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Small Group Research 2004; 35; 333

DOI: 10.1177/1046496404264973

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CONTRIBUTIONS OF PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORIES TO UNDERSTANDING SMALL GROUPS

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Psychodynamic theories of groups operate on the fundamental assumption that (a) nonconscious emotional processes shape interpersonal behavior in groups; (b) the lack of awareness of these processes inhibits effective work in the group; and (c) bringing such processes to members' awareness will help remove this inhibition. Psychodynamic theories can be classified into two types of approaches: psychoanalytic and humanistic. These perspectives further assume that social behavior has biological bases and that a group mind exists. The psychoanalytic approach is governed by a medical model and traces its early development to Freud. Humanistic approaches are governed by an education and the human development model and trace their roots to the early social psychological theories of Lewin. Psychodynamic perspectives have influenced the study of groups widely and are notable for their major contribution to theories of group development.

Keywords: psychodynamic; field theory; sociometry; NTL; Tavistock

The distinction between emotional behaviors and task-oriented behaviors has been the object of much attention in the small group literature for nearly a century. The prevailing ethos within the literature has treated this distinction as an uneasy alliance, one that must be accepted as characteristic of groups. Psychodynamic theories, however, challenge the prevailing characterization of this distinction, or that such a distinction even exists. From these perspectives, a group's understanding of its emotional processes *is* its task, or is crucial for accomplishing its task. The single most persistent research question addressed by the psychodynamic perspective has

SMALL GROUP RESEARCH, Vol. 35 No. 3, June 2004 333-361

DOI: 10.1177/1046496404264973

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been the identification of a universal pattern of group development. The common thread in the patterns that have been proposed is that two central emotional issues need to be resolved before a group can move to mature performance. These issues center around power and affiliation. Who leads the group? How much power do they exert? How is power shared? How cohesive should the group be? Is conflict healthy? Does a close personal relationship between two group members enhance or detract from the functioning of the group? In mature groups, dependence gives way to independence and ultimately to interdependence. Both polarization and idealized unification give way to the effective management of conflict and attraction.

Psychodynamic perspectives have been applied primarily to small, face-to-face interacting groups, but applications to large groups, organizations, and societies are also well represented (for examples, see Alderfer, 1998; Hirschhorn, 1999; Jarrett & Kellner, 1996; Kernberg, 1984, 1998; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984; Miller & Rice, 1967; Morgan & Thomas, 1996; Paul, Strbiak, & Landrum, 2002; Seel, 2001; K. K. Smith, 1982; K. K. Smith & Berg, 1987; Vogler, 2000; Volkan, 1999a, 1999b). Furthermore, the vast majority of this literature has focused on groups whose function is therapy, learning, or personal development. The general work within these groups is therefore learning about the group, improving the group's functioning, or restoring its members to health.

PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORIES DEFINED

As the title of the article implies, there is more than one version of psychodynamic theory. We focus here on two major approaches—*psychoanalytic* (Bion, 1961; Foulkes, 1964; Freud, 1921; Kernberg, 1984; Klein, 1959; Miller, 1998; Slater, 1966; Yalom, 1995) and *humanistic* (Back, 1972; Golembiewski & Blumberg, 1977; Lewin, 1943; Maslow, 1970; Moreno, 1953; Rogers, 1970; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1989). Both approaches have in common a focus on

the relations between nonconscious and conscious processes in groups.¹ Furthermore, the roots of the various versions are based almost exclusively within the disciplines of psychotherapy and social and organizational psychology. The following definition unifies them:

an approach to the study of group behavior that focuses on the relationship between the emotional and nonconscious processes, and the conscious and rational processes of interpersonal interaction.

The various psychodynamic theories share in common three broad assumptions. The first is that emotional and nonconscious processes exist within all human groups. This assumption is based on the argument that the universal psychological processes by which humans develop in terms of emotions and personality, form the foundations of social behaviors (Klein, 1959). Examples of these individual-level processes include defense mechanisms and identification processes. One of the debates among psychodynamic perspectives is whether groups as a whole manifest such processes (e.g., Bion, 1961), or whether these processes are only meaningful as individual-level phenomena manifested in a group context (e.g., Foulkes, 1964). Put in the language of therapy, one of the roots of this field, the question is whether psychoanalysis is performed on individuals in a group setting or on the whole group.

The second assumption is that despite the fact that these processes are largely outside of group members' conscious awareness, they nevertheless affect the quality of interpersonal interaction and task performance, no matter the specific domain or definition of the task. Much of the literature within these perspectives focuses on therapeutic and personal development groups. But performance on other kinds of tasks is affected as well. The third assumption is that bringing nonconscious processes to group members' conscious awareness is necessary for increasing group effectiveness. The path to learning is through dispassionate analysis of the connections between the nonconscious and the conscious dynamics within a group.²

VARIETIES OF PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY

PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACHES

It might reasonably be argued that the most fundamental assumption of psychoanalytic approaches is that group behavior has biological origins. The theories from this perspective rest on evolutionary arguments related to adaptiveness and survival. The existence of any group ultimately can be explained by the human instinct to combine spontaneously with others as a means to ensure species survival through protection and procreation. These primitive instincts are driven by emotions, and the resulting emotional dynamics remain part of all human social interaction.

In groups, the emotional dynamics lead to the formation of the “group mind,” a concept that has been at the root of this perspective for close to a century. Le Bon (1920) and McDougall (1922) presented theories of how small and large groups come to act as if they were single organisms. Freud later adopted this concept as he began to apply his theories of human development to the group level.

Consistent with a biological approach is the observation that a medical model, specifically psychotherapeutic, is the main paradigm guiding theory and research under this perspective. Psychotherapy includes a large number of techniques for the purpose of treating emotional and psychological disturbances (see Anderson, Anderson, & Glanze, 2001). Thus, psychoanalytic approaches have a problem-solving orientation. Perhaps because of the traditional medical focus on disease, there is a decided bias toward a dark view of the role that emotions play in groups. We intend here both the literal meaning of *dark*—the absence of, or away from, light—and the figurative meaning—mysterious or sinister. These processes are dark because they are not directly observable and because they are seen as the source of the problems to be solved. Not surprisingly, virtually all of the key theorists whose work has shaped psychoanalytic approaches to groups—Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Wilfred Bion, Michael (Siegismund) Foulkes, A. K. Rice, and Elliott Jacques—were psychotherapists.

Early roots: Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein. Freud developed his theory and method of psychoanalysis initially for working with individual patients suffering from neuroses. But he himself was among the first to recognize the application of his theories to the social arena. As mentioned earlier, he embraced the concept of the singular group mind presented by Le Bon (1920) and McDougall (1922). Freud characterized the emotional processes that formed the group mind as libidinal and defensive in nature, relating to the fundamental instincts of procreation and survival (see Ettin, Cohen, & Fidler, 1997; Long, 1992).

Freud characterized the development of personality as a series of fixed stages, each stage characterized by a particular conflict between libidinous instincts and societal expectations. He viewed personality as consisting of three structures: the id, which operates at the unconscious level and is the source of instincts and emotions; the superego, which also operates at the unconscious level and is the repository of values and moral sense; and the ego, which is the seat of rational and conscious thought. The developmental stages describe the growth of the ego and its ability to control the unconscious impulses and processes of the id and the superego. The idea of developmental stages characterized by resolution of inherent tensions is central to psychoanalytic approaches to groups. As will be seen in the coming discussion of Wilfred Bion, a group could be said to act at any given time as if it were in a particular stage of psychosexual development.

Melanie Klein's (1946, 1959) work, particularly in her departures from Freud's views, paved the way for significant advancement in psychoanalytic theories of group behavior. Consistent with Freud, Klein argued that the development of the higher order elements of personality (ego and superego) evolved through processes of defending the psyche against anxiety. Both Freud and Klein postulated that the earliest emotion experienced in the human psyche is aggression, and that the child's inchoate ego is too fragile to contain the full measure of its own aggressive impulses. Klein argued that the infant resorts to the primitive ego defense mechanism of "splitting," which involves separating its positive and negative emotions and then projecting these emotions onto different objects. The

infant thus eventually comes to experience its world as populated by various objects toward which it has negative or positive feelings. These objects, which Klein recognizes as being at a fantasy level of experience, form structures that help the infant develop a sense of reality about its world (Long, 1992). She departed from Freud in postulating that these processes occur at a much younger age than he contended, and she believed that the sexual instincts played a less prominent role in development. Unlike Freud, Klein worked directly with children and thus arguably had a firmer empirical basis for her version of the theory.

The splitting and projection processes are theorized to take place at the level of fantasy, but Klein postulated that these processes affect behavior and relations in reality through the process of "projective identification." Klein referred to this as a "process where fantasized, split off parts of the self are projected into others, so that those others are seen to possess these parts, and so that the individual becomes identified with the other" (as quoted in Long, 1992, p. 28).

Although Klein herself did not apply these ideas to groups, it can be readily seen how subsequent followers of her ideas, most notably Bion (1961), would take this step. Klein's idea of projective identification suggests that interaction between people can occur on a nonconscious level. She suggested that the basic structures formed by the primitive ego defenses of splitting and projection, and the more developed mechanism of projective identification, form the basis for patterns that continue to manifest themselves in interpersonal interactions throughout life. This argument has been the cornerstone of the most important theoretical developments in the psychoanalytic perspective. Otto Kernberg (1998), a contemporary proponent of Klein's ideas, reports that "impressive clinical evidence indicates that regardless of the individual's maturity and psychological integration, certain group conditions tend to bring on regression and activate primitive psychological levels" (p. 7).

Wilfred Bion. Arguably, Wilfred Bion is the single most important theorist across all versions of psychodynamic perspectives on groups (Kernberg, 1998). His theory and method have been applied

to groups of all sizes, within just about every setting imaginable. The most widely taught and cited theories of group development, which we will discuss explicitly in a later section of this chapter, are built on the skeleton of Bion's theory. We will accordingly discuss his theory and contributions at some length here.

Bion's work was directly influenced by Klein, who was both his mentor and his analyst. She was also a founding member of the Tavistock Institute, where she and Bion were colleagues. Bion's experiments with conducting psychotherapy in group settings, which eventually became known as the Tavistock method, began at a British military hospital with neurotic patients (Bion, 1961). Following his psychoanalytic heritage, Bion accepted the idea of a group acting as a single entity, but he took it a step further. He argued that there was a distinction between psychotherapy on individuals conducted in a group setting and psychotherapy on the group as a whole. He thus contributed methods and theories that allowed for the study and treatment of groups as entities in their own right. We will describe in more detail the Tavistock method in the later section on methodology.

One of the qualities unique to the group-as-a-whole perspective is group culture. Bion described two types of cultures: one that characterizes groups engaged in sophisticated, rational work (the *work group culture*) and another that characterized groups acting as if they were assembled for some reason other than the overt task (*basic assumption group cultures*). These basic assumption groups are shadows, existing in a parallel but nonconscious level as the work group. For Bion, the basic assumption groups are the biogenetic core universal to all human groups.

Miller (1998) presents a very useful elaboration of the biological basis of Bion's basic assumption groups. Miller shows that there are two fundamental biological instincts—survival and reproduction. The survival instinct can be divided into the instincts to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. The instinct to seek pleasure is associated with the nurturing received from the mother's breast (or substitute) and the accompanying dependency on her caretaking. This dependency is associated with the conflicting emotions of aggression, also directed toward the caretaker because of anxiety aroused

by the dependency, and rage when the breast is removed. These emotions of aggression and rage are associated with the instinct to avoid pain. The role of these two survival instincts is to increase the chances of the third instinct—to reproduce the species. This instinct is associated with the libidinal emotions of love and attraction.

Bion described three kinds of basic assumption cultures, each having an emotional character derived from one of the three instincts—pain avoidance, pleasure seeking, and reproduction. Miller argued that the conflict described between the pleasure derived from one's caretaker and the rage and aggression that results from depending on that caretaker leaves an imprint that is manifested in the basic assumptions of *dependency* and of *fight-flight*. Groups operating under the emotions of the dependency assumption behave as if they are in need of nurturing. They look for or expect a leader to show them what to do, to reassure them, or in short, to take care of them. Groups operating under the fight-flight basic assumption behave emotionally as if they face an enemy, or are on the verge of battle. They look for someone either to lead them into battle, or to lead their retreat from the battle. And according to Miller, the libidinal energy associated with the reproductive instinct is the basis for the emotional character of Bion's *pairing* basic assumption culture. Groups operating under a pairing basic assumption are characterized by the emotions of expectation and hope. The group's attention is drawn to the relationship between two of its members, whom the group expects to produce a "messiah" who will deliver them from their problems. What is important is maintaining the sense of expectation. The messiah must therefore remain hoped-for and unborn.

The work group culture, in contrast to the basic assumption cultures, is governed by rationality and task orientation rather than by emotions. The work group

has an organization appropriate to its task; it operates on the basis of rationality; members are valued for their contribution rather than for their status, and they recognize their disagreements; it can tolerate turnover of members without fear of losing its identity, and it can recognize and face the need for change. (Miller, 1998, p. 1497)

The work group is conscious; the basic assumption groups are nonconscious and parallel to the work group. Bion's biogenetic hypothesis asserts that humans are genetically predisposed to operate under the group culture of the basic assumptions: "Participating in basic-assumption activity requires no training, experience, or mental development. It is instantaneous, inevitable, and instinctive" (Bion, 1961, p. 138). There have been suggestions of additional basic assumption cultures (e.g., Hopper, 1997; Turquet, 1985) and criticisms of Bion's conceptualization (e.g., Brown, 2000; Shambaugh, 1985), but the three cultures originally formulated by Bion remain the ones generally accepted in this literature.

Bion's basic assumption cultures are analogous to the instinct-driven id from Freudian theory. Growth and maturity involve learning to control the impulses originating in the id; analogously, maturity of a group represents that group's ability to control the impulse to operate under a basic assumption culture. The basic assumption groups represent regressive forces within a group that threaten progress on the group's overt work task (Karterud, 2000).

In the same way that the id has a positive role in individual personality, so have the basic assumption cultures in groups. The emotions that underlie the dependency culture, for example, are important for the work of institutions such as schools or hospitals, whose role is essentially a nurturing one. The aggressiveness of the fight-flight culture has value within organizations such as businesses or armies, who are engaged in competition. The expectant, hopeful outlook characteristic of the pairing basic assumption culture might be useful for organizations that are engaged in generative or creative endeavors, such as arts institutions. Emotionally healthy groups know how to channel the emotions into task progress.

A final concept of Bion's theory we present here is his notion of valency. He defined *valency* as

the individual's readiness to enter into combination with the group in making and acting on basic assumptions; if his capacity for combination is great, I shall speak of a high valency, if small, of low valency; he can have, in my view, *no* valency only by ceasing to be human. (1961, p. 103, emphasis in original)

Bion's definition of valency further illustrates his belief that basic assumptions were fundamental to human nature. This particular belief, that emotions are fundamental to human nature and are part of all social interactions, represents one of the assumptions that is common across all traditions of psychodynamic perspectives. We turn now to a discussion of the humanistic tradition.

HUMANISTIC APPROACHES

The chief difference between the humanistic and psychoanalytic approaches is that the humanistic approach focuses on the unleashing of potential rather than the curing of pathology. Thus, whereas a medical model characterizes psychoanalytic approaches, a model based on education and development is the hallmark of humanistic approaches. The most prominent theorists whose work formed the foundations for this tradition included social psychologists and educators as well as clinicians (e.g., Kurt Lewin, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Jacob Moreno).

The institution most closely associated with humanistic approaches is the National Training Laboratory (Back, 1972; Bradford, Gibb, & Benne, 1964; Cooper & Mangham, 1971; Golembiewski & Blumberg, 1977; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1989), where the T-group (T for *training*) method was born in 1946. In contrast to Tavistock groups, which have remained closely affiliated with the Tavistock Institute, T-groups spread wildly beyond the confines of the National Training Laboratory (NTL) and took on the proportions of a social movement. Training workshops became variously known by the labels *human relations training*, *sensitivity training*, and *encounter group training* (Faith, Wong, & Carpenter, 1995; Weigel, 2002). Even the titles given to group facilitators reflect to some extent the contrast between the Tavistock and T-group traditions.

Tavistock group facilitators usually are referred to as "consultants," emphasizing their role of diagnosing and helping to solve problems. T-group facilitators are usually called "trainers," emphasizing their role of education and development. The distinction

between specific methods of the T-group and Tavistock will be addressed when we discuss methodological issues.

Despite these differences, the Tavistock Institute and the NTL share the psychodynamic focus on emotions and nonconscious processes in groups, as well as the notion that an explicit focus on these processes is beneficial for the development of groups. The Tavistock Institution predated NTL by nearly 20 years, and we know that the NTL founders were influenced by Bion's work. There is also evidence that the Tavistock practitioners knew of and respected the work of the early NTL contributors, Kurt Lewin in particular.

Kurt Lewin and the first training workshop. A remarkable fact about the history of the T-group movement is that the time of its origin, almost to the very moment, is clear. There is no debate about the widely told story (see Back, 1972; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1989; and www.ntl.org for excellent accounts of the history). In 1946, Kurt Lewin directed a conference in New Britain, Connecticut, designed to train leaders to handle intergroup tensions in their home communities. Three learning groups were formed, facilitated respectively by Ronald Lippitt, Kenneth Benne, and Leland Bradford. In addition, each of the groups was assigned a research staff member who collected observation data during the group sessions. Nightly debriefing sessions were held with the facilitators and research observers to discuss what had happened in the groups during the day's sessions.

One evening, three of the conference participants asked if they could sit in on the debriefing, and Lewin granted this request. Eventually, the conversation among the facilitators made reference to one of the participants there present, who then reacted to what had been said by offering her own interpretation of what had happened earlier in the group. Lewin in particular grew very interested and excited by what he saw as this additional data, and eventually the other two group members were drawn also into the discussion. After word spread throughout the conference about this exciting session, all the participants showed up for this debriefing meeting

the next night and every night for the remainder of the conference. These evening *feedback* sessions became the focal point of the conference.

Lewin and his colleagues, recognizing the learning benefit of these feedback sessions, decided to schedule another conference for the following year, this time building in feedback sessions as a formal part of the conference design. The feedback sessions became known as training groups, eventually abbreviated to the familiar T-group. The 1947 conference, held in Bethel, Maine, was christened the first National Training Laboratory in Group Dynamics. Tragically, Kurt Lewin died before this conference took place.

The origins of the humanistic approach show another aspect of its contrast with the psychoanalytic approach. The humanistic approach began with a focus on groups, whereas the psychoanalytic approach started with a focus on individuals. Kurt Lewin and his colleagues had founded the Research Center for Group Dynamics at MIT (later moved to the University of Michigan after Lewin's death), and it was this center that sponsored the 1946 Connecticut conference.

Lewin's earliest contributions to the field of group dynamics had been a series of studies showing the effects of group discussion on attitude change (e.g., Lewin, 1943, 1948). The objective of these studies was to change consumer eating habits during World War II. The strategy of combining systematic data collection with effecting behavior change introduced one of Lewin's great contributions to all of social science—the action research paradigm (Lewin, 1947, 1948). A central aspect of the action research paradigm is feedback, from researcher to participant back to researcher. It is therefore not surprising that Lewin quickly recognized the important role of feedback in those first impromptu sessions.

Whereas the biological sciences informed Bion and other psychoanalysts, the physical sciences informed the work of Lewin and those influenced by him. In particular, his field theory (Lewin, 1951) relied on ideas and language from physics to describe and explain the dynamics governing human social interaction. The German tradition of Gestalt psychology (e.g., Koffka, 1935; Kohler, 1969; Wertheimer, 1959), was a key foundation to his work. The

ideas from field theory have been applied to the dynamics of small (e.g., Bales, Cohen, & Williamson, 1979) and large (e.g., Rice, 1965) groups. In Lewin's view, nonconscious processes produced forces that controlled the patterns of interactions between individuals within a social context, just as physical forces control the relative movement of objects within a field. Bales et al. (1979), for example, theorized that interpersonal behaviors could be defined as vectors, each having a measurable force and direction. Patterns of polarization and unification therefore could be predicted through vector analysis. Furthermore, the operation of vectors could occur also at the nonconscious levels of fantasy or of values.

The spread beyond NTL. In this discussion, we will use the terms *humanistic* and *T-group* interchangeably. By the 1960s and 1970s, the interest in the T-group movement in the United States was extensive. From its headquarters in Bethel, NTL opened offices elsewhere in the United States, most notably in California. Perhaps due to the early loss of its central figure in Kurt Lewin, a core definition of T-group and a strict adherence to a particular methodology did not hold. Meetings, workshops, conferences, and independent consulting practices proliferated carrying the different labels as mentioned earlier. It has also been argued that the culture of the United States, characterized by relative affluence and a high degree of mobility among its population, was also a factor in the diffuse spread of the T-group movement (Back, 1972).

A source of controversy and tension surrounding the explosive proliferation of laboratory training during the 1960s and 1970s was whether T-groups were becoming therapy groups (e.g., Back, 1972; Golembiewski & Blumberg, 1977). Furthermore, the perceived blurring of the boundaries between T-group training and therapy was also the source of the questions raised about the legitimacy of T-groups (Alderfer, 1998; Back, 1972; Golembiewski & Blumberg, 1977; Walton & Warwick, 1973; Weigel, 2002). On the balance, however, T-group methodology has been viewed as valuable, especially within the organizational sector (e.g., Campbell & Dunnette, 1968; House, 1967). We will return to a discussion of the empirical evidence of T-group effectiveness.

Abraham Maslow (1970) raised an important counterpoint to psychoanalytic approaches. He argued not only that those approaches were flawed with their focus on disease but that the general medical model held the same flaw. His view was that the route to health, both physical and mental, was through the study of healthy people. Although Maslow dealt very little with groups, his perspective was extended and adapted to the group level by Clayton Alderfer (1987). And his views converged with those of Lewin and the T-Group movement in the work of Douglas McGregor (1960). Today's burgeoning work in the area of positive psychology continues this tradition, and we will review some of the work in a later section.

The Maslovian perspective suggests that the lower level needs are based in biology but that the higher needs transcend the biological. Particularly problematic for the group literature is the place of affiliative needs in the hierarchy. In Maslow's scheme, these lie between the biologically based physiological and safety needs and the higher order esteem and self-actualization needs. Bion's basic assumption of pairing suggests, for example, that affiliation within groups is a reflection of biological (reproductive) needs, albeit at the level of fantasy. And yet, group members' affiliations with one another can also be linked to self-esteem and even self-actualization.

The essence of the T-group approach is on personal development. It is generally agreed that the objectives of this approach are "(1) self insight . . . (2) understanding the conditions which inhibit or facilitate effective group functioning, (3) understanding interpersonal operations in groups, and (4) developing skills for diagnosing individual, group and organizational behavior" (Bennis, 1977, p. 18). Thus, the objective of T-groups is not to solve specific problems. Rather, individual group members learn to take what they have learned from the T-group experience to solve their problems for themselves.

Moreno's psychodramatic perspective could also be classified as humanistic in that it focuses on the unleashing of rather than overcoming emotion. The psychodramatic approach first appeared in Moreno's 1934 book *Who Shall Survive? A New Approach to the Problem of Human Interrelations* (revised and retitled, 1953). It

represents the triumph of emotion over analysis and the view that the individual and the group need to be liberated through spontaneity and the expression of repressed emotion. Formally, psychodrama can be defined as “a method that uses dramatizations of personal experiences through role-playing and enactment under a variety of simulated conditions, which include at least one scene and one psychodramatic technique” (Kipper & Ritchie, 2003, p. 14). Examples of psychodramatic techniques will be described in the section below on methods.

Moreno's second main contribution to the group literature was sociometry. Sociometric methods are used to define groups that exist in larger collectives as well as to highlight interconnections among groups. The individual can be seen as lying at the intersection of overlapping groups, defined by networks of social relationships. This is a concept that has its origins in the work of Georg Simmel (1908/1955). The original German title of his extended essay “The Web of Group Affiliation” translates as “Intersecting Social Circles.” Moreno's concept of the social atom, Lewinian field theory, and Simmel's intersecting social circles were combined into the notion of social molecules by Polley and Eid (1994), an extension of the physical science metaphor that pervades this branch of the psychodynamic tradition.

The impact of both Lewin and Moreno on theory and practice is paradoxical. Lewin's major theoretical contribution was field theory, yet few of the attempts to develop this theory have borne much fruit. On the other hand, Lewin's model of action research, although much less theoretically rich, has been embraced by organizational development practitioners as well as social workers. Moreno's psychodramatic perspective represents a small niche in the practice of group psychotherapy, whereas his basic sociometric concepts led to a number of major lines of research on networks of affiliation. Both Lewin and Moreno started significant lines of theoretical development rich with psychodynamic origins, but what grew out of their work was the pragmatic—a method of change in Lewin's case, and a method of measuring and organizing interpersonal bonds in the case of Moreno.

Finally, we would like to note that despite the different philosophical orientations underlying the psychoanalytic and humanistic approaches to psychodynamic theory, the earlier history shows that these two traditions influenced each other significantly. The design of the early T-groups certainly borrowed some of the techniques from Bion's Tavistock method. The consulting practice of the Tavistock Institute, in turn, was influenced by Lewin's action research techniques. A. K. Rice's (Rice, 1965; Miller & Rice, 1967) development of open systems theory, in particular, represents a conjunction between these two traditions. We now turn to a discussion of methodological issues.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

The work within all versions of psychodynamic perspectives is dominated by practice over theoretically driven research. The area is rich with theory, but the theories have been more frequently applied directly to the field of practice than toward systematic data collection. Even the well-crafted and theoretically driven research of Kurt Lewin was tied closely to producing social change. Thus, it might be said that an interest in producing change—at the level of individual, group, and organization—characterizes methodological choices within this perspective. Because the work is so heavily practice driven, we must talk about two classes of methodology. The first contains the techniques and tools of practice, such as the design of a T-group conference or the tools involved in psychodrama. The second contains tools that are traditionally thought to be research methods, and are the tools used to collect systematic data on various questions related to psychodynamic perspectives in groups. In making the distinction between these two classes, however, we do not intend to imply that the methods of practice do not constitute research. Indeed, the tradition of action research that is foundational within this perspective provides the means for linking practice to research. We discuss each of these classes separately.

Methods used in practice. As mentioned near the beginning of the chapter, an assumption that all varieties of psychodynamic per-

spectives share is the beneficial effects of bringing nonconscious and emotional processes to the conscious awareness of group members. The differences between the various approaches lie in the objectives and the techniques for bringing forth nonconscious processes. Although there are many variations of group practice based on psychodynamic theories, three techniques are the most representative: the Tavistock method, T-group laboratory training, and psychodrama. The general format that all these techniques share in common is that the group experience itself is often part of a larger training or therapy workshop. The duration of the groups can range from one single session to multiple sessions spanning many weeks. A format particularly popular during the height of the T-group encounter movement in the 1960s and 1970s was the 2- to 3-day marathon session, with T-group experiences interspersed with other learning activities, such as lectures (Weigel, 2002). The average size of a group is between 7 to 10 members, although some groups as large as 20 are not uncommon. A trainer or consultant works with the group, as will be described below.

The major contribution that Bion made through his development of the Tavistock method was to provide a way of treating the group as a whole, in contrast to treating individuals within a group setting. The most famous aspect of the Tavistock method is perhaps the behavior of the therapist or consultant. The consultant decidedly does not act as a leader, organizer, or facilitator of the group. The ambiguity inherent in the situation that ensues is central to the technique; it provides the occasion for primitive regressive emotions associated with the basic assumption cultures to manifest and thereby become available for analysis (Whitman, 1964).

The consultant to a group, as he or she observes the evidence of the particular culture operating in a group, will make *interpretations* that may describe directly what he or she sees, or that may be designed to get group members to recognize the evidence themselves. Keeping the focus on the group, even interpretations about the behavior of a particular individual member are interpretations about the group. The psychoanalytically oriented therapist or consultant attempts to present an emotionally neutral face to the group so that the intrapsychic processes such as projection and identifica-

tion that form the basic assumption cultures will emerge. Because the Tavistock technique is oriented toward solving or curing problems, the therapist or consultant will tailor interpretations to the specific problem(s) facing a particular patient or client group. In this way, the Tavistock method can be thought of as a prescription to help with a particular issue (Back, 1972).

The T-group laboratory training shares some common surface characteristics with the Tavistock method. The group trainer similarly adopts an explicit nonleading role, also with the result of creating a situation filled with ambiguity. As in the Tavistock method, it is expected that removing accustomed social structures will make salient for people their emotional reactions to those structures. The T-group trainer also makes interpretations of participants' reactions with regard to what those reactions reveal about nonconscious processes. Departing from the Tavistock, psychoanalytic tradition, the T-group approach does not attempt to relate participants' emotional reactions to deeper intrapsychic structures and history. The nonconscious processes that come to light are examined for what participants can learn from them about their own behaviors in groups generally (Bennis, 1977). Finally, the stance of the trainer is more one of collaboration than of neutrality.

Psychodrama techniques are also designed to bring nonconscious process into conscious awareness. The methods used rely on social and personal identities. The characters that are taken on through the various techniques represent specific identities or aspects of identity. Examples of psychodrama techniques include *role reversal*, where two group members begin by portraying particular roles and then switch the roles; *role-playing*, where group members enact roles but without changing their identities, for example, when members play the role of being themselves; and *doubling*, where one group member portrays him- or herself while another group member also plays the role of that first member. Unlike in the Tavistock and T-group methods, the group trainer may take an active and literally director role. In common with the T-group trainer role, the psychodramatist is in collaboration with the group members. On the other hand, psychodrama is closer to the Tavistock method in that it was developed as a method of conduct-

ing psychotherapy, although over the history of its development its uses have not been limited to therapy.

Methods used for research. The vast majority of the data collected by those interested in psychodynamic perspectives in groups focus on how group members change. Put simply, most empirical research in this area investigates the efficacy of the techniques used in practice. The literature exploring this question include examinations of what specific aspects of personality or behavior are affected, the processes through which effects occur, the means by which the effects can be measured, and the factors that explain differences in patterns and rates of change.

The most frequent methods used are case studies and quasi-experimental field studies. Case study methodology, so characteristic of the clinical approach, dominated the early literature in this area. Bion's (1961) landmark book is actually a series of case reports from his therapy groups, gathered together in a single volume. Bion's case studies provided systematic descriptions of behavior patterns as evidence for the existence of the constructs he theorized. Lion and Gruenfeld (1993), Stock and Thelen (1958), and Thelen (2000) also described, through their personal experiences as participants and researchers in group laboratories, the operation of Bion's constructs. This use of case study—to provide evidence that theorized concepts can be perceived in reality—applies equally to studies from both psychoanalytic and humanistic perspectives. The other primary application of case study methodology, also equally applicable to all psychodynamic perspectives, is to show evidence of the effects on participants of the group experience. Casey and Solomon (1971), for example, reported evidence from a case study that seating arrangements in a T-group affected the network of interaction among the group members.

The field studies designed to examine the outcomes of the group experience on the participants tend to use either a pre- and posttest design (e.g., Danish, 1971; Hipple, 1976; P. B. Smith, 1983), or a treatment/nontreatment control-group design (e.g., Bunker, 1965). The outcome measures examined include changes in individual traits such as self-control and neuroticism (e.g., Anderson &

Slocum, 1973) and behaviors such as communication and interpersonal skills (e.g., Hipple, 1976). Qualitative reviews of the literature generally conclude that participation in a T-group leads to behavior change (e.g., Campbell & Dunnette, 1968; Forsyth, 1991; Hartman, 1979; Highhouse, 2002; House, 1967; Lieberman, 1976; P. B. Smith, 1975). Two meta-analyses provide quantitative support for this general claim (Burke & Day, 1986; Faith et al., 1995). In another meta-analysis focused specifically on psychodrama, Kipper and Ritchie (2003) examined 25 studies. They reported average effect sizes larger than for other forms of group psychotherapy. They also found that the specific psychodrama techniques of role reversal and doubling were the most effective. We are not aware of qualitative or quantitative review studies specifically focused on the effectiveness of the Tavistock method.

Another approach found in field studies is to compare or vary different factors. Differences in the style or characteristics of the group consultant or trainer has been one such interest. Lundgren and Knight (1977), for example, found a positive relationship between T-group trainers' needs for control and affection and group members' attitudes toward the trainers. Morrison (1984) compared directly the effect on groups of leaders behaving as Tavistock method consultants and as T-group trainers. He reported that group leaders were more positively valued, seen as more competent, and were more emotionally supportive when behaving as T-group trainers than as Tavistock consultants. In an interesting follow-up study, Morrison and Stein (1985) added the factor of gender. Male and female leaders behaved as either Tavistock consultants or as T-group trainers. T-group trainers overall were seen as more emotionally supportive. But female T-group trainers were seen as least competent and potent. They found further that male trainers were most highly valued overall.

Courter (1999) added to the gender-difference literature by varying the gender composition of the groups while holding the gender of the consultants constant. Using female consultants of Tavistock groups, he found that all-female groups were most resistant to the consultant. Courter's study is also an example of field

studies that examine differences in characteristics of the groups or the group members.

A frequent research question is to ask how the characteristics of individual group members account for differences in the effect of a group experience. Danish (1971), for example, found a positive relationship between participant motivation to change and measures of actual behavioral change following a T-group experience. McConnell (1971), as another example, reported that the individual traits of flexibility, tolerance, independence, and decisiveness predicted success in a T-group experience. Anderson and Slocum's (1973) review of the role of individual traits in T-group outcomes presented results consistent with these example findings. Anderson and Slocum also noted that although T-group training did seem to be associated with changes in behaviors and attitudes, changes in personality were unlikely to occur.

The methods of data collection include self- and other-report measures, frequently using established instruments such as Schutz's (1966) FIRO-B. But Moreno's (1934/1953) sociometric methods are probably the most enduring methodological advance to come out of the psychodynamic perspective. The method is simple, though often misused. Members of a large group are asked very specific choice questions, such as, "Who would you like to room with? Who would you like to work with? Who would you least like to work with?" In the early years of sociometry, the answers to these questions were recorded by plotting the network of connections on paper. People would then be moved from group to group on the diagram in an attempt to maximize the number of ties within a group, such as a housing unit or work group. This method was used in both a wartime resettlement camp in Hungary and a girls school in New York. When sociometry was rediscovered decades later, various computer algorithms were used to achieve the same result, leading to the development of network analysis. In practice, much of the work in network analysis has involved the sort of vague choice questions that Moreno railed against: "Who do you like? Who do you dislike?" The field of network analysis would do well to return to Moreno's original guidelines. Networks of affiliation

are complex and multidimensional and not easily captured by a single like–dislike continuum.

The other systematic methodological approach to stem from the psychodynamic approach is Bales's methods of observation and interpersonal rating. These began with Interaction Process Analysis (Bales, 1950), a relatively objective measurement instrument that involved trained scorers who recorded interactions within 12 categories (6 on the task side and 6 on the emotional side.) The theoretical basis was Parsonian functionalism (see Parsons, Bales, & Shils, 1953), but the nature of the self-analytic groups that were observed (at the Harvard Business School and later in Harvard undergraduate classes) quickly led Bales to integrate the methodology with psychodynamic theory. *Personality and Interpersonal Behavior* (Bales, 1970) laid the groundwork, based on Arthur Couch's (1960) dissertation study relating a wide variety of personality tests to observed interpersonal behavior. From there, SYMLOG (Bales, Cohen, & Williamson, 1979) explicitly integrated psychodynamic concepts by asking observers to infer values from fantasy content in group discussion.

The methodology employed by this branch of researchers began as purely observational (interaction process analysis; IPA) and then moved to direct observation using SYMLOG as supplemented by questionnaire-based interpersonal ratings. IPA records only behavior, and all coding is done by outside observers. This observational information is supplemented by a battery of psychological tests administered to group participants. SYMLOG records both behavior and the content of imagery. In some cases, outside observers are employed, but paralleling the earlier shift by NTL to participant observation and analysis, group members have been trained in SYMLOG observation methods, and small subsets of participants rotate out of the interacting group to observe and provide feedback.

Typically, two sessions are observed each week, and a third session is used for feedback. SYMLOG scoring codes all references to people and events outside the here and now of the group as "fantasy" and treats these fantasy images—from history, literature, current events, and so forth—as reflections of processes occurring in the group. Retrospective interpersonal ratings at both the behav-

ioral and image levels supplemented these direct observations. At this point, very few researchers are using the direct observation methods, and practice has shifted to the interpersonal ratings. There are two reasons for this shift. First, direct observation is costly and time consuming; second, the rating method allows for all members to provide their perceptions of each other member, yielding richer information about biases and motivated perceptions. What is lost is much of the detailed information about imagery and the fine-grained analysis of group development that is only possible with observational methods.

AREAS FOR FUTURE INQUIRY

Margaret Rioch (1981), who worked directly with both Bion and Rice at the Tavistock Institute, makes the following observation about their work:

Lacking in both their works is the concept of the activity called play . . . neither . . . has given a great deal of thought to the purely esthetic aspect of life. . . . Perhaps it is characteristic of the Protestant ethic that the ideal group for both Bion and Rice is a "working" group. (p. 672)

Rioch's comment refers most specifically to the study of groups such as orchestras or sports teams, whose "work" is what most of us think of as play. Her observation, however, also offers a counterpoint to the generally negative undertone characteristic of much of the psychodynamic, psychoanalytic approaches. Playful or light-hearted behaviors within groups typically are treated as representing flight from the group's task, collusion, or indulgence in fantasy. Bion and Rice's treatment of emotional processes is to find ways to harness them to serve the needs of the group task. Rioch questions whether it might not be possible to find in the concept of play "a true synthesis of mature, scientific and primitive fantasy elements without the one being subservient to the other" (p. 673).

For example, the emerging work in positive psychology, with its emphasis on the role of positive emotions, might offer the theoretic-

cal basis for achieving the synthesis that Rioch suggests. Both the work of Csikszentmihalyi on the concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) and Goleman (1995) on emotional intelligence stress the importance of understanding the role that emotions play in all aspects of social life, including the workplace, schools, families, and small groups.

Bion sees humans as "hardwired" to enter into basic assumption cultures. Goleman (1995) agrees with Bion that our most basic instincts are to act from emotions—either to avoid pain or to seek pleasure—and the process of maturity involves the struggle of sublimating those instincts into socially appropriate behavior and responses. Goleman takes a philosophical stance toward this struggle similar to that of Bion. That is, emotionally intelligent groups ("sophisticated work group" in Bion's terms) should harness emotions in the service of rational task accomplishment. At the same time, both Goleman and Csikszentmihalyi recognize the inherent value of positive emotions that may not be immediately applied to a task, that is, play. In fact, Goleman cites the phenomenon of flow as "emotional intelligence at its best" (p. 91). Rather than treating emotions as instruments for task accomplishment, in flow, the emotions are a part of the experience and valued for their own sake. Goleman writes:

[The] experience is a glorious one: the hallmark of flow is a feeling of spontaneous joy, even rapture . . . it is intrinsically rewarding . . . it interrupts flow to reflect too much on what is happening . . . while in flow [people] are unconcerned with thoughts of success or failure—the sheer pleasure of the act itself is what motivates them. (p. 91)

Whereas the result of flow can be high-quality outcomes on a given task, emotions are not treated as either obstacles or stepping stones to the outcomes; rather, they are a part of the actual experience. In this way, Goleman can be seen as having much in common with the humanistically oriented approaches to psychodynamics, especially the work on psychodrama. We propose here that the approach to emotions represented in the work of Goleman, Csikszentmihalyi, and Rioch provides the theoretical bridge between the psychoana-

lytic and humanistic approaches to psychodynamic perspectives in groups.

NOTES

1. We use the term *nonconscious* to include subconscious, preconscious, and unconscious processes.
2. This article provides an overview of the theoretical and methodological issues surrounding psychodynamic approaches to small groups. For a more inclusive and detailed account, see McLeod and Kettner-Polley (in press).

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