is being made on redefining traditional sex role behaviour, the collusive system of projective identification among males and females make it difficult for them to experience themselves as having both affective and cognitive qualities. Indeed, it is difficult to be a *whole* person in this culture.

If a white male executive in banking were to be affectively expressive it is highly probable that he would be limited in advancement or eventually dismissed. To be affectively expressive violates norms governing the behaviour of banking executives. White males (in particular), through projective identification, carry the burden of being simply rational, non-emotional creatures. Given the high correlation between Type A personality and executives, their suppressed affects have health consequences that often result in fatal coronary disease (Jenkins, 1971; Caplan and Jones, 1975).

The excessive use of projective identification to manage interpersonal relations and group situations becomes a major problem and interferes with group effectiveness. For example, Janis' (1972) analysis of the Kennedy cabinet and Bay of Pigs incident clearly indicates how excessive projective identification was used to keep individuals in highly rigid roles. Age and social status dictated that undersecretaries should not speak in cabinet meetings unless they were asked questions by senior cabinet members. A collusive system developed between junior and senior cabinet members that maintained highly rigid roles. It allowed each member to split off parts of himself (the uncertain parts) in each of the others. The 'logic' of this projective identification is:

If senior cabinet members believe that they are most knowledgeable, the most experienced and possessing most insight regarding national security, they then can split the parts of them that may doubt their omniscience, and project their doubts onto the junior cabinet members. Junior cabinet members are then perceived as less knowledgeable and competent. This allows the senior cabinet members to keep the illusion of superior competence in understanding national security matters. In short, senior cabinet members manage to reduce their anxiety by splitting then projecting the doubting parts off in the junior members.

In juxtaposition, junior cabinet members projected their competent parts on the senior

members. If the junior members project their competent parts onto the senior members, it allows them to avoid responsibility for taking a definitive stance about national security policies. The junior members could hide behind their lower status. Indeed, senior members were more than willing to have the junior members defer to their greater wisdom. In short, junior members treated senior members like they had *all* the competence. The senior members colluded with this illusion.

Hence, senior and junior members, by excessive use of projective identification, developed a collusive system of illusions and rigid roles that prevented effective problem-solving behaviour.

The cabinet's behaviour in handling the Bay of Pigs incident illustrates how projective identification in groups operates: (1) to protect individuals from threats to their identity (ego-ideal); (2) to maintain highly rigid roles; and (3) to maintain a collusive system. It also demonstrates how valency, in this case based on social status and age, can contribute to role behaviour in groups.

Effective problem-solving and decision-making in groups are related to projective identification that develops among group members. This is a recurrent motif that emerges in groups that hinders or facilitates task accomplishment. Excessive projective identification among group members is more likely to lead to task ineffectiveness, rigid role differentiation, and destructive scapegoating.

Role differentiation in groups

Role differentiation results from the projective identification and symbolization that emerge in groups. Role differentiation is the vehicle by which group members manage their conflicts, ambivalence, and task(s). Gibbard *et al.* (1974) state:

Role differentiation . . . is, in part, a defensive and restitutive effort; and the cost of such differentiation, to the individual and the group, is that splitting, projection and compartmentalization all entail some distortion and simplification of emotional life.

Any specialization limits the individual's range of possibilities—a limitation often compounded by group processes, which seduce or lock the individual into roles that do not meet his emotional requirements. Scapegoating is only the most dramatic manifestation of the group's tendency to exploit the individual. To some degree all group membership is contingent on a conscious or unconscious contract which obligates the individual to sacrifice or suppress one aspect of himself in order to express or develop others. Thus, the individual often finds that groups do not permit him to 'be himself'. (p.250).

Role differentiation also serves an adaptive function for the group. Gibbard *et al.* (1974) assert further:

Rather than becoming flooded with conflicts, the group can make use of individuals (or dyads or subgroups) to circumscribe, localize and isolate conflicts. Through projective

identification, a group is divided into 'actors' and 'audience'. Members are recruited to dramatize the central conflicts of the collectivity, and other members are able to participate vicariously in this dramatization.

Thus, role differentiation can serve both defensive and adaptive functions that are intended to protect individuals from anxiety and ambivalence. Roles provide vehicles which bridge and anchor the group. Individuals use roles to find psychological security, often by depositing and exchanging unwanted parts. The matrix of these transactions and their meanings change during the group's life.

Roles are interdependent and distribute the group's *elan vital*. The distribution produces a variety of actors with different scripts. These actors play their 'parts' in service of the group's plot. The group's drama creates myriad 'parts' for individuals to assume. Each member has a 'part' in unfolding the group's drama. Hence, an array of roles emerges in groups based on projective identification (e.g. hero, seducer, silent member, loved object, combatant, scapegoat, pariah, taskmaster, clown, politician, oppressor, victim, patient, conciliator, incompetent, counterdependent, uninvolved, protector, etc.). These roles emerge from the group's plot (i.e. unconscious relationships and aims of the group) and the valency of the members to assume particular 'parts'.

To understand a 'role' in groups we must examine how it is *embedded* in the context of other roles. Embedded role analysis is critical to the socioanalytic approach. The following vignette describes a classroom situation and how roles are embedded and interdependent:

Dave B had been acting out; he was consistently trying the patience of the teacher, Ms T. She was finding Dave's behaviour quite unbearable. She inferred that Dave had poor impulse control, inadequate parental guidance, and poor analytical skills. She essentially used an intrapersonal analysis to understand Dave's behaviour. The conclusion of her analysis was that Dave needed to be put into a special class for emotionally disturbed children. She then made this recommendation to the principal. Dave was sent to the special class.

On the day of Dave's departure from class, Clay, another student in class, began to ask a series of questions of the teacher, spoke when others were speaking, and became 'disruptive'. His behaviour resembled Dave's behaviour. Using an intrapersonal analysis again, the teacher concluded that Clay had 'problems' similar to Dave's. Hence, Clay was finally put into the special class.

As this was occurring, the other class members often giggled; first at Dave, then at Clay. As the teacher would scold the boys, the class would sit back smiling—not at Dave nor Clay, but rather at Ms T. The class seemed to have an investment in seeing Ms T upset and troubled. It also allowed the class task to be abandoned. Clay's and Dave's classmates appeared well behaved and attentive. They seemed to have an agreement to act 'as if' they were good little children, and let two of their members express their discontent with task and contempt towards the teacher.

Additionally, on the day Clay was transferred, John began to behave in a similar way—to play up Dave's and Clay's part. The plot continues.

This illustration shows the power of group-level processes. Ms T. thought that the problem with the classroom was within the characterological structure of the students. She assumed that if she could get rid of the 'troublemakers' things would go quite smoothly. She failed to understand, however, that these students were expressing concerns on behalf of the group. They were only vehicles through which the group expressed its contempt and rage not only for the task but also for the teacher.

It was mentioned that we have ambivalent feelings about authority figures and groups—we both love and hate them simultaneously. However, it is difficult to have conflicting feelings about the same object; hence, we split off our negative feelings into others. Yet, through projective identification we identify with the person who is expressing negative affect by projecting our disowned negative parts. This enables us ('audience') to act 'as if' all of the contempt, rage, and discontent exist in the other ('actor') (Gibbard, 1975). Here is the origin of scapegoating.

We see this phenomenon in work groups and organizations where an individual is symbolized as incompetent or ineffective. Typically, his or her associates secretly discuss the incompetence or the anxiety level of the individual. They act 'as if' this person is the only one who is incompetent or has feelings of anxiety. There seems to be a tacit agreement among them to localize incompetence into this particular person. The manager of the unit evaluates the individual similarly. The person is then put on probation, transferred or dismissed. The manager in this situation acts 'as if' the problems of his unit exist at the intrapersonal level, i.e. within the individual. The manager does not examine the context in which the 'incompetent worker' occurred. He or she does not examine why the group has allowed this person to become incompetent. Moreover, he or she does not ask how it serves the unit to have this particular person incompetent. It could serve the unit in several ways. It allows the other members to split off their feelings of incompetence (bad parts) into this member, and at the same time, through projective identification, identify with the person's incompetence (because this incompetence is also a part of the member's internal world that he has disowned and externally projected). Hence, the incompetence seen in this particular member represents the projected bad parts of the other group members. Moreover, the projected bad parts are to be destroyed; thus there seems to be an investment in seeing that this member carry incompetence, hoping that it will vanish. Yet we know that it does not solve the problem.

After this person is put on probation, transferred or dismissed, another person may be asked to carry the incompetence on behalf of the unit. In short, if a unit allows one of its group members to carry all of the anxiety or feelings of incompetence, the person will indeed go crazy or get dismissed. Implicit in this conceptual framework is the interdependence of roles.

Role differentiation is, indeed, an imperfect solution for managing the

group's problem. This can be seen in the prior illustration. What often results from role differentiation is a compartmentalization of key members who are flooded with anxiety. Winter (1974) describes Redl's (1942) concept of *group psychological role suction* where:

Under certain conditions a specific group situation seems to have an amazing power to 'suck' individuals into performing certain tasks, even though they may not have been strongly inclined in that direction; these tasks which are important for the comfort, or which respond to the motivational or organizational needs of the group.

The group's psychological role suction is a powerful force in the group to keep members in their roles — even if they are not consciously willing to play them. For example, it is rare that a person consciously volunteers to play the scapegoat role. This, however, does not suggest that there is not a collusion to take the role. The scapegoat role appears to be ubiquitous and perhaps the most costly and destructive to the group and individuals. This is not to say that other roles are not important, but rather scapegoating in a group should receive more examination. The following section describes scapegoating in detail.

In sum, role differentiation is essentially a way that individuals cope with the group situation. The emergence of roles serves defensive and adaptive functions. Changing role differentiation is a manifestation of the group's changing pattern of projective identification.

Scapegoating in groups

Scapegoating is a special and destructive form of role differentiation, particularly in the context of work groups. The origin of scapegoating has its roots in myths and rituals of mankind. It emerges from the religious ritual of sacrifice and totemistic practices (Jaffe, 1968; Lieberman *et al.*, 1973).

The ritual of scapegoating is found in the book of Leviticus 16:1-34. Scapegoating was practised by the early Hebrew tribes to atone for their transgressions against their God. Leviticus 16, Verses 7-10, states:

- (7) And he should take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
- (8) And Aa'ron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.
- (9) And Aa'ron shall bring the goat upon which the lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.
- (10) But the goat on which the lot fell to be scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement with him and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

The scapegoat represented sins of the tribes that must be separated from

themselves and sent into the wilderness. The tribe could project and exorcise their sins through the scapegoat. This act of exorcising the sin (bad parts) on the head of the scapegoat is a mechanism used to cope with their ambivalent relationship to their deity and group. Jaffe (1968) states:

In the process of atonement and purification, the ritual involves, among other things, the disposition of two goats. One is killed and the blood sprinkled upon the arkcover and then upon the altar . . . it (goat) is burnt to make smoke . . .

The ritual proceeds to dispose of the second goat, which is the 'scapegoat'. *The entire removal of the sin and guilt of the community is symbolized by placing these upon the head of the scapegoat who is then sent away, bearing all of the inequities, into the wilderness or 'land which is cut off' (to prevent the animal's return).*

When later it was no longer possible to send the goat to a place whence it could not return to inhabited parts, the practice became one of casting the animal down a precipice. (p. 66.7) (author's italics)

Groups often search for the scapegoat to represent and repent for their badness (i.e. anxiety, weakness, sins, etc.). The scapegoat role provides the group with an imperfect solution to its felt badness, e.g. incompetence, anxiety, racism, or conflict. By projective identification group members deposit their unwanted parts (their guilt, rage, contempt) in another, then proceed to drive the other into the wilderness or into death. As the Hebrew children used the scapegoat to atone for their sins and to eliminate their guilt, the group uses the scapegoat to cope with its anxiety and badness. Groups create scapegoats to hide every person's self-contempt, self-doubt, weakness, and destructiveness. Miller (1974) states:

The group situation is a particularly salient one for the use of projective identification, a concept introduced by Melanie Klein (1946) to indicate the defensive process whereby aspects of the self are projected onto a person or object which then becomes characterized or controlled by this projected aspect of the self. The manifestation of this defense in groups occurs when members deny a particular feeling, attribute it to someone else, and thus overtly insist that someone else express the feeling for them. Scapegoating is a stereotyped example in groups where shared patterns of denial are focused by the process of projective identification on one member. That member is asked and often agrees to express all of the given undesirable attitudes for the group (p. 12)

The search for a scapegoat(s) typically begins after the group experiences aggression or frustration. Unconsciously the group members' thought may be: 'Someone is responsible for my anxiety'. This begins the group's search and destroy mission. Typically, people with different demographic characteristics, expressive personalities, and valency for patient or martyr roles become excellent candidates for scapegoating. Groups may even locate a dyad or triad to deposit their denied feelings and then behave in ways to isolate or render them crazy.

Using a scapegoat is an easy (albeit infantile) psychological solution for

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anxiety and unwanted parts. Excessive projective identification allows group members to deposit all unwanted parts in the scapegoat at the expense of the scapegoat. The scapegoat allows other group members to maintain their self-righteous autistic imagoes. This is why the scapegoat must be separated and sent away; the group cannot stand to look at or face itself seen in the scapegoat. Hence, group members deny any responsibility for making a scapegoat or having any characteristics of the scapegoat.

This cycle of search, isolate, destroy, and denial creates group casualties: to fill a person up with the group's anxiety (psychotic feelings); isolate these feelings in the person as if he or she is the only one who is feeling crazy; exorcise the person from the group; and then deny any responsibility for making a person into a scapegoat is a subtle and dangerous operation. Scapegoating has taken its toll of human life, destroyed work groups, organizations, and families (Lieberman *et al.*, 1973).

Excessive projective identification and rigid role differentiation lead to scapegoating. Role reversal, maintenance discussion, and/or interventions in the group's projective identification motif can alter the scapegoating phenomenon. Comprehending the complexity of the scapegoating phenomenon is essential to the systemic socioanalytic approach. Increasing the awareness of group members may abate the group's tendency to scapegoat. There are indeed other ways groups can cope with their anxiety and frustration.

DIAGNOSTIC HEURISTICS

The group-as-a-whole framework provides a basis for diagnosing organizational behaviour. A variety of heuristics will be given and then applied to a concrete case.

*Diagnostic strategies of socioanalytic approach**

- (1) Make an initial analysis of the group's processes using all psychological levels of organizational processes (i.e. intrapersonal, interpersonal, group-level, intergroup level, interorganizational).
- (2) Develop alternative and competing hypotheses about what is occurring in the group situation.
- (3) Give greater emphasis to interpersonal, group-level and intergroup processes than intrapersonal processes. The diagnostician should give individuals in conflict the 'benefit of the doubt' that the reason for the

* It is assumed that a diagnostician has been called to consult to a work group where a personality problem exists between Mr/Ms X or Mr/Ms Y. These heuristics and concomitant discussion will by no means prepare the reader to use the socioanalytic approach. They rather highlight major aspects of the approach.

'problems' is not solely dependent on their intrapsychic condition. Too often intrapersonal analyses are made. This often prematurely indicts/blames individuals for an organizational problem. Intrapersonal analysis is quite costly for the individual's life and career and for the organization in terms of turnover. Hence, only make intrapersonal attribution about organizational problems when all of the other process levels have been fully explored.

(4) When analysing organizational processes from a group-level perspective, the diagnostician must raise these questions about the group under examination: (a) What does this conflict represent on behalf of the group-as-a-whole? (b) What does the conflict symbolize for the group? (c) What feelings (via projective identification) are being put in these co-actors? (d) Do they express the anxiety, incompetence or hope on behalf of the group? (e) How does it serve the group to have these co-actors take their specialized roles?

(5) The diagnostician must examine him/herself by stepping back and using the 'observing ego' to check out the 'experiencing ego' or the internal experience of being with the client group. The diagnostician aims to use him/herself and his or her experiences as a barometer to understand the group's processes.

(6) The diagnostician must examine ways he or she may be using projective identification to cope with the consulting role. Projective identification can be abated by working on *owning and living with* ambivalence and concomitant anxiety. This reduces the need to split off internal bad/good feelings.

(7) Gather data on the group's unconscious alliances by listening to group themes, the tone of the discussion. Attempt to link and compare the content of the discussion to the 'here and now' group concerns

(8) Diagnosticians must ask themselves what feelings are being put into them. If the diagnostician feels anxious, hopeless, etc., at some levels, the group feels the same and has unconsciously asked the consultant to carry the feelings.

At the same time, if the diagnostician feels powerful, competent, 'able to leap tall buildings at a single bound,' the group via projective identification, may be acting 'as if' they are incompetent, deskilled infants in need of protection. To collude with the group's wishes confirms that they are infants (which they actually resent), thus creating a more problematic situation.

With the preceding heuristics in mind, the diagnostician can begin to formulate interventions focused at the group level. Interventions are aimed at the group-as-a-whole. They should be interpretative or demonstrative in nature. Comments should be offered about what the group is doing to the individuals who are the identified problems.

The data used to formulate these interventions should always be presented.

The use of the 'because clause' (Turquet, 1974) is extremely helpful when intervening at the group level. The 'because clause' is a hypothesis about the reason for the group's behaviour and how the co-actors express aspects of the group's *elan vital*.

The diagnostician should discuss the conceptual perspective he or she uses to examine group processes. It should be stated that individual behaviour in groups is assumed to represent the group-as-a-whole. Hence, when a person acts, he or she acts not only on his or her own behalf, but on behalf of the group's life.

Members typically challenge the group-as-a-whole concept. In western society group members like to see themselves as acting always under their own initiatives. This attitude may represent individualistic norms of the western world. To adopt a group-level perspective about individual behaviour in group violates the narcissistic striving of the group members. They are frightened by the possibility that they may be controlled by some force other than themselves. To take the group-level perspective elicits anger and fear in group members. They experience the group-level perspective in itself as a narcissistic blow. It challenges their vanity. Hence, resistance against interventions rapidly grows. A working through of the group's response to the intervention is critical. The diagnostician can request the group to step back and examine the moments when the intervention was made and offer comments about the difficulty in understanding the notion that we exist as interdependent co-actors connected by a covert and unconscious relationship.

The diagnostician should only aim to reduce the pressure on the individuals (i.e. alter the group's projective identification motif) who represents the identified problem. The diagnostician may consult with the individuals separately to discuss how the group may be using them as a repository, etc.

A series of interventions used to reduce the pressure on and conflict between Ms A and Mr K follows as an illustration of the socioanalytic approach.

A case illustration*

A five-day experiential learning laboratory for drug treatment counsellors about the treatment and rehabilitation of minority (coloured) substance abusers was offered in a large northeastern metropolitan city. During this workshop conflict and hostility developed between two participants: Ms A, a black woman, and Mr K, an anglo man. Fifteen participants (eight anglos, five blacks, and two hispanics) comprised the workshop. Three blacks, the staff. The dean of the laboratory was a black man.

The conflict between Ms A and Mr K escalated as the laboratory progressed. In large group sessions they often interrupted and disagreed with one another.

*The author's role was that of the Dean in this case.

While these combatants engaged in their seemingly interpersonal problem, the other group members sat as a silent audience, watching with great interest. The *content* of their disagreement focused on the validity of the material presented by the staff (i.e. black authority). For example:

Mr K (angrily): These theories do not represent my experience. I don't really know if there are any real differences between black and white clients. A lot of these theories is mere abstractions and bullshit!

Ms A (said to Mr K): They are real to me. If you don't like it, or it is not consistent with your experience, you can get out — leave. You don't need to help anybody anyway — except your damn self!

Ms A always defended the validity of the material. Mr K always raised questions about the validity of the material. It was 'as if' a discussion regarding the relative merits or deficiencies of the material presented could not occur without erupting into a conflict. Moreover, when Ms A and Mr K discussed to the point where they might agree, a member of the group would say: 'You really don't listen to each other.' (Other members would nod their heads in agreement.) This would act to rekindle the conflict between Ms A and Mr K. They would accuse each other of not listening and the cycle continued — their conflict roles reinforced.

In spite of their promotion of the conflict between Ms A and Mr K by remaining silently attentive during the interchanges and introducing inflammatory material whenever the two would approach agreement, the other group members were not at all grateful for the services of Ms A and Mr K on their behalf. On the contrary, they complained, both inside and outside the sessions, that Ms A and Mr K were 'too aggressive', 'took up too much air time', and that they were 'tired of listening to them'.

From an intrapersonal perspective, it would appear that Ms A and Mr K have personality problems, e.g. they each lack impulse control, are excessively insecure and competitive, or just 'crazy'. The problem lies *within* Ms A and Mr K. To resolve these 'intrapersonal problems', individual psychotherapy is recommended.

From an interpersonal perspective, the behaviours of Ms A and Mr K suggest that their respective communication styles are incongruent, and that they lack interpersonal competence. The problem lies *between* only Ms A and Mr K. To resolve these interpersonal problems, a 'training' (T) group experience is recommended.

Using the systemic socioanalytic approach (i.e. 'group-as-a-whole' method of analysis), it would appear that Ms A and Mr K are involved in a conflict in which the other group members are intensely interested. Moreover, it also seemed that the participants had a stake in the conflict between Ms A and Mr K. The other group members, through projective identification, forced Ms A and Mr K to confront issues for them that were perceived as difficult and

anxiety-laden. Once the opposing positions were assumed, they were scapegoated.

By using Ms A and Mr K as receptacles, the group can simultaneously express its frustration and feel contempt for the dyad. To assume that the problem lies only within Ms A or Mr K, or only between Ms A and Mr K, would be erroneous. Zinner (1976) would say the dyad acted as a 'proxy' in the world (outside the self) which served as a repository for the other group members' wishes.

Moreover, it appears 'as if' Ms A and Mr K represented opposite aspects of the ambivalence that the member group had towards the staff group. The group acted out its ambivalence through the dyad — one black, the other white. It is not coincidental that Ms A, the black woman, expressed the positive side of the ambivalence, and Mr K, an anglo male, expressed the negative side. The group members wanted to simplify their lives; they wanted things clear — in 'black and white' terms.

Through projective identification the group used the dyad to resolve strong, conflicting feelings. It was 'as if' Ms A was in support of the staff without reservation and Mr K was against the staff without reservation. In reality, it was more likely that Ms A had some reservation about the content of the course and the training staff and Mr K had some positive feelings about the course content and the training staff. Yet it was very difficult for either Ms A or Mr K to have appropriately mixed feelings about the course and training staff.

Under the influence of the group's motif of projective identification, the dyad could not 'break out' of their roles without help from other members. They were involved in Redl's (1942) group psychological role suction. The influence of the group's projective identification pattern is revealed in the group members' interest in the pair fighting. They had an unconscious alliance with each other to maintain the pair. At a fantasy level for the group, perhaps, Ms A and Mr K would come together and produce the *answer* (Messiah) to the difficulty in learning by experience and resolve the racial conflicts, but, most of all, they would reduce the overwhelming anxiety generated by participating in this temporary educational enterprise.

This is quite a dangerous situation for the dyads who become the repository for split-off parts of the group. In extreme form, group members in these roles are scapegoated, used, driven crazy, and exorcised from the group or organization. Without a group-level analysis we could assume that the problem lies within the individuals involved. Yet the group projective identification motif reveals that there are forces working to fill up Ms A and Mr K with negative affect and conflict. It is, indeed, this process that drives individuals psychotic in group and organizational contexts.

Through the use of projective identification, group members (the audience) experience vicarious gratifications of their projected impulses as expressed by

the conflict in the Black-white dyad. Using Ms A and Mr K to express conflict allowed the release of the group's frustration and anxiety. It also allowed the other group members (audience) to withdraw and stay aloof, as though they had no investment nor internal tension about participating in the laboratory. Projective identification allowed the audience to take an unconscious voyeuristic attitude towards the interaction between Ms A and Mr K. This unconscious voyeuristic posture assumed by the group members provided a vehicle through which they could split off their bad parts and put them into Ms A and Mr K. Splitting and externalizing the bad parts (i.e. anxiety-producing parts) is a defensive manoeuvre to achieve the pre-ambivalent, autistic state of a neonate.

Yet, what of the implicit collusion by Ms A and Mr K to express the group's frustration and anxiety? It appeared that Ms A was predisposed for strong identification with the staff's competence. She wanted to protect the staff from the anger, contempt, and competition of the group. Through the use of projective identification she could positively identify with the black staff. This, therefore, made it more difficult to consciously experience her own competitive, envious, angry, and contemptuous feelings — unconsciously Ms A thought the staff would be destroyed by her badness.

The interaction between Ms A and her predisposition or valence towards identifying with the staff* and the group members' symbolization of and attribution to her sociological characteristics (i.e. black female) extended her identification with the staff to include the function of protecting them. Dumas (1975) suggests that in social systems tremendous pressure is exerted on black women to perform 'nanny' or protective, caretaking roles. Hence, at some level, Ms A was available to protect the staff. Yet the protection of the staff put extreme pressure on her (on leaving the workshop, Ms A and Mr K both complained of headaches and fatigue). From an individual point of view, under the influence of the group's projective identification Ms A's *valence bonds* were exaggerated or extended so that it became psychologically uncomfortable and anxiety-provoking for her. She became swept up in the influence of the group's projective identification, which allowed her to take on scapegoat functions concomitantly with Mr K.

*Nobles (1974, 1976) suggests that Afro-Americans have maintained their African connection, or 'Africinity', despite the assertions made by white 'scholars'. This Africinity is clearly seen in the black extended family system (Nobles, 1976; Hayles, 1978).

The oneness of being and survival of the tribe are the principles upon which Africinity is based. Thus, in the ontology of Afro-centric people throughout the black diaspora, there is an existential view that all black people are of the 'same being', of the same 'vital life force' that connects them as one. As an analogue, the spider's web represents the relationships in Africa and throughout the black diaspora, as Ms A's identification with the staff, in part, represents Africinity. There seemed to be an implicit existential connection between Ms A and the black staff. Her identification with the staff was facilitated by her being-black-in-the-world.

Mr K, an anglo male, was also predisposed to collude in the group's projective identification. Mr K reported that he worked in an all-black organization with a black male director. Hence, he had several concerns. First, he had a sincere desire to work with people of colour, and he viewed himself as a sensitive, committed individual who championed social causes. However, he had ambivalence about having a subordinate role working with black people. At work, he was apparently unaware of his negative feeling about working in an all-black organization in his subordinate and minority status. In the laboratory, he projectively identified with other anglos whom he perceived as uninterested in social causes and racist.

In this laboratory situation, Mr K's ambivalence towards his minority working status was triggered by working with an all-black staff who had no 'real world'* authority to affect his employment. Hence, he had a valence, given his ambivalence towards his work situation, to come under the influence of the group's projective identification.

He colluded with the group's wishes to compete with and challenge the staff. He also expressed the group's fantasy that the staff really might be incompetent; and that the only reason they were hired was because of Affirmative Action plans, or 'that they were just running a "good game" without having any skills to teach anything'. The former attitude represented the covert attitudes of the anglo participants, the latter black participants' covert attitudes. Mr K's expressions of admiration and trust for the staff (the other side of his ambivalence) could not be expressed under the influence of the group's projective identification. He developed psychosomatic complaints during the week under the stress of acting as the repository for the negative feeling towards the staff and being scapegoated for it. Yet, like Ms A, Mr K's valence bonds were stretched so that he got swept up in his role and became a candidate for scapegoating.

This case study and interpretation provide an illustration of how projective identification, role differentiation, and the psychological needs of scapegoating are used in a group setting. A discussion on intervening in interpersonal relations from a 'systemic socioanalytic perspective' follows.

Interventions

On the third day of the laboratory, the staff decided that 'conflict' between Ms A and Mr K had escalated and begun to have a negative impact on the progress of the course. It was thought that the conflict between Ms A and Mr K should be openly discussed in the large group session.

During the large group session the Dean (the author) offered the following comments:

*Real world' authority meaning that, as trainers, the staff had no relationship with his work organization. The laboratory staff could not affect his employment.

It seems to me that the group has allowed Ms A and Mr K to express mixed feelings and reactions to the relevance of the course content or the competence of the staff that exist inside each and everyone here. Surely, it is much easier to let Ms A and Mr K carry and express each side of the conflicting feelings about the staff on behalf of everyone here.

In response to the Dean's comment, a member replied:

This is Ms A's and Mr K's conflict — it's their trip. I don't have anything to do with it.

The Dean then offered this comment:

Indeed, it would be a simple solution to live under the pretence that the conflict is just Ms A's and Mr K's. Surely, they are willing actors who allow themselves to be used in this way. It seems that Ms A represents the part of each member that may want to protect the staff. Mr K represents the part of everyone that may question the content of the course and the staff's competence. It's quite easy to have Ms A and Mr K simply resolve the group's internal ambivalence.

This Intervention* had several purposes: (i) to articulate how the group was using Ms A and Mr K to reduce other group members' internal conflict and tension; (2) to illustrate how Ms A and Mr K colluded with the group's wishes — implicitly suggesting that they should stop the collusion; (3) to uncover 'tacit alliances' that existed among the members. Making explicit by surfacing the group's tacit alliance (the group's projective identification motif) through the intervention renders this particular form of group alliance inoperative. Tacit group alliances can only operate when they are indeed unconscious or covert.

Interventions from a group-level perspective are often resisted and resented by the group members. They experience the intervention, as Tarachow (1963) suggests, as a 'double deprivation'. Firstly, the intervention uncovers the unconscious alliance that exists among the group members, which they experience as being 'found out' or 'caught'. Secondly, there is an implicit statement that staff in this case will not collude with how the group is relating to and using each other. In short, they must change their behaviour towards one another and themselves.

The group's wish to have the conflicting feelings and tension bottled up in two of its members is challenged by the intervention. The wish (or the hope) that putting the feelings into Ms A and Mr K can resolve complex feelings and painful anxiety is extinguished.

The message to the group members is that each of them must own the parts of themselves that are split off into others via projective identification. The intervention invites each member to tolerate his or her ambivalence and

*The group-as-a-whole approach had been discussed with the group members earlier. Hence, the group was familiar with the concepts of projective identification and splitting. If a group is unfamiliar with these concepts, they should be given a lecturette.

anxiety. The intervention requests the members to refrain from using others to carry and express unwanted split parts. The intervention asks members to abandon their neonate coping strategy (i.e. projective identification) to manage the feelings generated by the laboratory experience. The intervention robs the group of its infantile wishes.

The members often respond defensively and with denial to these interventions. To illustrate, a members commented in response to the Dean's interventions:

I don't know what you are talking about. I think the course is OK. I am just waiting to see how you (staff) are going to tie it together. But, I feel all right.

Another group member commented:

Well, I have a number of questions about what has been going on here. Yet, Mr K seemed to have raised them for me. I really didn't want to seem like a smart-ass always asking questions. I might get misinterpreted because I'm white.

A black member commented:

I find the theories presented helpful. Yet, there are questions I don't ask because I think the white members here will use them to criticize you (staff). So, I just keep things to myself and ask you about them after the sessions are over.

There seemed to be an underlying fear that prevented members from bringing their whole person into the laboratory. It appeared that they needed to keep some of their thoughts and feelings out of the workshop. There seemed a need to 'put a lid on things'. Fantasies of violence and conflict were uppermost in members' minds. Kovel (1970) suggests that even discussing race relations in America elicits primitive and violent fantasies. Hence, there was a concern that things might get out of hand — someone might get hurt. An easy solution to the underlying anxiety was for Ms A and Mr K to carry and hopefully resolve the conflict on behalf of the group by scapegoating the black/white dyad — if the group could fill up Ms A and Mr K with affect and cast them off to atone for the badness (bad feelings) in each member.

Indeed, in ancient Hebrew rituals, the scapegoat was banished to the wilderness — never to return — with the transgressions of the tribes. The banishment of the scapegoat represented atonement. Scapegoating is used to exorcise individual and collective sins (badness) of the tribe.

In the attempted scapegoating of Ms A and Mr K, the staff interfered with this solution by making an intervention from the group level. The group members could no longer ignore how they were using each other and how destructively and violently they were behaving.

In response to the members' comments, the Dean made this intervention:

Denied feelings seek expression. We often split off our feelings and put them into others. Yet, that really does not resolve the feelings; they only get repressed, waiting with greater magnitude for expression.

To deny the truth increases its force a thousandfold. To deny feelings increases them beyond endurance.

It seems then the major question for this group is: 'Can people bring their whole selves into the experience of the laboratory — both positive and negative feelings, emotion and intellect?'

A white member responded:

I feel I can't let all of my thoughts out. Things might happen. Conflict, confusion, and hostility may erupt. I don't want to be called a fuckin' racist!

Other members nodded in silent agreement. Then a black group member remarked:

I feel I can't raise questions or say very much because everyone may get into a conflict. I hate confusion and conflict. I'd rather avoid it. And you (the Dean) don't help matters either!

A comment from a Latino member followed:

The conflict in this group is between anglo and black people. I'm just here to learn. I don't say much because I can see both sides of the issue. I have my own special issues. They are not black or anglo; so, I'll let you all fight. But, I feel that the issues of latino clients were not addressed. There aren't any latinos on staff! And, seemingly, nothing can be done about it. So, I'll sit back and let all of this bullshit go on — crazy Americans!

After these members had responded to the Dean's intervention, other group members shared their feelings about the course and each other. As discussion among the group members became more open, exploration of the group's fantasies and fears occurred.

The intervention changed the motif of projective identification among the group members. It robbed the group of its unconscious alliances and thus freed group members to form other types of alliances that were less destructive. Consequently, the group's investment in using Ms A and Mr K to express the conflict abated. They were released from their conflict roles. Their candidacy for scapegoats was relinquished.

To test whether the conflict was interpersonal in nature, the staff asked if Ms A and Mr K wanted to have a third-party (Walton, 1969) consultation to help them resolve their 'interpersonal problem'. There was little interest in this solution by Ms A or Mr K. In subsequent sessions, conflict between them ceased. Other group members became more active and gave feedback. Negative and positive feelings were shared.

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Critical and positive evaluations were offered. Even greater openness emerged as the session progressed. Group members seemed more able to take responsibility for their feelings (both negative and positive) and for their learning.

At the end of the workshop, Ms A and Mr K did not necessarily adore each other. But they were not engaged in conflict nor scapegoated. Indeed, both had learned a lot about how groups can use individuals and how one can collude. Moreover, they became acutely aware that when one acts in a group, the acts may not be the function of one's own intrapersonal conditions, but rather that of the group. Groups can make individuals behave in certain and prescribed ways. Perhaps Ms A and Mr K learned more than other members by being in the entrails of the group.

In evaluating the laboratory, members commented:

Feelings can be put in you!

A person often uses and is used by other group members to act in a certain way — to assume a particular role.

I don't want to believe that groups can control my behaviour.

When I came here I thought all of that psychoanalytic stuff was bullshit. It really might have some relevance; I have to reconsider.

I have more to learn, all has not sunk in yet.

This was a hard experience. I learned a lot about myself — and the treatment of minorities.

Interventions from a systemic socioanalytic perspective can provide meaningful learning for organization members. They can teach group members that they are all responsible, in part, for what happens in their work group. Often by tacit agreement, through silence and collusion, we determine what people say or how they act in groups and organizations. We can and do fill others with our split, projected parts. Moreover, socioanalytic intervention may teach us that we are what we have disdain and contempt for. We are indeed, in part, all of those undesirable traits and behaviours we see in others. Group-level interventions help us to be more empathetic with those whom we would like to kill off. We all, at times, act like King David, author of the *Psalms*.

The underlying intent of the socioanalytic approach is to increase individuals' and groups' understanding of their covert dynamics. It is hoped that individuals exposed to the socioanalytic approach will be more task-effective and humane to each other. Increased consciousness enables individuals to become more competent managers and better leaders and followers. It may also reduce the amount of human wreckage and pathos that occurs in groups and organizations at alarming rates.

Simply stated, the socioanalytic intervention and approach helps individuals understand that we must take individual and collective responsibility for what

happens in groups. We are not solipsists, unaffected by others, nor individuals in isolation, but rather connected and driven by collective ties. We are indeed group creatures. The wise poet John Donne (Hayward, 1949) eloquently describes our 'groupishness' and man's identity:

Who bends not his ear to any bell which upon any occasion rings, but who can remove it from that bell which is passing a piece of himself out of this world?

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main

Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never seek to know for whom the bell tolls: it tolls for thee. (from *Devotion XVII*)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter delineates the theoretical and diagnostic aspects of the systemic socioanalytic approach. A number of concepts have been defined and applied to several case illustrations. This is only an introduction to the developing approach, and raises more questions than it answers. Many of the concepts presented here hopefully have heuristic value for scholars and practitioners.

The group-as-a-whole phenomenon is important, but little recognized in determining quality of life in social systems. Phenomena often defined as personality problems or personal incompetence may, in reality, be a manifestation of the group's struggle with its anxiety and tension. Indeed, the group-as-a-whole concept is intellectually challenging and appears to violate western notions of individual uniqueness and autonomy. Nevertheless, it can explain a large portion of variance in individual behaviour within groups. The group-as-a-whole approach also makes it clear that members of *Homo sapiens* are connected by their 'groupishness', regardless of their contempt for that idea.

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