

# **THE FORCES INVOLVED IN BEING A MEMBER OF A SMALL GROUP**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR**

in

**INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

in the

**FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

**PRETORIA**

April 2012

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## Letter of Declaration

I, Jean Cooper, hereby certify that this dissertation is a bona fide report of research conducted by myself under the guidance of Prof. Johan Basson.

The content of this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted to any other institution or university for the award of any other degree or diploma and all the source material that I have used have been duly referenced and acknowledged.

Jean Cooper

April 2012



Vir Fransie

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their contribution to the completion of this study:

- Prof. Johan Basson, for being a ‘voice of reason’ throughout but, especially, for giving me the space I needed to play with ideas and to grow with my research;
- Melissa Brak, for getting to know the data as well as I did and for providing a critical space for reflecting on the data and what it meant;
- Liz Archer, for all her help with AtlasTi;
- Greyling Viljoen, for the many conversations over good cups of coffee on my research ideas, but especially for awakening my initial interest in groups;
- The group members who participated in this research, for allowing me to use their very personal learning experiences for my own learning;
- The group psychology community, for your generosity of spirit in listening to and providing feedback on my ideas. Especially to Drikus Kriek, Assie Gildenhuys, Frans Cilliers, Andy Beck, Leopold Vansina and Barney Straus;
- My Evanston neighbours and friends, for helping out with the children and for providing me with a crucial opportunity to enjoy silence and solitude during the final stretch of writing;
- My family: Fransie, Francois, Rose and Riëtte, who made the journey both possible and worthwhile.

## Abstract

# THE FORCES INVOLVED IN BEING A MEMBER OF A SMALL GROUP

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There is a general lack of in-depth research into what it means (and takes) to be a member of a small group. Firstly, research is often focused on leadership rather than on membership and, secondly, empirical research tends to focus on studying group outcomes rather than group process. The purpose of this research was to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group and to develop a research method for doing so. A postfoundational philosophical stance was adopted in terms of which the need both for discovering universal truths as well as gaining in-depth understanding within context, was pursued. A constructivist grounded theory design was adapted by developing a theoretical lens with which to facilitate the coding and analysis of the data. This theoretical lens was based on an integration of Kurt Lewin's field theory; Wilfred Bion's psychoanalytic group-as-a-whole approach; S.H. Foulkes's group analytic approach and Yvonne Agazarian's theory of living human systems. The data consisted of transcribed video material of ten 90-minute sessions conducted with a training group of 9 members; written reflections by the group members on their group experience as well as field notes taken by the researcher during the training group sessions. Through the application of the theoretical lens to the data, member

behaviour was coded both deductively and inductively, thus allowing the data to speak for itself whilst maintaining a rigorous analytical structure. The result of this exploration was an emerging field theory of group membership which postulates the group member as existing within a field of forces (both pro- and anti-group) operating between the triangular 'polarities' of belonging, individuality and task. The theoretical and practical implications of this field theory are discussed in terms of their relevance to both grounded theory research methodology and group psychology. Finally, it is shown how this research can be used as a foundation from which to conduct a multitude of future studies into group processes from the perspective of the group member.

## Opsomming

# DIE KRAGTE WAT INWERK OP 'N LID VAN 'N KLEIN GROEP

deur

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Daar is 'n gebrek aan navorsing oor wat dit beteken (en verg) om 'n lid van 'n klein groep te wees. Eerstens fokus navorsing gewoonlik eerder op leierskap as op lidmaatskap, en tweedens konsentreer empiriese navorsing gewoonlik eerder op uitkomste as op die groepsproses self. Die doel van die navorsing was om die sielkundige kragte wat inwerk op 'n lid van 'n klein groep te ondersoek, asook om 'n navorsingsmetode te ontwikkel om hierdie ondersoek uit te voer. 'n Postfundamentalistiese navorsingsperspektief is ingeneem ten einde die spanning tussen die soeke na universele waarhede aan die een kant, en die behoefte aan 'n konteks-spesifieke verstaan aan die ander kant, te oorbrug. 'n Konstruktivistiese *'grounded theory'* kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is gevolg. Hierdie navorsingsontwerp is aangepas en verryk deur die ontwikkeling van 'n teoretiese lens vir die kodering en interpretasie van die data. Die teoretiese lens is gebaseer op 'n integrasie van Kurt Lewin se veldteorie, Wilfred Bion se groep-as-geheel benadering, S.H. Foulkes se groep-analitiese benadering en Yvonne Agazarian se

stelselsbenadering tot groepsgedrag. Die data het bestaan uit getranskribeerde videomateriaal van tien 90-minute sessies van 'n opleidingsgroep met 9 lede; geskrewe refleksies deur die groeplede oor hulle groepervaring; sowel as veldnotas wat geneem is ten tyde van die groepsessies. Groeplede se gedrag is beide induktief en deduktief gekodeer deur die aanwending van die teoretiese lens. Sodoende kon daar in diepte op die data gefokus word terwyl daar 'n sistematiese en analitiese struktuur gehandhaaf is. Die resultaat van die ondersoek was 'n ontluikende teorie wat stel dat die groeplid homself in 'n kragveld bevind tussen drie 'pole', naamlik, 'individualiteit', 'om te behoort' en 'die groep se taak'. Die teoretiese en praktiese implikasies is bespreek beide met betrekking tot *'grounded theory'* as navorsingsmetodiek en groepsielkunde. Ten slotte word die hoop uitgespreek dat hierdie navorsing die fondasie kan lê vir vele toekomstige studies rakende groepsprosesse vanuit die oogpunt van die groeplid.



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## Introduction

So, let's not look at our leaders in anger or desperation, let's look at ourselves and ask: 'How are we to be members of this uncertain society?' (OPUS Listening Post comment, January 10 2012, The US and the world at the dawn of 2012)

### 1.1 Background

As researchers and social scientists, it is essential that we take the dynamics of being a group member seriously. We cannot escape the fact that groups, and our membership of them, permeate our lives (Dalal, 1998). From our first and primary group, the family, and throughout our lives, we stand in continuous relationships with a variety of both formal and informal groups. Not only do we influence the various constellations of the groups to which we belong, but they also influence us – in the present and also well into the future – as we transfer our previous group experiences to the new groups that we join. In fact, the degree to which our individual behaviour is intelligible only in the context of the groups to which we belong (our social context) is such that various scholars believe that it is impossible to examine human behaviour outside of the context of groups (Dalal, 1998; 1991; Stacey, 2003). So, on the one hand we have scholars who give primacy to the individual (or the internal) and on the other hand we have scholars who give primacy to the group (or the external/social) when trying to make sense of behaviour. In concurrence with Stacey (2003) and Dalal (1998) I contend that we should try to find a conceptualisation that does away with the internal-external dichotomy. In lieu of this, it seems as if a shift in focus from a split between the 'individual' on the one side and the 'social' on the other, to an integration of the two as embodied by the group member, can provide important insights with regards to human behaviour.

In addition, it is essential that we admit that being a group member is a complex and powerful process (Aronson, 1995). As group members we are confronted with pressures from within ourselves as well as pressures from the group that are often

difficult to understand, but which can lead to powerful experiences, both constructive and destructive (Nitsun, 1996). It was, in fact, immediately after the atrocities of the Second World War that researchers began to ask questions in earnest about groups and the effects that groups have on individuals (Bion, 1961; Foulkes & Kissen, 1976; Lewin, 1951). However, the complex and powerful dynamic of being group members is not only reflected in the big events of world history, it is also a part of our daily existence. This means that, as part of our process of maturation, we are continuously confronted with the responsibility of reflecting on and taking responsibility for the way in which we conduct ourselves as members of the groups to which we belong. Therefore, since making sense of how we conduct ourselves as members of groups is an extremely complex issue, social research can make a valuable contribution in providing frameworks within which our often conflicting experiences of being group members can be understood.

Even if the issue of group membership is narrowed down to formal groups within an organisational context only, it makes sense that we regard group membership as a serious topic which merits further research (Hirschhorn, 1988; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Organisations today are functioning within a context of unprecedented democratisation of authority and information (Ridderstråle & Nordström, 2004). In order to be able to adapt to the rate of change, organisations are becoming smaller, less hierarchical and increasingly structured around teams. Increasingly these developments are placing the group member in a position where he/she is forced to take responsibility for his/her own process of navigating the dynamics of being a group member. A deeper scientific understanding of the dynamics of being a group member would help group members to understand the reciprocal interactions between themselves and the groups or teams to which they belong; it would assist leaders to make sense of the experiences of group members; and it would contribute to overall organisational wellbeing and performance if the members of the various groups on different organisational fronts and levels would take responsibility for the way in which they take up their membership roles in the organisation.

The problem, however, is that, whilst we realise the need for a greater understanding of group membership, there is a lack of in-depth research into the dynamics of being a group member. Ever since the 1930s, researchers and theoreticians in the social sciences have paid more attention to questions pertaining to what it takes to be a group leader (for instance the trait-, behavioural-, contingency- and transformational leadership theories), rather than to what it takes to be a group member. Even where

researchers did deviate from this path by developing theories on followership (Kelley, 1998), these theories still indirectly emphasized the primacy of the group leader over and above that of the group member. Despite the fact that theories of leadership differ in many respects, they do have one thing in common in that they mostly tend to neglect the effect of group dynamics on leadership and performance. Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977) probably comes the closest to taking account of the group, but even they do not really ever work with the group-as-a-whole, its internal dynamics and how these dynamics influence the motivation and competence of interdependent group members. Accordingly, theorists who chose to research and explain leadership, not only, by implication, chose to not examine membership, but they also, to a large extent, neglected the influence of group dynamics on leadership requirements.

Nevertheless, groups have not been totally forgotten, albeit not in the domain of leadership-centred research. In the period towards the end of, and directly after, the Second World War, social scientists in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy started with an in-depth focus on researching group phenomena and developing theories in order to explain group behaviour (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Ringer, 2002). The most notable of these early pioneers included Wilfred Bion (1897–1979), S.H. Foulkes (1898–1976) and Kurt Lewin (1890–1947). Although these early theorists and their followers in the Tavistock, Group Analytic and Organisational Development (OD) traditions made significant contributions to our understanding of groups, not one of them specifically attempted to formulate a theory of membership that takes the group member as the point of departure. This was also the case with later, prominent theoretical schools such as the Interpersonal School of Irvin Yalom (1931– ) and the Systems Centred approach of Yvonne Agazarian (1930– ). Although most scholars in these theoretical traditions often refer both to membership and to issues regarding membership when describing and explaining various group phenomena, not one of them (with a few exceptions) placed the group member at the centre of their investigative focus and theoretical formulations. Therefore, even although it is possible to draw valuable inferences from these works on the dynamics of group membership, not one of them has focused specifically on in-depth, empirical research on the forces involved in being a group member.

Nevertheless, there are some exceptions where group membership has, indeed, constituted the investigative focus. These include the following:

- a) *'What's in it for me?' The development from immature to mature dependence in groups'* in which Von Fraunhofer (2008) uses concepts from Fairbairn (object relations) and Foulkes (group analysis) to discuss the defensive regression and eventual resolution connected with the anxiety of joining a group;
- b) *'Ambiguity, Complexity and Dynamics in the Membership of Collaboration'* in which Huxham and Vangen (2000) focus on the membership structures of inter-organisational collaboration;
- c) *'Rituals and resistance: Membership dynamics in professional fields'* in which Lawrence (2004) examines the concept of membership from an institutional perspective, focusing on the dynamics of membership in professional fields;
- d) *'Group membership and individual security'* in which Zander (1958) discusses a trend that prevailed at the time in wanting to find out about the causes of emotionally toned behaviour in groups;
- e) *'Group membership and self-evaluation'* in which Rasmussen and Zander (1954) investigate the relationship between experiences in groups and self-esteem.

It is, thus, clear that, as compared to leadership, there has been relatively scant research attention paid to group membership. In addition, there has been no research focused specifically on understanding the forces involved in being a group member. Of course there is the extensive body of knowledge which has evolved from the various group-theoretical traditions mentioned earlier but, as mentioned, these do not take group membership as the point of departure, but rather as a structural and dynamic component in the description of various group phenomena.

The dilemma is, therefore, that, despite the fact that we recognise the need for in-depth research which focuses on the dynamics of group membership, such research barely exists. This situation is compounded by the fact that any empirical research that tries to move beyond 'black box', input-output studies towards studies on the full complexity of group processes or dynamics as they unfold is highly complex, difficult and time consuming (Beck & Lewis, 2000). In fact, a general trend in group research is the remarkable lack of rigorous empirical studies into the group process (Beck & Lewis, 2000). Research into groups will, typically, take one of the following routes:

- a) Theoretical and philosophical studies that take an in-depth look at the complexity of groups by building on and integrating existing theoretical formulations in order to create new ways of understanding old formulations.

These studies often focus on the complex dynamics of the group process, but are non-empirical in nature.

- b) Rigorous empirical studies that avoid the group process data but, instead, focus on data from before and/or after the group, collected through questionnaires, surveys and interviews.
- c) Case descriptions, for example, vignettes, in terms of which the researcher's recollection or description of a group situation will be analysed from a specific theoretical perspective such as the group analytic, systems psychodynamic or systems-centred perspective. Although these studies often attempt to make sense of the complex dynamics of the group process itself, they do not work with the data as they emerge from the group, but rather with recollections of the group situation via interviews or essays.
- d) Group process studies that observe, analyse and interpret the data produced by the group situation itself and which are captured by means of video and/or audio equipment are, without any doubt, in the minority and, with regards to group membership, per se, such studies are even less evident.

## **1.2 Research problem**

Against the backdrop of an increased need to understand the dynamics of group membership, we are, thus, faced with the dilemma that empirical research on this topic is almost non-existent. This is compounded by the fact that research of the type that focuses on group processes is highly complex and very few examples exist that could act as methodological blueprints for such a study. The problem facing this research study is, therefore, twofold:

- a) There is currently no methodological blueprint for the study of the forces involved in being a group member.
- b) There is a lack of empirical research focusing specifically on the forces involved in being a group member.

## **1.3 Research objectives**

In order to address the research problems, this research study will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To develop a method for an in-depth empirical study of the forces involved in being a group member.



- b) To make use of this method to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group.

#### 1.4 Research questions

In order to achieve the above objectives of the research, the following questions will have to be answered:

- a) Which research philosophy will be able to guide the process of designing and conducting such research?
- b) What is meant by 'group membership'?
- c) What is meant by 'the forces involved in being a group member'?
- d) How can the forces involved in being a group member be studied?
- e) What are the forces involved in being a group member and how do they operate?

#### 1.5 Delineation and limitations

This study is situated within the theoretical and practical context of group dynamics in small groups. Although certain parallels do exist between small and large groups, this project does not aim to make any claims regarding the dynamics of group membership of large groups and other more complex social formations, such as organisations or societies (Anzieu, 1984; Hopper, 2003a). Nevertheless, in view of the fact that organisations are, in essence, groups within groups within groups, I am of the belief that it will be possible to make useful inferences, based on this study, with regard to the level of the organisation as a whole (Ringer, 2002).

A further delineation is the fact that this study is situated within the intellectual traditions of the psychoanalytic, systems and field-theory approaches to groups although this is not to say that various other valuable psychological or sociological approaches do not exist. The reason for this particular theoretical demarcation is the fact that the second main objective of this research study involves exploring the forces involved in, or, the *dynamics* of being, a member of a small group. Psychoanalytic thinking provides access to an understanding of both conscious and unconscious dynamics whilst systems theory and field theory provide a language in terms of which it is possible to operationalise dynamic concepts for both research and application purposes (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). Whilst field theory provides the language and methods for conceptualising "dynamics" in the group specifically as psychological

forces, systems theory, in turn, and especially as applied by Yvonne Agazarian, provides the space for creating a bridge between psychoanalytic and group dynamics thinking. A systems-centred approach also helps us to adjust our observational perspective to focus on the individual, the member and the group respectively. The main psychoanalytic approaches to groups that are used in this research are those of the Tavistock and Group Analytic traditions as pioneered by Bion (Bion, 1961) and Foulkes (Foulkes & Foulkes, 1990b).

In terms of the first research objective, namely, to develop a methodology for the study of the forces involved in being a member of a small group, the research is delineated by a focus on qualitative research approaches. This appears to be a logical choice as a result of the fact that the focus of this study is neither to prove a hypothesis, nor to measure a construct, but rather to explore the dynamic forces as they unfold within the group context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This will be further discussed in the sections on method in chapters 2 and 5.

It has to be acknowledged from the outset that it is not possible to objectively discover “The Theory” that would fully explain the forces involved in being a group member. As will be discussed in the sections on the research method, it is quite possible that different researchers may observe different dynamics in the same set of data. Accordingly, it is essential that the inevitable subjectivity of a research project such as this be acknowledged and worked with if the research is to be of value (Charmaz, 2007). Several strategies have been employed in order to ensure that this is, indeed, the case, including providing a detailed trail of the considerations, decisions and thinking of the research team in terms of which all subjectivities were made as transparent as possible so as to render this research study intelligible for future researchers and practitioners (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). As will be discussed in chapter 2, this research is philosophically positioned in the postfoundational tradition. The epistemological and ontological implications of this will be dealt with extensively in the following chapter.

A potential limitation of the study is the fact that the empirical component is based on a semi-structured training group within an educational setting. Despite the fact that an argument will be offered in the sections on the research method (chapters 2 and 5) in favour of the appropriateness of using such a group, it is worth noting that further empirical research using groups within different contexts would strengthen the theoretical description of the forces involved in being a group member. However, the

possible limitation in terms of the number of groups studied may also constitute a possible strength in terms of the depth of the analysis that can be made of this one group (Smith, 2008).

## 1.6 Assumptions

This research is based on the following assumptions:

- a) Groups and group research are complex and there are no quick and easy answers to questions regarding the dynamics of groups (Beck *et al.*, 2000).
- b) There are both conscious and unconscious dynamics at play in groups (Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Bion, 1961; Foulkes & Kissen, 1976; Hirschhorn, 1988; Hopper, 2003a; Miller, Gould, Stapley, & Stein, 2001; Nitsun, 1996; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994; Pines, 1985; Prins, 2006; Ringer, 2002).
- c) The Tavistock, Group Analytic, Systems-Centred and Field Theory approaches to group dynamics will provide a sufficient intellectual space in which this study can achieve its aims. (This is discussed in more detail in the chapters on theory – chapters 3 and 4.)
- d) Experiential training groups provide a sufficient laboratory context for the study of groups that can, in turn, be transferred to other group settings (Miller, Gould, Stapley, & Stein, 2004). (This is discussed in more detail in chapters 2 and 5.)
- e) It is possible to carry out research that simultaneously strives both to understand and to explain phenomena. Understanding (hermeneutics) and explanation (episteme), therefore, need not be mutually exclusive (Van Huyssteen, 1990).

## 1.7 Significance and relevance of the research

This research project is significant, firstly, because it addresses a group process that, despite its importance and complexity, has not, until now, been the primary focus of the research community.

Secondly, this research comes at a time when, as a result of a rapidly changing social landscape, the issue of group membership is becoming critical with regard to the development, success and general mental health of individuals, groups and organisations.

Thirdly, because of the fact that it is not possible to conceptualise the individual apart from the group/groups to which he/she belongs, this research may provide significant insights into the impact of group membership on the individual. These insights can be especially helpful to group leaders and also to individual counsellors and coaches/mentors in assisting them in understanding the individual's experience in relation to the groups to which he/she belongs.

Finally, this research is significant in that it strives not only to contribute to the fraternity of group theorists and the leaders of the various kinds of groups that constitute our daily social reality, but especially to group members as they strive to reflect on and take responsibility for their own membership behaviour.

### **1.8 Dissertation flow, layout and language**

This dissertation is structured in such a way that it presents itself as a process, or a work in progress, rather than as a final, perfect product. The dissertation is, therefore, not merely the final story of the research as it was conducted. It is more than that. It tells the story but the act of telling also changes the story. By not removing the traces of trial and error in this final telling, it becomes possible to see the way in which the research, the researched as well as the researcher, changed and developed as the story unfolded. This layout decision was inspired by Henri Matisse's methods of modern construction, as depicted in his 1913 *Flowers and Ceramic Plate* (Matisse, 1913), in which he deliberately leaves the traces of development of the artwork in the final product in order to depict art as a work in progress (The Art Institute of Chicago, 2010). Accordingly, it is hoped that this way of presenting the research will allow the reader to follow the logic within its context as it developed and, thus, enable the reader to perceive the research as an honest effort that is never fully completed.

The first chapter discusses both the research problem and the research objectives. The research is delineated, possible weaknesses are pointed out and the assumptions underlying the research are briefly discussed.

Chapter 2 is the first of two chapters (chapters 2 and 5) in which the research method is discussed. Firstly, an argument in favour of a postfoundational philosophical stance with regard to the research is developed. In addition, postfoundationalism and its implications for conducting research are discussed. Following this, constructivist grounded theory is considered as a research design that is both compatible with a

postfoundational philosophy and also suitable in terms of realising the goals of this research project. With the philosophy of science and the research design pinned down, chapter 2 continues to describe the initial research process that was conducted. It is important to note that this initial process represents the first attempt at conducting the research, and that the subsequent attempt is discussed in chapter 5. As part of the description of the first research attempt, attention is also given to the research setting; training groups as a medium for research; the data collection and the data analysis. It is specifically with regards to the data analysis that this first attempt at conducting the research is regarded as the *initial* research process. The outcome of the first attempt at data analysis is described as well as the need that emerged for a theoretical lens through which to analyse the data in a more structured deductive-inductive (abductive)<sup>1</sup> manner.

Chapter 3 proceeds to lay the foundation for the development of the theoretical lens. Firstly, the notion of group membership and the way in which group membership is currently defined and understood is problematised and explicated. This is followed by an integrative discussion of four major group-theoretical schools of thought, namely, Kurt Lewin's Field Theory, Wilfred Bion's psychoanalytic approach (also referred to as the group-as-a-whole or the Tavistock approach), S.H. Foulkes's psychoanalytical approach (also known as group analysis) as well as Yvonne Agazarian's systems-centred approach.

In chapter 4, drawing upon the theoretical foundation laid in chapter 3, an argument is developed for understanding group membership as a dynamic interaction of forces between the member as an individual (individuality), the member as belonging to a larger body of people (belonging), and the group's task (task) as the primary reason for the existence of the group. The logical consequences of this formulation in terms of understanding group membership are considered while the theoretical lens itself is viewed critically against various group-theoretical concepts in order to check and improve the ability of the lens to act as a robust framework in terms of which to make sense of the forces involved in being a group member.

Chapter 5 proceeds to operationalise the theoretical framework for research purposes, specifically with regards to the data analysis while an in-depth exposition of the way in which the data were analysed and interpreted is also presented. This exposition shows

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<sup>1</sup> Abductive logic is discussed in detail in chapter 2.

how this approach to data analysis is congruent with the principles of postfoundationalism, constructivist grounded theory as well as the second objective of the research, namely, to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group. The chapter then proceeds to discuss measures that were taken to ensure the research quality as well as the ethical considerations that were involved in the research.

Chapter 6 describes and interprets the results pertaining to the second research objective. This is done by first focusing on the behaviour that emerged throughout the life of the group under investigation, then on the way in which shifts in overall group behaviour took place between sessions and, finally, on how the forces involved in being a group member played out in one of the sessions of the group.

Chapter 7 provides an overall conclusion to the research and also summarises the research. The essence of the research outcomes, as weighed against the stated research objectives, is considered while practical, theoretical and methodological implications of the research study are discussed. Possible future research, aimed at both strengthening and building upon the current research, is discussed.

Chapter 8 provides a personal reflection in terms of which I, as the researcher, take a step back in order to reflect on the research process, my own patterns of membership behaviour, the value of the research and the field of group research in general.

## 2

### Method

Every group is like all other groups in some respects, like some - perhaps even most - groups in some respects, and like no groups in other respects. (Cissna, 1984 in Gildenhuis, 1989, p. 1)

#### 2.1 Introduction

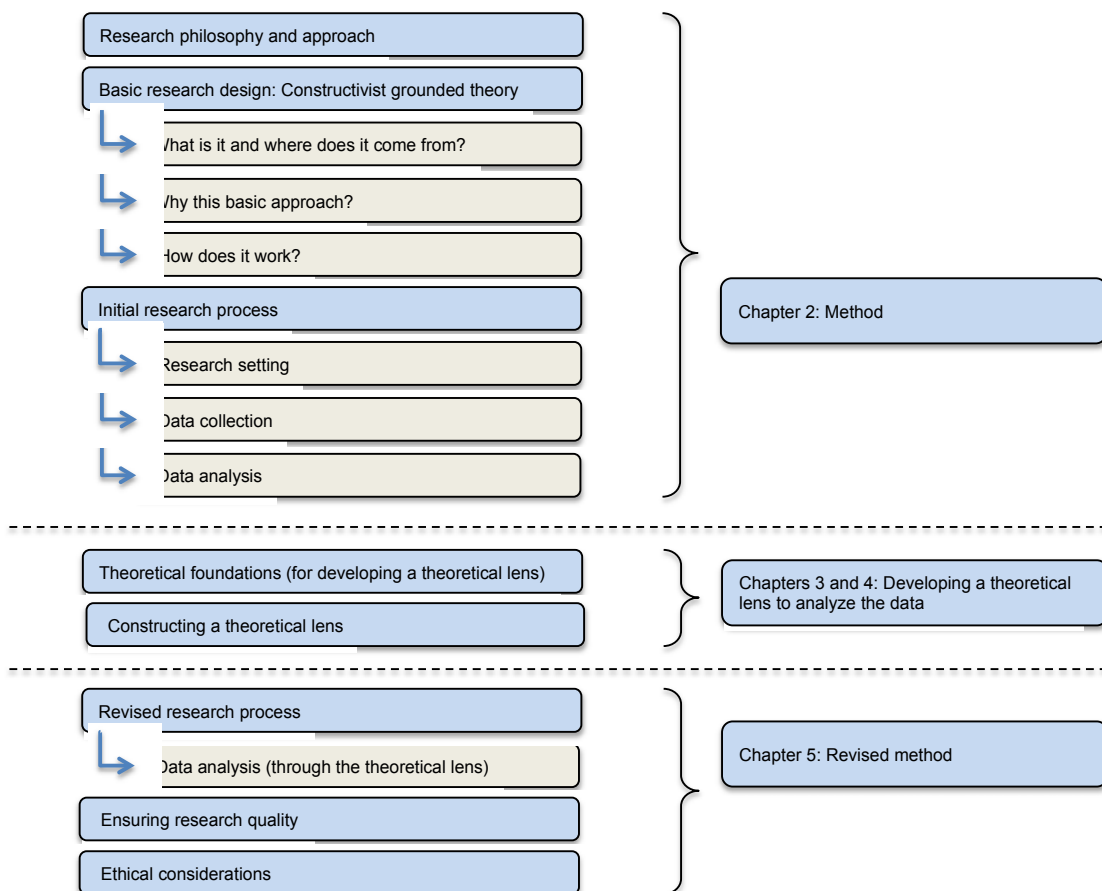
As discussed in chapter 1, this research project set out to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group. Embedded in this stated purpose of the research is also the implicit objective of either choosing or developing a research methodology that would enable me, as the researcher, to realise the main purpose of the research (Hofstee, 2006; Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

For the purposes of this dissertation the decision was made to represent the research methodology that was followed not as a predesigned process that was merely applied to the research problem, but as a process that grew and developed as the research unfolded. The reason for this decision was, firstly, to provide a more accurate and honest account of the entire research process, but also to provide an insight into the continuous critical reflection that formed part of the research process. It is hoped that this will not only allow more insight into the actual research process that was followed, but that it will also deepen the understanding of the way in which the basic research design (grounded theory) can be adapted and modified to suit the unique requirements of a specific research project.

One disadvantage of representing the method as a “research-design-in-progress”, rather than as a pre-developed research design, is the difficulty of structuring this chapter in such a way that it did not become either confusing or cumbersome. However, this difficulty was overcome by structuring the chapter more or less chronologically in order to illustrate the way in which the design unfolded over time. The chapter will commence with a meta-theoretical discussion of the ontological and epistemological position of the research. Constructivist grounded theory will then be

discussed as the basis on which the research design was developed. The way in which constructivist grounded theory was adapted and operationalised as the research design for this specific research project is discussed in two parts, namely, the initial adaptation and the revised adaptation. The initial adaptation, how it was applied as well as its shortcomings with regards to data analysis, forms part of this chapter, while the revised adaptation and application is discussed in chapter 5. The main difference between the initial and the revised research designs is the way in which the data analysis was conducted. After the need for a revised methodology for the data analysis has been explained, this chapter ends with a summary and conclusion that will enable the dissertation to proceed to chapters 3 and 4. In chapters 3 and 4, the theoretical lens is developed that is applied in chapter 5. In addition, issues pertaining to the quality of the research and the ethical considerations that formed part of this research study is dealt with in chapter 5.

The schema below provides an outline of the way in which the discussion of the research method has been structured:



**Figure 2.1: Outline of discussion on research methodology**



## 2.2 Research philosophy and approach

### 2.2.1 Basic scientific beliefs

One's basic scientific beliefs are central to any social research project. In other words, what I believe about knowledge and reality will, undoubtedly, influence the kind of research questions I will ask as well as the way in which I will endeavour to answer them (Hofstee, 2006).

If, for example, I believe that there exists an external and objective reality and that the task of science is to uncover and explain that reality – as in the case of logical positivism – this will have a definite impact on the way in which I view my work as a researcher (Human, 2004). Firstly, it will be incumbent on me to assume the position of the objective researcher in order to ensure that my personal biases do not interfere with the value of my judgements. Secondly, I will derive much of my motivation from my ambition to discover more about how people work with such knowledge holding true regardless of time and place. Consequently, it will be essential that I pay meticulous attention to the variables operating in my research data as I will have to be able to justify and quantify my findings if they are to be reliable in all other contexts. In addition, I will have to report my research process and findings in such a way that it will be possible for any other scientist to repeat my research project and to come up with similar results, if my work was of an acceptable quality (Babbie& Mouton, 2001; Mouton, 2001). Logical positivism, which was first espoused by Comte, took its cue from the natural sciences and embarked on proving that it is possible for the social sciences to uncover rigorous, valid and true knowledge about the social world in very much the same way as the natural sciences uncover knowledge about the natural world (Babbie& Mouton, 2001).

However, during the mid-twentieth century, social scientists grew increasingly disenchanted with the positivist approach, thus opening the way for the rise of the phenomenological approach<sup>2</sup> (Babbie& Mouton, 2001; Human 2004). The main reason for this move away from positivism was a growing unease with the assumption that it is possible to study both social phenomena and human behaviour in much the same way

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<sup>2</sup> Earl Babbie and Johan Mouton classify all qualitative research under the broad philosophical umbrella of the phenomenological approach. Of course, there are several qualitative methods that differ from phenomenology as a research method, although many of them do share the philosophical foundations of phenomenology.

as it is possible to study natural phenomena. The notion that people are different than animals in terms of emotions, free will and intellect gave way to a research paradigm that regarded people's perceptions, fears, aspirations and emotions in a serious light. However, the view that knowledge of the social world is something to which it is possible to gain access by taking the internal realities of people seriously implies that specific research strategies must be employed in order to gain an understanding of reality as experienced by individuals. Accordingly, where positivism searches for the truth "out there", phenomenology searches for the truth "in there" (Human, 2004). However, both of these approaches take for granted that the truth exists and that it is possible to discover the truth.

In reaction to the modernist ideals of discovering knowledge and, thus, "contribut(ing) to the making of a better world" (Seidman, in Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 42), a whole range of positions and research methods arose under the broad umbrella of postmodernism. Postmodernism rejects any attempt at either discovering or uncovering "The Truth" with postmodernists asking "Whose truth?" According to postmodern thinking, truth is contextual and relative in nature. This clearly makes it impossible (or, at least, highly unlikely) for social scientists to make any claims about absolute truth. Accordingly, social reality is believed to be constructed while scientific knowledge is regarded as merely a construct of scientific enquiry. Thus, if I were to conduct research from a postmodern position, I would have to admit that, as a researcher, I exercise some influence on the research process. I would also have to consider that whatever I find in the specific context in which my research is situated provides some indication about the way in which reality is being constructed within that context, but not about the reality in any other social context. Furthermore, postmodernism questions the power-relations in the construction of scientific knowledge. The question "Whose truth?" not only refers to the fact that what is true here might not be true there, but it also refers to the fact that knowledge is often validated by virtue of legitimate scientific methods, schools and authorities to the exclusion, and, often, at the expense, of those voices, discourses, methods, people, not regarded as legitimate (Human, 2004).

Accordingly, on the one hand, there are the quantitative and qualitative research approaches that flow from a modernist paradigm and, on the other, there are those – mostly qualitative – approaches that flow from the postmodernist paradigm, with the former emphasising the search for an existing truth (whether the truth is perceived as existing external to human beings and, thus, either yet to be discovered or else inside

people and yet to be uncovered) and the latter promoting the relativity and contextuality of truth as a social construct.<sup>3</sup> There are, however, disadvantages to both these approaches that this study will have to take into account – both in terms of the broad research topic (groups) and the specific objectives of this research study.

### 2.2.2 Considering the research topic and objectives

The broad topic encompassing this research project is that of groups. However, the problem arises that we are all members of various groups (Dalal,1998) and this, in turn, means that, as the researcher, I am faced with a dilemma – I am part of that which I wish to study. Accordingly, in view of the fact that I am always a member of groups myself, it is impossible for me to assume the position of the objective, external observer, seeking to discover ultimate truths about groups. However, there are two possible arguments that may contradict this statement. In terms of the first argument, the fact that I am always a member of groups does not automatically mean that I am a member of the specific group that I want to study and, this, in turn, can still enable me to assume an objective, external position from which to make truth claims about groups. The second argument pertains to the fact that, although I am always a group member, this need not necessarily constitute a stumbling block, but rather an opportunity to gain an even deeper understanding of groups. Both these arguments assume that there are general truths about groups and that it is possible either to discover (as in argument 1) or to uncover (as in argument 2) these truths. In addition, in order to qualify as "knowledge", it is essential that these truths are generalisable to different contexts.

With regard to the first argument, it must be remembered that the fact that the researcher is not a member of the group to be researched does not automatically imply objectivity. Even if the researcher sits apart from the group and watches the group interactions on a video, the researcher still needs to analyse and make sense of the data that emerge. It is impossible for this sense-making and analysis to be completely objective as the researcher is a subjective human being, with a history of group experiences that will, consciously or sub-consciously, influence the

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<sup>3</sup> A third popular research paradigm is that of Karl Marx's critical theory, which emphasises the social justice that needs to be brought about by the particular research. This paradigm is not so much interested in whether knowledge is to be discovered, uncovered or constructed, but in whether the knowledge has any direct and significant impact on rectifying the social order. This approach is usually used in studies with a strong political slant, which is not the case in this research.

thought processes involved in sifting, analysing and interpreting the data. It is, thus, impossible (or, at least, highly unlikely) to make objective, general truth claims about a phenomenon that one is part of oneself. Secondly, the fact that I am part of groups does not mean that my insider status will ensure deep truths about groups. Whereas the first argument favoured the discovery of external truths, the second favours the internal truths about groups that should be uncovered. However, the problem arises as to how I would ever be able to prove that my internal realisations about a group are true representations about what actually took place in the group? It is, of course, possible to conduct in-depth interviews with group members and to search for trends and discrepancies, but would such interviews really uncover the truth about what happened in the group? In addition, would it be possible to extrapolate this truth to other groups in other settings? Whether one perceives the researcher as objective or subjective, and whether one sees the truth as existing outside of the group or inside the group members, as long as one views reality as fixed and the task of the researcher as having either to discover or uncover reality, one encounters difficulties when working in the field of groups. These difficulties are not only in terms of method (trying to ensure objectivity or trying to make total sense of subjectivity), but also with regard to truth claims – are we really able to claim that what we have discovered here, at this time, in this place, and under these conditions is applicable to all other groups, regardless of context? (Popper & Schilpp, 1974).

If it is the case that research in the field of groups should not hope to make absolute truth claims in the modernist fashion, then what is there to aim for? The postmodernist answer would be that there is no absolute truth and that knowledge can be regarded as such within a specific context only (Vaillancourt Rosenau, 1992). The problem, research-wise, is that a purely postmodern perspective limits knowledge to the group under investigation, and this leaves a relativism that renders attempts at accruing general knowledge about groups futile (Van Huyssteen, 1990).

This brings me to the meta-theoretical dilemma facing this research study: I am working with a phenomenon that can never be fully understood and this, in turn, renders a purely modernist pursuit – searching for absolutes – impossible. On the other hand, a purely relativist (or post-modern) pursuit will not allow any statements beyond the specific groups with which I am dealing empirically and, even then, such a paradigm would not allow me to make any certain claims about what had happened in the group. Nevertheless, in order to realise the purpose of this research study, I need to be able to allow both for the fact that I will never fully understand and for the fact

that there is a need for sufficient understanding to enable group members to use this understanding in order to reflect upon their membership of groups (Popper & Schilpp, 1974). Accordingly, a philosophical space is required in which the tension between the need to abstract and the need to contextualise is creatively embraced, and not juxtaposed. I found the postfoundationalist philosophy of scholars such as Van Huyssteen and Popper helpful in exploring these possibilities.

### 2.2.3 Postfoundationalism and the ontology and epistemology of this research

Before describing postfoundationalism as the meta-theoretical basis of this research, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of both foundationalism and nonfoundationalism. According to Van Huyssteen (1990), foundationalism refers to the supposition that it is possible to justify beliefs by appealing to some item of knowledge that is either self-evident or indubitable. Accordingly, foundationalism regards beliefs as knowledge only insofar as it is possible to justify knowledge claims through a chainlike process, ultimately invoking non-negotiable foundations upon which to construct the evidential support systems of the various convictional beliefs. These knowledge foundations are accepted as given, and, according to Van Huyssteen, are "... treated as a privileged class of aristocratic beliefs that serve as ultimate terminating points in the argumentative chains of justification for our views" (Van Huyssteen, 1990). The foundationalist arrives at these foundational beliefs either through reason or through the empirical study of daily experience. Nevertheless, both the rationalist, who believes that logic is sufficient to establish coherent, foundational truths, as well as the empiricist, who favours systematic empirical research for providing unquestionable truths upon which further knowledge-constructions can be built, are social scientists who take part in the foundationalist project of the modernist era, namely, the search for truths, or meta-narratives, that objectively and rationally explain human behaviour.<sup>4</sup>

In the philosophy of science, foundationalism is often rejected in favour of nonfoundationalism or anti-foundationalism. Nonfoundationalism is, philosophically speaking, one of the roots or resources of postmodernism (Van Huyssteen 1990). Where foundationalism argues for rationality and objectivity, nonfoundationalism argues for contextuality, thus rejecting any notion of foundational truths that hold

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<sup>4</sup> Most modernist qualitative and quantitative research is conducted from the foundationalist perspective, while most postmodern qualitative research is conducted from the nonfoundationalist perspective.

across contexts and communities (Popper & Schilpp, 1974). Nonfoundationalists, while rejecting the existence of any ultimate rational or empirical foundational truths, argue that all our beliefs together form a groundless web of interrelated beliefs, and that these can be tested only against the rationality of each community and context where they are being held. The nonfoundationalist project of social scientists in the postmodern era is, thus, not to find truths that explain human behaviour, but to understand human experience within context. Accordingly, there is a turning away from epistemology as the primary task of philosophy, to hermeneutics – the making sense of opinionated experience. However, the problem is that, in its most extreme form, nonfoundationalism leads to a relativism that renders impossible any attempt at either interdisciplinary or transcontextual communication (Van Huyssteen, 1990).

It is at this point that we turn towards postfoundationalism. Although postfoundationalism does not reject the ideals of truth, objectivity and rationality, it does acknowledge the provisional, contextual, and fallible nature of human reason. According to Van Huyssteen (1990), we can be rational as human beings only within our contexts. There is, thus, in postfoundationalism a simultaneous striving towards explanation and understanding, episteme and hermeneutic.

In order to elucidate the implications of working from a foundationalist, non-foundationalist or postfoundationalist perspective in the field of group dynamics, we shall turn to the popular theory of group development<sup>5</sup> of Bruce Tuckman. Tuckman identified five stages of group development, namely, forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). If I worked from a foundationalist perspective, I could, for example, take Tuckman's theory as a foundation upon which to construct further empirical knowledge about the obstacles which new group members encounter when entering an existing group which is already in the norming stage of group development. However, by carrying out such a study, I would, firstly, have to accept Tuckman's theory as true, otherwise my own research would be worthless. Accordingly, if I researched the empirical evidence underlying his work, and was satisfied that he had applied objective and logical research methods, I could be persuaded that his theory was valid and that my subsequent study would render useful results. Otherwise, still from a foundationalist perspective, I could set out to refute his theory by attempting to prove the theory wrong

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<sup>5</sup> Of course, there are various theories of group development, e.g. Bennis and Shepard (1956) and Beck (1981). I use Tuckman's theory here as an example, as Tuckman's theory is the most popular theory in the management sciences.

and, maybe, to replace it with an alternative theory of group development that would hold true for all groups in all contexts.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, if I worked from a nonfoundationalist orientation, I would reject any possibility of using Tuckman's theory on which to base my research. In such a case, my argument would be that each group is a unique and complex entity situated in its own specific context and that it is not possible to use any theory as a foundation upon which to construct knowledge about my specific group. I would question the very basis of the alleged rationality and objectivity underlying Tuckman's research, claiming that it is impossible to be objective when studying groups in the first place. I would, therefore, rather turn my attention away from trying to explain the restraining forces impacting on a new group member entering into an existing group in the norming stage towards trying to understand the experience of a specific member, joining a specific group, at a specific point in time. The purpose would, thus, not be to provide any new, transferable knowledge regarding the way in which groups either work or develop, but to provide a tentative and honest attempt, during which I would be both critical and self-critical, at understanding the lonely and intensely subjective embodiment of an individual's personal group experience.<sup>7</sup>

However, if I work from a postfoundational perspective my position with regard to Tuckman's theory would be different. I would, firstly, accept that, although fallible, Tuckman's five-stage theory does reflect the attempt of one social scientist at providing a scientific description of group development. I would, further, take seriously the fact that Bruce Tuckman, while conducting his research, was a human being within a specific sociocultural context and that the groups he used were also context-bound. It is, thus, only against the backdrop of the context within which his theory was developed and the specific circumstances surrounding the data he used, that I would be able to make his findings useful and valuable to my own work. I would, however, also compare his work with other, context-influenced group development theories and, on this basis, construct tentative and provisional ideas regarding the groups in my research project and the way in which their development may impact on a new member joining the group. The purpose would, thus, be to explain tentatively, while

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<sup>6</sup> I would do this using either deductive (positivistic) or inductive (as found in most qualitative research) modes of logical reasoning.

<sup>7</sup> I would not use either deductive or inductive logic, for I would not try to prove or refute a general truth claim, nor would I try to infer generalisations about others' experiences based on this one experience that had been studied.

realising that I am open to correction. In addition, I would be making these explanations while taking seriously the specific, contextual circumstances in which both myself and the group are enmeshed.<sup>8</sup> In doing so, I would also be taking a critical and self-critical stance (as with a nonfoundational approach), although I would still be willing to make (albeit tentative) truth claims. Such is the nature of a postfoundational approach to research.

## **2.3 Research design**

### **2.3.1 Constructivist grounded theory**

#### *2.3.1.1 History and development*

In essence, grounded theory refers to qualitative research which is grounded in empirical data and which seeks to construct new theory based on what is observed in the data. Grounded theory was first introduced by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss as an explicit method of developing middle-range sociological theory (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008). In their book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory (1967)*, Charmaz and Henwood describe the development of systematic qualitative enquiry as a move away from the then predominant, hypothetico-deductive, research logic which was prevalent in the social sciences. Since its introduction both objectivist and constructivist threads have emerged and have remained in the theory, with the constructivist thread being significantly influenced and developed by the works of Kathy Charmaz and Adele Clarke (Charmaz & Henwood 2008). "Grounded theory is fundamentally an interactive and interpretative method" (Charmaz, 2006a) with the constructivist thread emphasising the contextuality of knowledge as a co-construction between the researcher and the researched. However, grounded theory still contains both objectivist (emphasising rigorous systematic enquiry) and interpretive elements (emphasising the way in which people construct meaning).

Today grounded theory is widely used in a variety of fields and it has become a popular method of conducting research in psychology. In terms of a constructivist grounded theory approach grounded theory is viewed, not as a package or a set of recipes, but as a set of principles and practices that can act as guidelines for research. These principles and practices could and should then be adapted and worked with

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<sup>8</sup> I would make use of both deductive and inductive, thus, abductive reasoning. See footnote 9.



(and even applied in conjunction with other qualitative approaches) in order to suit the requirements of each unique study (Charmaz, 2006).

### *2.3.1.2 Reasons for using constructivist grounded theory*

Constructivist grounded theory is an appropriate research design if it 1) is congruent with the research philosophy guiding the research and 2) offers a way of realising the research objectives.

As a result of its dual objectivist and interpretive heritage grounded theory contains all the elements of striving for scientific rigour whilst remaining cognisant of the contextual and tentative nature of human knowledge. As a research design within a postfoundational paradigm, the constructivist strand of grounded theory provides an easy fit, specifically in view of its emphasis on abductive research logic<sup>9</sup>.

In terms of the fit between a constructivist grounded theory research design and the objectives of this research, the following is important. Firstly, this research project requires the development of a method in order to guide the research and it would appear that constructivist grounded theory is an ideal basis for the development of such a method. On the one hand, it has the advantage of being a well-known and established method and is, thus, suited for use as a foundation for further development. On the other hand, it explicitly provides space for the incorporation of various methodologies and adaptations to fit the specific research needs of each research project.

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<sup>9</sup> This is extremely important, especially in the context of working with groups, or rather: in developing a theoretical framework to assist leaders in their work with groups. Karl Popper was one of the major exponents of the difficulties experienced when working with inductive logic in research. In his attempts to distinguish between science and pseudo-science, Popper argued that inductive logic is not able to demonstrate the truth of laws, as human reason does not proceed from facts to theory, but through trial and error, i.e. refutation and falsification. Popper further argued that the weakness of inductive reasoning lies in a popular but false theory that human intellect starts from a blank slate, observes facts and generate theory (the tabula rasa-fallacy) (Popper & Schilpp, 1974). Popper's argument is aimed at a recognition of the fact that human reason does not start (as formulated by Bacon) with observation and then progress slowly to facts. Reality is always already interpreted (Muller, 2007; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000) which means that we make sense of the world by means of trial and error - the critical method (Popper & Schilpp, 1974). Gregory Bateson (Bateson, 1972) also warns against an overreliance on inductive logic and shows the importance of moving from inductive logic to testing against theory and then back to the data – abduction.

Secondly, with regards to the research objective pertaining to the exploration of the forces involved in being a member of a small group, there are several reasons why a constructivist grounded theory design seems appropriate.

- a) The abductive mode of reasoning is very similar to the logic required when working with groups – a specific event or occurrence is observed and the leader connects the event with other events in the group, while searching for a pattern in the data. The emerging pattern is tested against a theoretical construct(s) which the leader has in mind with the theory requiring more data to confirm that that which is being observed is, in fact, that which the theory is describing. If not, the leader will have to return to the data but, if so, the leader will act in concurrence with the theoretical constructs, while sensing the outcome and making the necessary adaptations (Yalom 1985). Abductive reasoning is, thus, an ongoing critical process of trial and error in terms of which the researcher comes to tentative conclusions, tests these conclusions against the data, again draws tentative conclusions, tests these conclusions against the data, and so forth.
- b) As a result of the fact that no theory currently exists that specifically describes the forces involved in being a group member, a constructivist grounded theory method will help to guide the exploration of the data in order to develop a tentative theory that could then be further tested and developed by future researchers.
- c) Simultaneously, a constructivist grounded theory design will allow for the fact that, even though there is no specific theory with regard to the research topic, there do exist several different theories on groups and their internal processes. The use of existing theory is part of the constructivist grounded theory method.
- d) Constructivist grounded theory can assist in conducting a systematic and rigorous collection and analysis of the data whilst allowing the contexts and intersubjective meanings within the group and between the group members to be taken seriously and explored as part of the research process.

### *2.3.1.3 How does constructivist grounded theory work?*

It is important to understand that constructivist grounded theory is not a predefined package or a set of procedures and steps, but rather a set of principles or guidelines according to which qualitative research processes can be developed or organised. The following general principles for grounded theory were described by Charmaz (in Charmaz & Henwood, 2008):

- a) Grounded theorists should engage simultaneously in data collection and data analysis in order to allow for early data analysis to inform subsequent data collection.
- b) It is essential that constant comparative methods be invoked in order to make comparisons at each level of analysis, including data with data, codes with codes, codes with categories, category with category and category with concept.
- c) Emergent concepts are then developed by means of constructing successively more abstract concepts arising from the researcher's interactions with the data.
- d) Researchers with a grounded theory orientation should adopt inductive-abductive logic by first analysing inductive cases, and then checking the emerging analysis with all possible theoretical explanations, confirming or disconfirming these explanations until the most plausible theoretical interpretation of the data has been constructed.

In practice, constructivist grounded theory studies generally comprise some or all or even variations of the following steps (Charmaz, 2006; Bartlett & Payne in Payne):

- a) Collect and transcribe the data. Although any source of textual data may be used, semi-structured interviews and observational notes are the most common.
- b) Start with initial coding while collecting data by asking the following question: "What is happening in the data?" Short, active, analytic codes are used. Qualitative data analysis computer software is often used to keep track of, compare and integrate codes and memos.
- c) Move on to focused coding in terms of which the most significant initial codes are used to sort and study large amounts of data. These focused codes, in turn, become tentative categories to be explored and analysed.
- d) Memowriting occurs throughout the research process to raise the analytic level of the emerging theory.
- e) Theoretical sampling is the next step. In terms of theoretical sampling specific data is sought in order to develop the properties of the categories -the theory.
- f) If the gathering of new data reveals no further insights into the evolving theory, then data saturation has occurred. This, in turn, means that there is no need to collect new data.
- g) Theoretical sorting and integration is one of the final steps in the process. This entails weighting, ordering and connecting theoretical memos in order to demonstrate how the theory fits together and how it links with other, existing

theoretical formulations, to make the relationships between the theoretical categories explicit, to specify the conditions under which these categories arise and to state the consequences of the theorised concepts.

- h) The emergent theory is finally grounded by returning to the data and comparing and validating it against actual segments of text. Should gaps exist, more data is collected in order to try and fill the gaps.

## **2.4 The initial research process**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

This section describes the way in which the constructivist grounded theory method has been adapted and applied to this research process. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, this section will describe the research as it was designed and executed initially. However, after this initial execution of the research design, adaptations were made – see discussion in Chapter 5: Revised method. At this point it is important to state that these adaptations were made only to the way in which the data was analysed while everything else pertaining to the initial research design remained exactly the same in the revised research design.

### **2.4.2 Research setting**

The group from which the data for analysis emanated was not merely any group, nor were its members just any members. The group was a specific type of group, facilitated in a specific way as part of a specific post-graduate programme at a specific academic institution and the research was conducted by a specific individual, who stood in specific role relationships to both the group members and fellow researchers. In line with the postfoundational research philosophy, as well the guidelines for interpreting the data in a constructivist grounded theory research project, it is essential that these specific contexts be made explicit and explored if the research is to be intelligible to people situated in different contexts. While this research will not aim to discover an objective truth it will, nevertheless, aim to be both rigorous and honest in its attempt to construct knowledge within its specific context that can be of value to other researchers in other contexts.

There are various contexts to be explored:

- a) The immediate, physical context of the training group as it existed in time and space;
- b) The theoretical and professional contexts which informed the roles and approaches of the facilitators;
- c) The context of the postgraduate programme within which the training group was situated and in respect of which the researcher played a role as lecturer to the group;
- d) The institutional context of the group, namely, the academic department, faculty and university;
- e) The broader context of experiential learning within academic environments, specifically with regards to group dynamics training;
- f) The South African socio-political context as part of a broader, global context.

However, each of these contexts will be discussed in broad terms only in order to provide a succinct overview of the environment within which the group existed without attempting to offer an in-depth environmental analysis. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that every group, in addition to emanating from the various contexts described above, also creates its own context as it develops over time. Foulkes (1975) termed this co-created context the dynamic matrix with the contexts listed above serving as the foundational matrix. During the data analysis all these contexts were borne in mind.

#### *2.4.2.1 The immediate, physical context of the training group*

Physically, the group consisted of nine members, between the ages of 21 and 27, and who were enrolled for a Masters of Commerce degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology. One group member was male and the rest were female. In addition, they were all from diverse cultural backgrounds. The group was facilitated by two clinical psychologists in one of the lecturing facilities of the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences building. The room was spacious, with the chairs arranged in a circle near the front of the room. A video camera was set up in the corner of the room while a back-up audio-recording device was attached to a wall opposite to the wall where the video camera was located. In order to make the observation and recording process as unobtrusive as possible there were no additional microphones or lighting. I, the researcher, was located in an adjacent room from where I observed the group over a television monitor. The temperature in the room was regulated by an automatic air

conditioning system which, when in operation, resulted in a low background noise that, at times, made it difficult for the video and audio recording equipment to record the group conversations clearly<sup>10</sup>. Further down the hall from the room where the group sessions took place, there was a small auditorium that was used during the introduction and out-group sessions as well as the final closing session of the weekend. The group room, video-observation room and mini-auditorium were also the designated lecturing rooms that had been used for the students since their Honours year. In other words, the majority of the group had been attending all their lectures in these rooms for almost two years, while the remaining group members had been attending lectures in these rooms for almost a year.

The group was structured as a group dynamics training group. A training group refers to a group experience in terms of which the purpose of the group is to learn about groups by taking itself as a case study in the here and now situation (Anzieu, 1984; Ringer, 2002; Miller *et al.*, 2004; Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974). Such a group has relatively little structure (usually time and space only) and the group leader offers little or no direction to the group. The group is not presented with any content from the facilitators and, thus, creates its own content as it progresses. This form of experiential learning has its origin in both the Lewinian National Training Laboratories and the Tavistock Group Relations Conferences (Gildenhuis, 1975). The concept of training groups is explored further in the literature review section but, in terms of the context, it suffices to understand that this group was an unstructured, or rather, a semi-structured, training group.

#### *2.4.2.2 The theoretical and professional contexts which informed the roles and approach of the facilitators*

As was mentioned above, both the group facilitators were clinical psychologists while the members in the group were all being trained to register as industrial psychologists. The significance of this fact will be discussed in the section on the results in chapter 6. In addition, the facilitators' approach to group work can best be described as analytical eclectic, as their approach, primarily, focuses on unconscious group processes on the various systemic levels of the individual, member, subgroup and group-as-a-whole, although it also incorporates constructs and practices from the interpersonal, systems-centred and group dynamics traditions. The analytical threads, which informed the

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<sup>10</sup>The recordings were still good enough for transcription purposes.

facilitators' mode of work, can be traced back to both the Tavistock and Group Analytical traditions. However, the main difference between the way in which the facilitators took up their roles and the way in which a consultant to a small study group in a group relations conference would take up his/her role is the fact that the facilitators did not only address the group-as-a-whole when they made interpretations, but they alternated between addressing the different systemic levels of the group. This approach corresponds to a significant degree with the Foulkesian way of seeing the group against the background of the individual and then the individual against the background of the group. The facilitators also did not position themselves more towards the 'outside' of the group as is the case in the Bionian tradition and they also did not manage the time boundary of the group in the same rigid manner as in group relations conferences. However, other than this, the relative inactivity of the facilitators at the outset of the group and their style of allowing the group space to create its own dynamic context were very much in line with the Tavistock and Group Analytic approaches.

#### *2.4.2.3 The context of the post-graduate programme and the role(s) of the researcher*

Programme-wise this group experience was part of the I/O Psychology Practicemodule. There were 27 students enrolled for the programme and the students were randomly allocated to three training groups, which ran on three consecutive weekends. In terms of this module the students were required to attend the group and then to submit a 10-page reflection paper two weeks after the group experience. This was followed by a 1-day theoretical lecture a month after the group and, then two months after the group experience, the students were required to submit a 20-page paper in which they analysed an organisational case study of their own choice. The participation in the group and the reflection paper were not graded, although the 20-page case study analysis was graded. In this analysis they were required to integrate insights from both their group experience and group theory in order to make sense of a real-life case study.

I was in the dual position of being the lecturer responsible for the overall programme and final grading as well as being one of two researchers who was working with the data for academic purposes. The research team was structured in the following way: the two researchers acted as co-researchers for each other's research projects and were overseen by a research supervisor who was also the chair of the masters programme.

Group members were asked to give their consent for the video and audio material to be used for research purposes. Where this consent was not given, the data of that entire group was not included for the purposes of this study. One member in one of the three groups refused consent but was not penalised for this academically.

The group experience was structured as ten sessions over a block period of two and a half days. The group assembled in the mini-auditorium on a Thursday evening for an introduction to the programme, then moved to the group room for two sessions. On the Friday morning the group met for two more sessions in the group room before moving to the mini-auditorium for an out-group reflection on what had taken place in the group. During this out-group reflection session the two facilitators and I took on more active roles in terms of which we helped the group to see connections between the content they were discussing about and both the pattern of communication and the group process. This was followed by lunch as well as two more in-group sessions in the group room. On the Saturday morning the group attended two more sessions before another out-group reflection. This out-group reflection focused on roles and norms in the group as well as topics of the group members' own choice. This reflection session was followed by two more sessions before the group adjourned to the mini-auditorium for the final reflection and closure of the weekend programme.

It may also be helpful to add that this module was the first module in terms of which experiential learning was central that these students were exposed to during their entire undergraduate and graduate programmes. In addition, until the commencement of this module, the students had not been exposed in any depth to psychodynamic thinking with the majority of their academic programme taking the view that decisionmaking constituted rational cognitive and economic processes.

#### *2.4.2.4 The institutional context*

Institutionally, the programme formed part of the MCom I/O Psychology degree programme at the Department of Human Resources Management, which is in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Pretoria. The department was founded twenty years ago when there was a break away from the Psychology department in the Human Sciences faculty in order to start the Personnel Management department. As a result of the fact that their programmes eventually lead to these students attaining degrees in Commerce, several management and



economics modules are included in the programme, with the I/O Psychology component being significantly influenced by a Human Resource Management focus. At the end of their programme the students are awarded either a MCom Human Resources Management degree or a MCom I/O Psychology degree, depending on the focus of their final masters dissertations. However, each of these degree designations qualifies the students to register as both I/O Psychologists with the Professional Board of Psychology at the Health Professions Council of South Africa and as Certified Personnel Practitioners with the South African Council for Personnel Practice. The result is that students often find themselves uncertain with regard to their professional identity as psychologists.

*2.4.2.5 The broader context of experiential learning within the academic environment, specifically with regards to group dynamics training*

Although it has been alluded to above, it is, nevertheless, necessary to emphasise that there are certain general challenges where experiential training groups are used as part of formal academic programmes at universities. In feedback that I have received from members of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO) who use some form of experiential training groups in the programmes they teach across the world, they all agreed that:

- a) Students often experience anxiety as a result of the unfamiliar approach to learning in a context in which they have become used to being taught instead of having to create learning for themselves.
- b) The competitiveness and individualistic behaviours that are fostered in a traditional academic setting affects the way in which the students experience the groups and they often experience groups as dangerous or threatening.
- c) It is essential that the young age of the students entering into such groups and, thus, their ability for mature self-reflection, should be taken into account.
- d) The fact that the students know each other before the group commences and will continue to be in the same programme after the termination of the group impacts on the degree to which they are willing to engage in the experiential learning process.
- e) The fact of entering a training group as part of a formal programme often means that the students feel 'forced' or 'coerced' into something they have not chosen for themselves, whether or not they actually had a choice in the matter of attending.

- f) Experiential training groups are often experienced as tough, difficult, or bizarre but most meaningful learning experiences that provide insights the students do not usually gain from their other academic programmes.

#### *2.4.2.6 The South African socio-political context as part of a broader, global context*

This group took place in the South African context, 15 years after the ending of apartheid. This means that, despite the fact that there has been much progress in South African society, there does still remain a plethora of cultural prejudices, not only between racial and language groups, but also between genders and religious groups. The majority of the group members, as well as the facilitators and the researcher, were Afrikaans first language speakers, although the group was conducted in English to accommodate those group members who were not very familiar with Afrikaans. The stigma of being the 'language of the oppressor' is still carried by Afrikaans and it is considered politically incorrect to speak Afrikaans in a social situation in which all those present are not Afrikaans first language speakers. In addition, there are many power struggles taking place in South African society around the issues of language, morality, gender and religion. Also, at the time that these groups took place, and still today, South Africa was experiencing a significantly high rate of violent crime, as well as an increase in corruption among politicians and government officials.

#### 2.4.3 Sampling and data collection methodologies

##### *2.4.3.1 Training group*

The primary data for analysis came from the training group itself, as it existed over the two and a half days. The training group chosen for analysis came from a total of five groups that were conducted and video-recorded. In view of the sheer volume of data per group (15 hours of recorded material), as well as the purpose of the research (to conduct an in-depth exploration of the forces involved in being members of a group), it was decided to use the data from one of the five groups only. Furthermore, as a result of the fact that two of the five groups had been conducted with the 2008 cohort of students, it was decided rather to focus on the 2009 cohort because these groups were still fresh in the minds of the research team. Of the three 2009 groups, the group that had been conducted on the second weekend was chosen. The first group was not selected as a result of the fact that one of the group members had refused to give her consent for the data emanating from the group to be used for research purposes. This,

in turn, left the second and third groups as possible research subjects, with the second group being chosen. The reason for this particular choice was the fact that, by the time the third group was conducted, they had already heard several different stories about the group experience from their fellow students, and this would have complicated the matter of understanding the psychological context (expectations and anxieties) from which they entered the group. The sampling method was, thus, one of purposive sampling as the second group, which seemed to be the least problematic in terms of gathering post-group data, ethical concerns and ‘contamination’<sup>11</sup> was chosen for the research.

Although the basic structure and nature of training groups were discussed as part of the discussion above on the research setting, one or two comments can be made at this point regarding the use of training groups as a data collection methodology for research purposes. Firstly, training groups provide an environment which is extremely conducive to collecting rich data as all the members of the group are present for the entire life of the group and the data collection can cover every minute of the group's existence (Anzieu, 1984). Secondly, the unstructured nature of the training group, plus the fact that the facilitators are not introducing any content, automatically emphasise the underlying dynamics in the group and this, of course, is the focus of this research study. In addition, training groups are set up and run in such a way that the very nature of such a group places the focus on studying the group in the here and now as it unfolds over time. As compared to either project teams or sports teams, for example, there is no other purpose to a training group other than providing the members with an opportunity to learn about the way in which groups work by studying themselves as a group. Training groups have been used since the post-World War II period until today for the purpose of studying group dynamics and they are still regarded as the best way in which to learn about and study groups (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).

In order to collect the data emanating from the group, video recordings, together with additional audio back-up recordings, were made. These recordings were captured onto videotape, and then converted into DVD format. Both the original videotapes, as well as the DVDs and the digitized recordings, are safely stored on three different hard drives. Nobody has access to the data apart from the members of the research team.

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<sup>11</sup>I know that ‘contamination’ is not an issue that one would normally be concerned with in a constructivist grounded theory study, but the feeling amongst the research team was that the mixed messages that affected the expectations of the Group 3 could further complicate an already highly complex challenge with regards to data analysis.

The video material was transcribed and pseudonyms were allocated to the group members before the textual material was imported into the AtlasTi software programme for analysis – this will be discussed in more detail in the section on data analysis below. Where the video recordings were unclear as a result of the noise from the air-conditioning system that was turned on periodically, the audio recordings, which were recorded on a different recording device from a different position in the room were used to augment the material for transcription purposes. The transcriptions were carried out by a professional transcriptionist and were then checked line by line by both the researcher and the co-researcher separately and consecutively to ensure accuracy.

In addition to the video and audio recordings, I also made observational notes while the group was in session. The aim of these notes was to capture my thoughts and feelings as well as specific incidents I had observed as I watched the group from the adjacent room while the group was in session. These observational notes were consulted continuously throughout the coding process.

#### *2.4.3.2 Written reflections*

As a secondary source of data that was captured mainly for the purposes of triangulation and for further illumination of the transcribed video material, the personal reflections that the students were asked to submit as part of their academic programme, were also included as data for this research study. Despite the fact that there were the personal reflections of all the students from both the 2008 and 2009 cohorts, only the reflections of the nine members who had been part of the training group that was selected for research purposes were used for analytical purposes. The full wording of the assignment can be read as part of the study guide and study letters that are included as background information in Appendix A to this dissertation, but the section in which the task was described reads as follows:

*“This assignment asks of you to write a critical reflection on the group experience. Specifically, reflect on the following:*

- a) *Your own experience of becoming/being a member of the group (especially on a psychological level)*
  - *What made it easier for you to join the group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations);*

- *What made it difficult for you to join the group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations);*
- *How did you experience being a member of this group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations).*

*b) Significant moments in the group for the group-as-a-whole*

- *Reflect on one or two specific moments in the group that, according to you, were especially significant for the group as it moved through the 2 ½ days.”*

#### 2.4.4 Data analysis

##### *2.4.4.1 Initial data analysis process followed*

This section describes the way in which the data was analysed initially. Analysing qualitative data is, certainly, one of the most challenging aspects of qualitative research (Charmaz, 2007), especially where various sources of data are used. The various data sources mentioned above had to be analysed as an integrated whole in order to realise the research objectives. In addition, it is essential that the way in which the data is analysed be congruent with the underlying philosophy of the specific research study, as well as with the ultimate purpose of the research (Charmaz, 2007). Furthermore, when working with groups, the focus should not be on learning about overt, measurable processes in the group only, but also on learning about the covert, unconscious processes (Prins, 2006). Another requirement of the data analysis, which is in line with the philosophy of postfoundationalism, is the fact that any results emanating from the analysis will be intelligible only if viewed within context –placing further emphasis on the importance both of interpreting data within context (Mueller-Vollmer, 1986) and taking into account the various discourses at play (Clarke, 2005).

During this initial data analysis process, the grounded theory guidelines that were followed were closer to those espoused by Glaser (1993, 2001) than those of Strauss and Corbin (1990a, 1990b) in that, in essence, the process actually started as a totally open coding process. Accordingly, the focus was initially purely on the inductive aspect of coding in terms of which the codes only reflect what happens in the data without referring to theory. According to this grounded theory principle, codes and categories are, initially, deeply rooted in the text only and it is only after categories have been abstracted from the open coding, that the codes and categories are compared with existing theory in the constructivist grounded theory fashion (in terms of

which various theories are compared in order to find the theoretical constructs that best describe what is happening in the data). It is important to take note of the tension which may arise between creating categories before the coding starts - as introduced by Straus & Corbin (1990a) - and the purely open-ended approach of Glaser (2001). With regard to the former one runs the risk of losing some insight into the data by being too focused on the pre-created theoretical dimensions while, with regard to the latter, one runs the risk of becoming so tangled up in the data that it becomes difficult to start abstracting from the data.

The following analytic steps were part of the initial plan for the data analysis:

- a) The first step involved converting the video to DVD format in order to transcribe the data but also to enable me to watch the video as I went through the process of coding the data in AtlasTi<sup>12</sup>. The reason for this was that I did not want to work with textual transcriptions only, as I was not interested in the content of the words being spoken only, but also in the entire scene – words, gestures and tensions – which would be both too deep and too multidimensional to transcribe.
- b) The next step involved the chronological arrangement of all the video material in order to enhance the accuracy of the transcriptions but also to obtain another overview of the entire group experience.
- c) I had, in conjunction with the previous steps, also made notes/memos of my own thoughts, feelings and conjectures about what was happening and what this could mean in terms of group membership and the forces involved in the process.
- d) With regard to the specific behaviour by each group member, I planned to make suppositions, based on both theory and the data, about what could have given rise to the behaviour. My focus would be on making conjectures about what the most plausible forces could have been that had impacted on the individual actions or behaviours of the group members.
- e) At this point I planned to compose a first draft story/account of each of the participants' behaviours within the group.
- f) Next, I planned to elaborate on the context by including the written course material and any other information that could provide a clearer understanding

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<sup>12</sup>(AtlasTi is a qualitative data analysis computer programme that can be used for any type of qualitative research design, but which has been developed specifically in accordance with the underlying principles and logic of grounded theory. It provides an automated way to keep track of codes and memos that are devised throughout the analytic process).

of the specific case context. This would also include a theoretical understanding of training groups as all the actions interpreted in this case study should be viewed against existing knowledge about the behaviours and dynamics in training groups.

- g) I then planned to compare these stories and make further connections between the actions, categories of actions and stages of the group membership of the participants.
- h) The next step involved making comparisons between the individual 'stories' and the theoretical constructs emanating from the literature analysis, specifically with regards to the forces that appeared to have been involved.
- i) At this stage I hoped to arrive at a first-order description/interpretation of the forces that had impacted on the process of being a group member as this process played out for the group members.
- j) With regard to the theory, the question would arise as to the way in which the theory helps in an understanding of the descriptions of the forces involved that had been observed in the data. It may have been that the theory was totally lacking or else it may have been that the theory had played a role in helping me to perceive the forces more clearly.
- k) Finally, I planned to construct a force-field analysis in terms of which I would describe and interpret the forces involved, albeit in a tentative manner that allowed for imagining how the analysis can be applied to other situational contexts.

With this data analysis plan intact I set out to analyse the behaviours of one of the nine members during the first session of the group with the aim of ascertaining the types of outcomes which this form of data analysis would provide.

#### *2.4.4.2 The need for a revised data analysis methodology*

The result of this initial analysis was a 36 page discussion of the behaviour of one group member during one session. In this discussion I intended to draw constant comparisons between the codes, categories and possible theoretical interpretations while there was no limit set on the depth of interpretation. The results of this initial analysis are not presented here but are included as Appendix B to the dissertation.

However, the main problem with this methodology of data analysis was that it was too open-ended in its aim of creating a to and fro interaction between data and theory in

such a way that it started with the data, moved to theory, and back to the data, etc. As a result of the fact that the research dissertation had to be written up in order to enable other researchers to be able to follow the research logic so that the results would, in true postfoundational fashion, be intelligible in their contexts, this approach required extensive descriptions of, inter alia, the interpretations made, the theories involved, and the reasons for not making different interpretations. If one adds to this the fact that the group context that is created as the group develops over time, becomes progressively more complex, as well as the fact that this represented an analysis of the behaviour of one member in one session only, and not the behaviours of the nine members in all ten sessions, then the sheer scope of this analytical procedure became impossible.

In addition to the vast scope and complexity of an ever-expanding, open-ended analysis of the various factors impacting one another on various systemic levels of meaning, there was also the issue of the quality of the research. This research study aimed to explore the forces involved in being a group member in such a way that was both rigorous and systematic on the one hand and also deep and focused on subjective meaning on the other. Despite the fact that this initial approach to data analysis did, undoubtedly, provide adequate space for the intersubjective and symbolic meanings in the group to be dealt with, it was not sufficiently systematic to prevent me from becoming lost in the welter of various meanings upon meanings upon meanings.

This, in turn, meant that I was confronted by the following choice: either focus the analysis on a section of the group's life only (e.g. one session or section of a session) or change the approach to analysing the data. As a result of the fact that I did not wish to lose the dynamic nature of the data as a progression over time, I was reluctant to discard most of the data and to focus on a small section of the group's life only. Accordingly, I decided to move closer to the Strauss and Corbin (1990b) approach to data analysis. This approach starts with a predefined theoretical structure which acts as a guide for the open coding process – a beacon that provides a fixed point of reference during the process of analysing a vast amount of data. I realised that this more structured approach could cost me some of the meanings that I might miss because of the theoretical framework, but I also realised that I needed a theoretical lens through which to look at the data. Therefore, although this lens could have left certain details out of its focus, it could also bring others into focus that I may have missed without the lens.



## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter described how I embarked on developing a method for realising the research objectives. The research philosophy, namely, postfoundationalism, which was deemed to be the most appropriate for the research, was discussed as well as the underlying principles of constructivist grounded theory as the research design upon which I aimed to base the specific design for this research. The research context and the various methodologies applied in order to collect the data were discussed and this was followed by a discussion of the methodology for the analysis of the data that was initially developed and applied to the first session of the training group. However, it was shown that this data analysis methodology would not suffice to deliver satisfactory results pertaining to the research questions. Accordingly, the chapter went on to indicate the need to develop a theoretical lens to use as a departure point for a constructivist grounded theory data analysis. This approach lines up closely with the Straus and Corbin approach and was deemed more suitable to the unique circumstances of this research.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 describe the process of developing a theoretical lens to use in a revised methodology for analysing the data. Chapter 3 lays down the theoretical foundation while chapter 4 then proceeds to develop the theoretical lens. Chapter 5 discusses both the way in which the theoretical lens was operationalised for research purposes and also the way in which the data was finally analysed. Chapter 5, which is a continuation of the method section of the dissertation, also pays attention to issues pertaining to the quality of the research and the research ethics.

## Theoretical foundations

### 3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the first attempt at analysing the data in an open-ended, inductive way did not work out due to the fact that the multilayered complexity of the data as well as the sheer volume of data, made it impossible to adopt a purely inductive approach, as espoused by Glaser (Glaser, 1993). Accordingly, the decision was made to adopt an approach more closely aligned to that of Strauss and Corbin (Strauss & Corbin, 1990a; Strauss & Corbin, 1990b) – an approach to coding that would draw on both inductive and deductive reasoning. This approach also seemed to be more in line with Kathy Charmaz’s Constructivist Grounded Theory approach through which a constructive dialogue between theory and data is maintained (Charmaz, 2006). This, in turn, means that the theoretical knowledge about the subject matter is not discarded, but it is brought into contact with the empirical data as it emerges. The theoretical knowledge that I had prior to the research project would be utilised for the purpose of the study by using it to create frameworks in terms of which to interpret and work with the data, while bearing in mind that the data should also be allowed to ‘speak for itself’ (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008). This is congruent with the principles of the guiding philosophy of the research, namely, postfoundationalism (See discussion in chapter 2) which aims to maintain the creative tension between the need to explain based on general principles and the need to come to a deep understanding of the individual case within its context (Van den Berg, 1972; Van Huyssteen, 1990).

This chapter will discuss the main theoretical foundations on the basis of which the theoretical lens was developed – chapter 4 will, in turn, discuss the development of this theoretical lens. The purpose of discussing these main theoretical foundations is not to provide an exhaustive account of each of the contributing theoretical departure points, but to depict both the basic departure points of, and unique contributions from, each. However, despite the fact that they will be discussed separately, it will become increasingly clear towards the end of the chapter that these very different approaches need not be seen as either contradictory or mutually exclusive, but rather as complementary ways of trying to make sense of the complexity of groups.

The theoretical perspectives that will be discussed include:

- a) Field theory, which originated from the work of Kurt Lewin and gave rise to various developments in social psychology (Lewin, Heider, & Heider, 1936; Lewin, 1951; Lewin, 1981).
- b) Psychoanalytic approaches to groups and, specifically, those of Wilfred Bion (Bion, 1961) and S.H. Foulkes (Foulkes & Kissen, 1976; Foulkes & Anthony, 1984; Foulkes & Foulkes, 1990a). These two main psychoanalytic approaches, respectively rooted in Kleinian object relations theory (with regard to Bion's group-as-a-whole approach) and Freudian classical psychoanalysis (with regard to Foulkes' group analytic approach) provide a good overview of the psychoanalytic approaches to groups.
- c) Systems-centred group therapy, as developed and applied by Yvonne Agazarian (Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Agazarian & Gantt, 2000; Agazarian, 2001), and mainly rooted in Ludwig von Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968).

The next section will present a broad overview of these various theoretical influences.<sup>13</sup> In the chapter that follows (chapter 4), certain aspects of these theories will be dealt with in greater detail as they are used to develop the theoretical lens and to test it for its logical consistency from various theoretical perspectives.

## **3.2 Field theory**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

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<sup>13</sup> It should be mentioned here that Agazarian's integration and adaptation of psychoanalytic, systems and field theory approaches was highly influential (and inspirational) to this entire research project. Her work, especially as first described with Peters in "The visible and invisible group" (Agazarian & Peters, 1981) and later with Gant in "Autobiography of a Theory" (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) rendered it unnecessary to formulate grand arguments from scratch for integrating the various theoretical approaches. However, this chapter aims to lay a foundation by discussing the various theories and the way in which they can be integrated by following and building, mainly, on Agazarian's logic.

It would be difficult to over-estimate Kurt Lewin's contribution to social psychology (Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Agazarian & Gantt, 2000; Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Deutsch, 1990; Gold, 1990). According to Cartwright (in Lewin, 1951, p. 159):

When the intellectual history of the twentieth century is written, Kurt Lewin will surely be counted as one of those few men whose work changed fundamentally the course of social science in its most critical period of development.

Lewin, who was born in Germany and later moved to the United States to escape World War II, was greatly influenced by the philosophy of Cassirer in Berlin and asserted that the scientific focus should be on searching for the underlying forces governing behaviour, and not, as in Aristotelian vs. Galilean logic (Schellenberg, 1978), on trying to describe behaviour as a result of characteristics. This became an important guideline for Lewin's thinking and the eventual development of his field theory. According to field theory, behaviour can be understood only as a function of the totality of the life situation of the individual (Lewin, 1951). With regard to research, Lewin was also regarded as a pragmatist, famously claiming that there is nothing as practical as a good theory (Lewin, 1951). These three tenets of his thinking, namely, that the wholeness of a situation should be considered, that the relational field between entities should be taken seriously and that research should be practical, together with his insistence on democratic research and learning (Schellenberg, 1978) were at the heart of his tremendous impact on the social sciences with regard to his contributions to field theory, group dynamics, experiential learning, Gestalt psychology and action learning.

This section will, firstly, pay attention to the meta-theoretical aspects of field theory. These ideas will be discussed because they will be used as guidelines and criteria for the development of the theoretical lens in chapter 4, as this lens will, in essence, also be a 'field theory' (see later discussion). Secondly, certain definitive building blocks of Lewin's specific field theory will be discussed, as they will be used later in order to construct the theoretical lens. Finally, field theory will be weighed against the aims of this research, while the need to augment this theory using other theoretical perspectives will also be discussed.

### 3.2.2 Field theory as meta-theory

Martin Gold (Gold, 1990) argues that, when discussing field theory, it is necessary to distinguish between two field theories, namely, the meta-theory and the specific theory. According to Gold, the meta-theory is not a method or a theory, as is so often claimed – “It is a set of rules to be followed as a method to build good theory” (Gold, 1990, p. 69). Lewin applied these rules of the meta-theory to the development of his specific field theory. These rules include the following (Gold, 1990):

- a) *Rule 1:* Psychological phenomena must be explained by psychological conditions. This means that psychological terms must be used to talk about the inner experiences and overt actions of individuals. Lewin applied this rule to his specific field theory by focusing on motif or goal (purposiveness) when talking about individual behaviour, although this way of applying the rule need not always apply. This rule of the singular level of analysis forces one to ask what the psychological impact of a social or physical event on an individual is and then to make use of this psychological impression on the individual for the purposes of analysis. Lewin, therefore, takes specific issue with stimulus-response psychology in terms of which the physical event itself is taken to induce the response (Lewin, 1951). A system, in terms of which psychological phenomena are explained by psychological conditions, would be one in which it is not the physical stimuli as such, but rather the individual’s experience or interpretation of the stimuli which are included in the theoretical formulation. Psychoanalysis and, specifically, object relations theory, is an example of a discipline that has a long tradition of taking seriously, for example, the influence of the internalised experience of the strict father (the negative part-object) on the individual’s behaviour, rather than the real father himself (Lewin, 1951). In the context of the member of a group, this would mean that the focus would have to be on the way in which the group process is experienced, perceived or processed by the member, rather than on what happened objectively in the group.
- b) *Rule 2:* Theory building must be constructive. This rule encourages theoreticians to be both creative and imaginative and not to shy away from creating constructs that are unobserved or even unobservable (Gold, 1990). In other words, Lewin was warning against trying to build theories by observing empirical data only and he was of the opinion that a good theory should capture the underlying dynamics or laws governing that which can, eventually, be observed.
- c) *Rule 3:* It is essential to take the totality of conditions into account when framing explanations. This means that, where multiple causative factors exist,

the relations between these factors should be taken into account (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000; Gold, 1990; Lewin *et al.*, 1936). This is, in essence, a gestalt principle which is the reason why Lewin's specific theory was originally termed a field theory. It is, thus, a theory that places the emphasis on the field that exists between the elements within the life space. Accordingly, it looks at the situation as a whole, which is not more than, but different from, the sum of its parts (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). In other words, this rule does not require that all the possible causal relationships in the situation be individually analysed, but rather that the situation as a whole be analysed as one in which various factors are related to each other and where the totality of this interrelatedness or field should be considered.

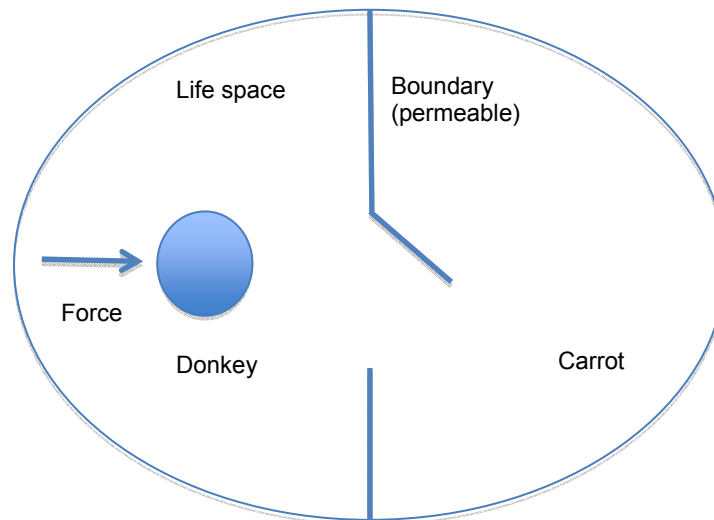
- d) *Rule 4:* The rule of contemporaneity – this means that elements and conditions are able to influence behaviour in the present only. However, this does not imply that past events have no effect on current behaviour but, rather, it means that it is the way in which the past event is currently perceived, remembered or experienced which has an impact on the present, and not the real historical event in itself (Gold, 1990). This would appear to depend on adherence to Rule 1, for the past event, through reinterpretation and translation into psychological terms, can have an influence on the present. In other words, in the words of Gold, “Not the event in the past, but the event as transformed through a number of mitigating events in the interim, makes us want to focus on the precipitate of the event, i.e. the effects of the event through history” (Gold, 1990 p72).
- e) *Rule 5:* The rule of formalisation – this means that good theory should be an effective hypothesis machine (Gold, 1990). In other words, the constructs and the concepts in the theory should be stated so clearly and unambiguously that it should be possible to use symbols to refer to them and mathematics to illustrate the relationships between the symbols, which can then be logically altered in order to generate hypotheses. Lewin believed that the aim of science should be to develop and put to the test theories that are able to explain both general and specific behaviour (Lewin, 1951). In order to do this, Lewin placed great emphasis on the need to clarify and refine terms and relations from popular language into scientific language so as to be able to talk about them mathematically. However, he also warned against a premature formalisation before the concepts had been properly thought through (Lewin, 1951).

Lewin developed his specific field theory from these five rules. However, Gold emphasises the fact that Lewin's specific field theory was not only the result of the application of these rules as it is possible that the application of these rules can lead to a multitude of different field theories (Gold, 1990). Lewin's specific field theory was also a result of the culture at the time, the personalities and ambitions of Lewin and his co-workers as well as the data with which they worked (Gold, 1990). However, Lewin's assertion that adherence to these rules would lead to a productive scientific practice in terms of which popular concepts could be systematised, formalised and represented in ways that would allow them to be subjected to experimental scrutiny is of the utmost importance. The immense productivity of Lewin himself in his short professional life serves as a significant attestation of the approach that he advocated.

### 3.2.3 Lewin's specific field theory

In its most basic form, field theory is an attempt to describe the essential here and now situation (field) within which a person participates. It assumes that if one fully understands a person's situation, one can also fully understand his behaviour. The goal of field theory is, therefore, to describe fields with systematic concepts in such a precise way that a given person's behaviour follows logically from the relationship between the person and the dynamics and structure of his concrete situation. (Cartwright in Lewin, 1951, p. 3)

The key concepts in Lewin's specific field theory will be described and elucidated by means of a series of simple illustrations depicting the dilemmas of a donkey, as proposed by Agazarian (Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Agazarian & Gantt, 2000):



**Figure 3.1: The donkey towards the carrot**

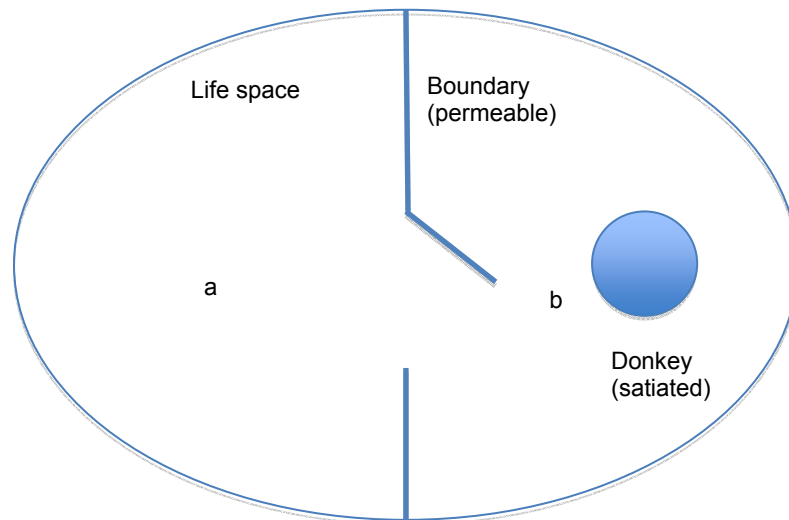
The figure above illustrates the life space of the donkey, as it exists for the donkey. The life space is a conceptual map of a person's concrete situation, including the person him/herself. Field theory asserts that, if we are able to understand the life space (or the map) of a person, we will be able to predict observable behaviour, or, conversely, from the observable behaviour we will be able to infer the structure and dynamics of the life space. This can be expressed mathematically to mean that behaviour is a function of the life space:

$$b = F(Lsp) \text{ (Where } b = \text{behaviour and } Lsp = \text{life space)}$$

This conceptual map, or life space, consists of all the elements of the person's life that currently play a role in determining his/her behaviour. These elements must be contemporaneous (the carrot is there now), they must have existence (the donkey must be aware of the carrot, otherwise it will not have an impact as depicted in figure 3.4 in which the donkey does not see the carrot) and they must be interdependent (in a complex life space all the elements are perceived to exercise some sort of influence on each other).

In this case, the behaviour of the donkey is fairly predictable. The donkey will move towards the carrot because the carrot has a positive valence for the donkey, thus acting as goal region in the life space towards which a driving force will operate.

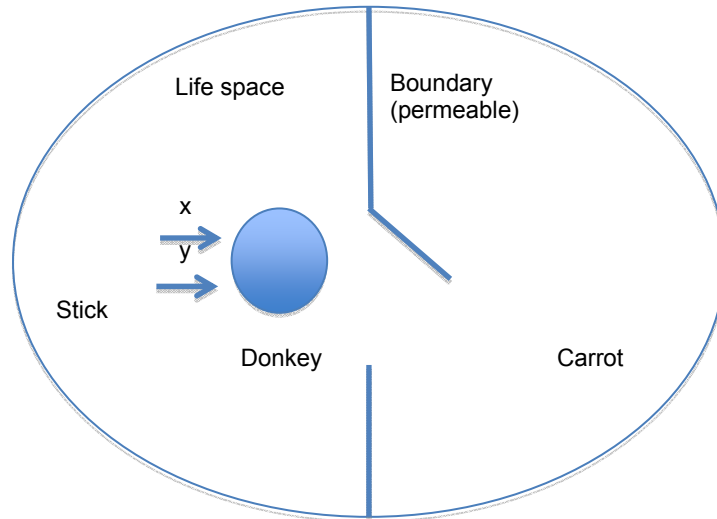




**Figure 3.2: The donkey is satiated**

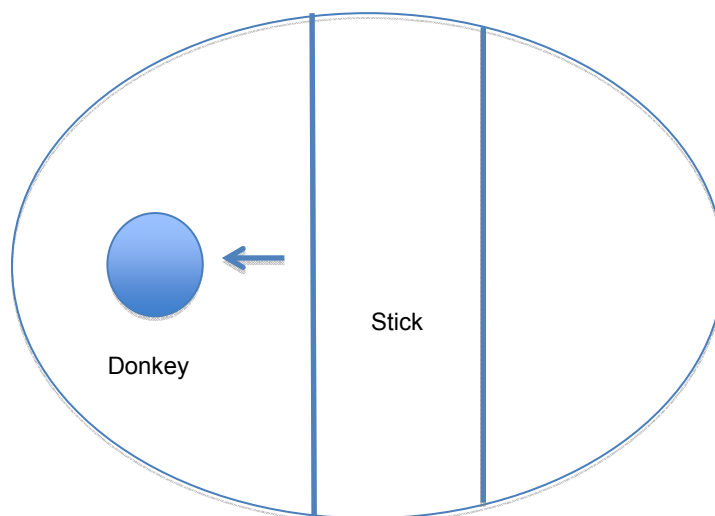
The tension system that existed in the donkey with regards to the carrot is now released as a result of the fact that the need (hunger) in the donkey has been satisfied. The donkey's behaviour is the same as the locomotion from position 'a' to position 'b' in the life space and, in addition, it happened as a direct consequence of the force (vector) that was applied to the donkey, in the direction of the goal region 'b'. The following deductions can now be made:

- a) Behaviour equals locomotion:  $b = I_{ab}$  (Where  $b$ = behaviour and  $I_{ab}$ = locomotion from a to b)
- b) Satisfaction of the need equals the achievement of the goal, which results in a reduction to zero of the tension system:  $T_{d(ab)} = 0$  (Where  $T_d$ = tension in the donkey-system and  $ab$  = distance from a to b)



**Figure 3.3: The donkey moves away from the stick and towards the carrot**

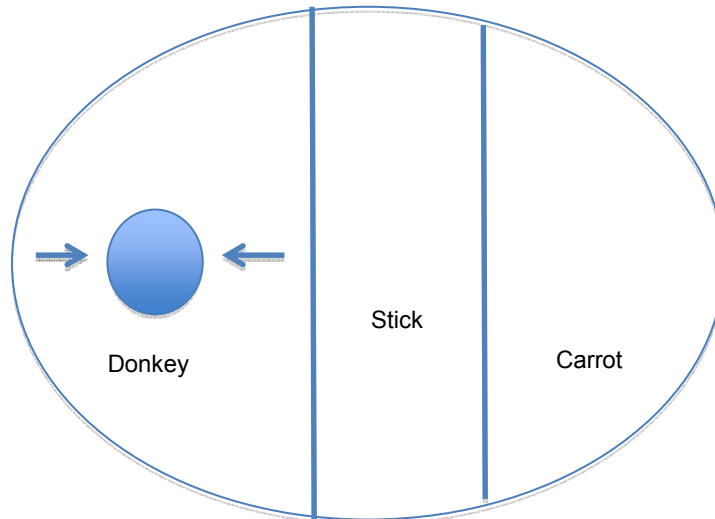
In this situation another element is introduced (stick), with this element having a negative valence for the donkey. In this picture it is clear that the donkey will move away from the stick towards the carrot. In the donkey's mind the stick is associated with pain and the carrot with pleasure. (The focus, is thus, as per the first rule of Lewin's meta-theory, on the psychological impression and not on the physical object itself. However, if the donkey realises that the stick is not ever used to hit him, but only to lightly stroke his back, the stick will lose its negative valence for the donkey.) There will, thus, be a force (x) towards the goal region of the carrot applied to the donkey, plus a force (y) away from the aversion to the stick, which will result in locomotion on the part of the donkey through the life space away from the stick and towards the carrot.



**Figure 3.4: The donkey does not see the carrot**

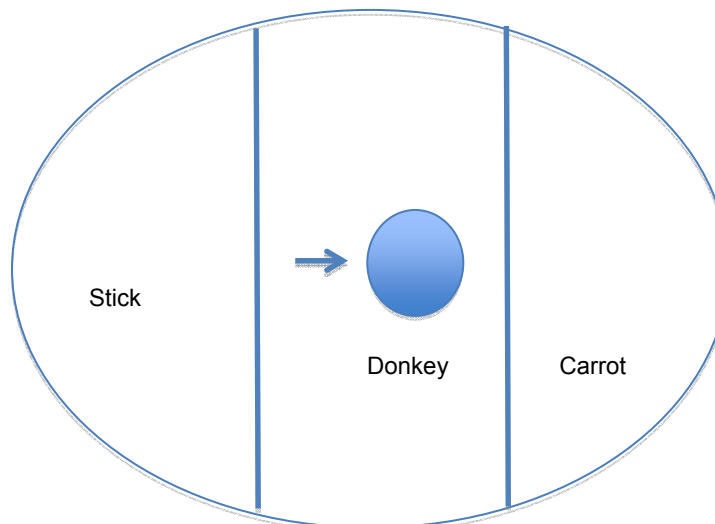
This figure illustrates the criterion that, if an element is to be included in the life space, then that element must exist for the person concerned. Accordingly, in this scenario the donkey does not see the carrot and, thus, the carrot has no positive valence that can result in a force towards the goal region of the carrot. The donkey is aware only of the stick and the sole force being exerted on the donkey would, thus, be the driving force towards the goal of avoiding the stick. Agazarian introduced this idea of a negative goal (Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). The original conceptualisation by Lewin was of driving and restraining forces, with driving forces working towards the achievement of the goal and restraining forces working as resistances or hindrances on the way to the goal (Lewin, 1951). Agazarian's adaptation of this idea is extremely helpful as it reframes the resistance to the force as a force in itself which is in exactly the opposite direction of the positive force and, thus, the goal now becomes avoiding the realisation of the initial goal. It is also significant to note that if one were not aware that the donkey had not seen the carrot, then one would be able to form the following logical hypotheses, which could be tested:

- a) The donkey did not see the carrot and, therefore, moves away without hesitation. This could be tested by making the donkey aware of the carrot and observing whether his behaviour changed;
- b) The donkey is not hungry and, thus, no tension system exists which will drive the donkey past the stick towards the carrot. This could be tested by removing the stick and observing whether the donkey still did not bother to move towards the carrot;
- c) The donkey is more afraid of the stick than hungry. This could be tested by observing whether increased time would lead to increased hunger to a point where the donkey would decide to overcome his aversion for the stick and work his way towards the carrot.



**Figure 3.5: The donkey is caught between his hunger for the carrot and his fear of the stick**

In this figure the donkey has, in fact, become aware of the carrot and is now experiencing a conflict between the two forces driving towards and away from the goal region. In the end, the locomotion will be in the direction of the resultant force. In other words, if the fear is greater than the hunger, the donkey will move away, if the fear equals the hunger, the donkey will not move and, if the hunger is greater than the fear (which will probably happen over time), the donkey will move past the stick towards the carrot.

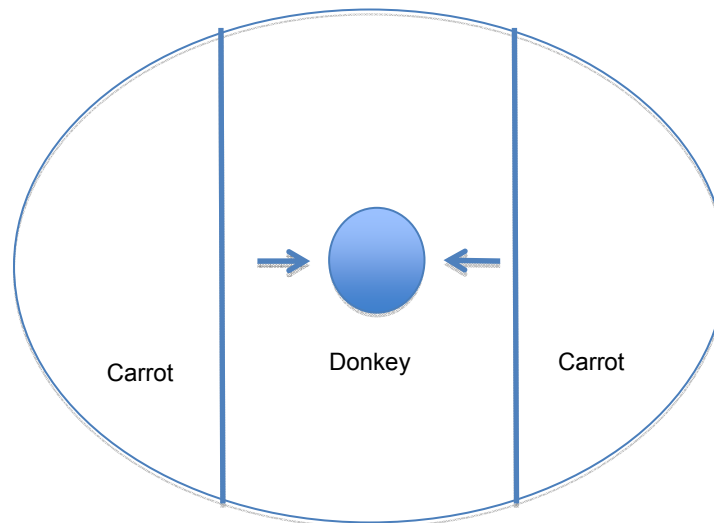


**Figure 3.6: The donkey moved past the stick**

In this figure the donkey has decided to move past the stick towards the carrot. Based on the previous discussion it would be possible to say that the force towards the goal was stronger than the force away from the goal, thus resulting in locomotion:

$f_R = f_{ab} - f_{ba}$  (Where  $f_R$ = the resultant force,  $f_{ab}$ = the force from a to b and  $f_{ba}$ = the force from b to a)

and if  $f_R > 0$ , then  $b = I_{ab}$ (Where  $b$  = behaviour and  $I_{ab}$ = locomotion from a to b)



**Figure 3.7: The donkey is between two carrots**

In this situation the donkey finds itself in another dilemma – it is caught between goal regions with equally strong positive valences. Accordingly, moving towards the goal has a positive valence while moving away from the goal has a negative valence. There are, thus, equal and opposing forces being applied to the donkey. If the donkey chooses to move towards the one carrot, the driving force towards that carrot will become stronger as a result of the diminishing distance between the donkey and the carrot. However, the shorter the distance towards the one carrot, the longer the distance from the other carrot which, in turn, means that the force towards avoiding not having that carrot also becomes stronger.

#### 3.2.4 Constructs in field theory

Based on the illustrations, it is possible to formulate a concise summary of certain of the key constructs in field theory:

#### 3.2.4.1 *Life space*

The life space represents the conceptual representation of the totality of a person's current situation (including the person him/herself) that has to be taken into account in order to understand and predict behaviour (Lewin, 1951). If it were possible to produce an exact picture of a person's life space, then it would be possible, exactly and accurately, to predict behaviour. The life space exists through time, which means that the life space now ( $Lsp_t$ ) is not the same as the life space one day ago ( $Lsp_{t-1}$ ); in other words it changes all the time.

$$Lsp + t = Lsp_t$$

#### 3.2.4.2 *Field*

With regard to the life space all elements are seen in relation to one another. It is in this relational field that forces are exerted so that each element in the life space is interdependent on each other element as well as on the totality (Lewin, 1951).

#### 3.2.4.3 *Elements*

Everything that impacts on the individual is included as an element in the life space. In order to be included as an element, there needs to be existence, contemporaneity and interdependence (Cartwright, in Lewin, 1951). This means the element must exist for the individual at that particular point in time and also stand in an interdependent relationship with the other elements within the life space. Elements that have an influence on the individual without the individual's knowledge are included on the boundary of the life space and are termed *boundary elements*. However, anything that exists, for example, the colour of charcoal packaging in Budapest, but has no impact on the individual, is not included in the life space.

#### 3.2.4.4 *Goals*

A goal exists as a positive valence within the life space if it creates a driving force towards itself. However, once the goal has been achieved, it loses its valence and the tension in the person system disappears. Goals can also have negative valences and are then known as aversions, or countergoals with this type of goal exerting driving

forces away from itself. The relation between a goal and a force is such that a field of forces exist around a goal with all these forces being pointed in the same direction (Lewin, 1951).

According to Agazarian, it is important to distinguish between explicit and implicit goals (Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). The explicit goal is the stated goal while the implicit goal is the 'as if' goal, or the inferred goal – the goal towards which the individual's locomotion is actually directed and, therefore, the goal that exerts the strongest force on the individual if it is observed that the individual is not moving towards the explicit goal.

#### *3.2.4.5 Goal region*

The goal region is the region within the life space in which the goal is located in relation to the other elements and regions in the life space (Lewin, 1951). The boundary of the goal region can either be more permeable or more rigid. The more permeable the boundary, the less the restraining forces which make it difficult to achieve the goal. The explicit and the implicit goals can be located in very different regions within the life space, which, in turn, implies that a movement towards the implicit goal can also be a movement away from the explicit goal.

#### *3.2.4.6 Position*

Position is the psychological position within the life space in which the person-system is located at a specific time in relation to both the goal regions and the other elements within the life space (Lewin, 1951).

#### *3.2.4.7 Locomotion*

Locomotion refers to the movement from one position to another in the life space over time. Locomotion is the same as behaviour and is always the result of a force applied to the person-system (Lewin, 1951). Locomotion is caused by forces that, as will be seen shortly, are always goal-directed. In other words, if a person is moving in a direction other than towards the explicit goal, this can only be because an implicit goal of some sort exists in a different region of the life space.

#### 3.2.4.8 Force

At any given point in time there are various forces at work in the life space. A force is represented as a vector that has direction (it is, thus, goal-directed), a point of application (the person-system) and strength (Lewin, 1951). It must be remembered that the stronger the force, the greater the resultant locomotion. When forces operating in different directions are applied to the person-system simultaneously, the person will move in the direction of the resultant of the forces. A force will either drive towards a goal with a positive valence or away from a goal (aversion) with a negative valence. Within the life space conceptualisation a force is represented by an arrow with the point of the arrow indicating the direction of the force while the length of the arrow represents the strength of the force (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).

#### 3.2.4.9 Tension

A tension system possesses a different dimension to a force in that it exists within the person-system and is related to a need in the person-system. The tension is released when the goal is reached (Lewin, 1951).

#### 3.2.5 Conclusion: Why field theory is not enough

However, Lewin's specific field theory, as discussed above, is not sufficient as the only theoretical underpinning of this research study. Despite the fact that the constructs of field theory and its basic principles with regard to theory development provide the foundation upon which the theoretical lens will be built, it is not possible for it to be the lens itself. The reasons for this are to be found on both a structural and a content level.

Firstly, on a structural level, Lewin's field theory does not specifically allow for life spaces within life spaces. For example, with regard to groups, although Lewin allows for the life space of the group, especially in relation to other groups – inter-group dynamics – it would appear that this life space of the group is treated as separate from the individual life spaces of the group members. If the group operates within a specific life space, then this means that the life space will consist of the group, plus the other constituents of the group's current situation, as symbolised by elements, forces, goals, etc.



However, what about the members of the group? Their behaviour must also influence the group. However, in order to understand their behaviour, it would be necessary to draw up a life space for each of the group members within the 'group' or, rather the way in which the group is perceived, as an element in each of those life spaces. The problem now arises that, although we 'know' on a pre-scientific level that the members, subgroups, groups and organisations all influence each other, field theory does not provide a mechanism with which to include this into the life space without making the picture so complex that it would be difficult to formulate any hypotheses at all. However, Yvonne Agazarian (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) provided a solution to this dilemma by combining Von Bertalanffy's (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) systems thinking with Lewin's field theory – see later discussion.

The second problem is on a content level and specifically with regard to the content from the psychoanalytic group theories. The assertion has been made that field theory does provide a slight structural opening for unconscious processes to be brought into the life space. However, this study requires not only that the unconscious, per se, are brought into the life space, but the ways in which unconscious group processes have been described and conceptualised by various writers are also of importance for the purposes of the study. If a field-theoretical lens is to be able to make sense of both the behaviour of group members as well as the forces operating during a training group, then it is essential that this lens be able to integrate psychoanalytic group concepts into its mechanisms of observation and interpretation. The notion of applying field theory to other content areas of social science is very much in keeping with Lewin's thinking (Gold, 1990).

Lewin regarded field theory as both a language and a method that should be able to reconcile the different theoretical approaches in order to enable an inter-disciplinary scientific dialogue during which it would be possible to compare apples with apples and pears with pears. Nevertheless, it must be stated again that Lewin left only a 'slight' opening in the structure of his schema for the unconscious to enter with his notion of the reality/irreality dimensions of the life space. However, Agazarian fortunately provided further elucidation, not only in terms of conceptualising the individual as a system within which both the unconscious subsystem and the conscious subsystem are operative (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000), but also by using Festinger's notion of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and Korzybski's notion of 'man as a map-maker' (Korzybski, 1948) to illustrate the way in which the perceived map (life space) can be compared to reality in order to explain complex

psychodynamic concepts such as the conscious, unconscious and preconscious. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

### 3.3 Psychoanalytic approaches to groups

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

It would appear that it is impossible to conduct an in-depth exploration of dynamic group processes without taking the unconscious into account. The two main strands of psychoanalytic thinking on groups that will be discussed in this research study are those pioneered by Wilfred Bion and S.H. Foulkes respectively. Despite the fact that both of them had a psychoanalytic background, they strongly believed in the interpenetration between the group and the individual (Nitsun, 1996). They both worked in successive periods at the psychiatric wing of the Northfield Hospital during and after World War II (Pines, 1985) and made their main contributions while in England. Nevertheless, they espoused radically different philosophies about groups while their approaches to groups – both conceptually and in practice – were also very different.

Foulkes followed in the conceptual footsteps of Sigmund and Anna Freud and was inherently sceptical about later developments in psychoanalysis, for example, object relations theory (Dalal, 1998). His classical psychoanalytic heritage (characterised by an emphasis on intra-psychic impulses and drives), his high regard for neuroscience plus the influence of the work of sociologist Norbert Elias on his thinking, laid the foundation for what is known today as Group Analysis. The Group Analytic Society (GAS) and the Institute of Group Analysis (IGA) in London are two of the major formal institutions promoting group analytic research and practice. Group analytic practice is still a predominant method in clinical contexts although a movement towards organisational consulting contexts is also becoming apparent (M. Nitsun, 1996).

On the other hand, Bion was strongly rooted in Kleinian object relations thinking with its emphasis on intra-psychic representations and, of course, the relationships between these representations or 'objects' of extrapsychic events and actors (Pines, 1985). Bion's ideas about the group-as-a-whole and its regressive and defensive patterns were first described in his famous *Experiences in groups* (Bion, 1961). His ideas were quick to be granted formal acknowledgement by the Tavistock Institute (United Kingdom), the A.K. Rice Institute (United States of America) and several other so-

called group relations training organisations worldwide. Today Bion's contributions and especially the way in which group relations is practised during Group Relations conferences are widely regarded as the most effective way in which to train people in the understanding of groups (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000; Lipgar & Pines, 2003b; Miller *et al.*, 2001; Miller *et al.*, 2004) although a pure application of the Bionian stance on psychotherapy groups has had mixed and, in some cases, negative results (Malan, Balfour, Hood, & Shooter, 1976). The systems-psychodynamic approach to organisational consulting, as practised by the Tavistock Institute and various other organisations worldwide (Amado & Ambrose, 2001; Hirschhorn, 1988; Lipgar & Pines, 2003a; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), represents another well-known application of Bion's ideas combined with general systems theory principles.

### 3.3.2 The group and the individual

As mentioned earlier, one of the points on which Bion and Foulkes agreed is the fact that they both perceived the individual and the group as intertwined and inseparable (Armstrong, 2005; Bion, 1961; Foulkes, 1975; Nitsun, 1996). It is, thus, necessary to examine more closely their respective ways of dealing with the tension between 'the group' and 'the individual' as this becomes important later in this research project.

#### 3.3.2.1 *Foulkes on the individual vs. group dilemma*

Farhad Dalal (Dalal, 1998) takes specific issue with the individual vs. group dilemma and points out the contradictions in Foulkes' thinking. These contradictions arise from Foulkes' allegiance to both Freud (1929) and Elias (Elias & Schröter, 2001; 1991). Dalal (1998) distinguishes between the orthodox (thus following in the footsteps of Freud and according prime position to the individual) and the radical (thus following Elias and according prime position to the group) strands in Foulkes' thinking. Dalal (1998) then goes on to formulate a way in which to eliminate this contradiction by discarding the notions of 'inside' and 'outside' – 'inside' refers to the individual psyche and 'outside' to the social environment. He suggests a radical way of not only looking at people in terms of groups rather than as individuals, but also of not talking about the individual in the group, but of the group in the individual (Dalal, 1998). Still, even if we put Dalal's critique aside, we have to acknowledge that Foulkes indeed went to great lengths to deal with the dilemma of group vs. individual. With his notion of figure and ground, he made an invaluable contribution to group psychotherapy with his belief that it is sometimes necessary to view the individual against the background of

the group and then, at other times, to view the group against the background of the individual (Foulkes & Foulkes, 1990a). Nevertheless, what is of great importance is Dalal's (1998) critical assessment of Freud (Freud & Strachey, 1986), Klein (1971), Winnicott (1989; 1965), Fairbairn (1994; 1952), Bowlby (Bowlby & Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1969; 1980), Foulkes (1975) and Bion (1961), in which he illustrates how all the major psychoanalytic thinkers struggled with the tension between individuality and the need to belong, as well as with where to place our 'groupness' in a schema of understanding human behaviour.

### 3.3.2.2 *Bion and the individual vs. group dilemma*

Bion deals differently with the individual/group tension. Initially, it appears as if he, like Elias, sees the group first and then the individual, but Dalal highlights a peculiar characteristic of Bion's approach: Bion perceives the group as the vessel into which primitive, unconscious material, which originated in the individual's protomental state, is poured, but he then loses sight of the individual almost completely as he continues to focus on group-level phenomena (Dalal, 1998). "The picture that we are left with then is a curious one, of a group filled with psychological forces, but with no sight of the individual they are presumably emanating from" (Dalal, 1998, p. 166). Accordingly, the main difference between Bion and Elias is the fact that Bion regards thought as emanating, ultimately, from the *apriori*, protomental state (before experience) while Elias sees "all thought as emerging from worldly experience" (Dalal, 1998, p. 167).

Armstrong (Armstrong, 2005, p. 18) provides a balance to this argument of Dalal's with his analysis of some of Bion's later works:

...it is clear that, for Bion, individual and group are necessary for the progress and development of each. It is not just that, if an individual's ideas are to enter the public domain, they need a group that can contain and work with them, without destroying or robbing them of their vitality, ... The group also potentially embodies a collective wisdom, a multiplicity of resources, centres of awareness, that can feed, add to, fill out what any individual has been able to discern and communicate. (Armstrong, 2005, p. 18)

Armstrong goes on to point out that the tension between group and individual is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the group resists contributions from the

individual as it might be disturbed by these contributions and, on the other, the individual resists making contributions lest they develop into belonging to the group and can no longer be regarded as “my idea, my experience, my thought” (Armstrong, 2005, p. 19).

The systems psychodynamic notion of the ‘organisation-in-the-mind’, as in the internal constellation of object relationships and emotional experiences from which behaviour within groups and organisationsemanates, further underlines the notion of the group and the individual as intertwined and interpenetrating with the one influencing the other as the other is influenced by the first in a continuous and ongoing cycle (Armstrong, 2005; Hirschhorn, 1988).

### 3.3.3 The group’s task

For Bion, there would be no group if there were no task (Bion, 1961). In other words, the task is the primary reason for the existence of the group and anxieties about the task play an important role in inducing regression to primitive modes of behaviour (Armstrong, 2005). Foulkes, within the context of psychotherapy groups, perceives the task of the group as that of restoring communication (Foulkes, 1975). He sees the group as the medium through which different hindrances to healthy communication in the ‘matrix’ can be explored and removed.

### 3.3.4 Specific contributions: Bion

#### 3.3.4.1 *The group-as-a-whole*

Arguably, the most groundbreaking contribution by Bion was his conceptualisation of the group-as-a-whole as an entity separate from the individuals comprising the group. In terms of this idea, the group is not merely an aggregate of the individuals comprising it, but the group is also an entity in its own right (Bion, 1961; Lipgar & Pines, 2003b). Accordingly, if we have a small group of six people, it is essential that we also take note of the seventh entity – the group-as-a-whole. However, Bion did not only see the group-as-a-whole as the seventh entity in a group of six, but he saw this seventh entity as the primary entity on which to focus when working with the group (Ringer, 2002). This view is not only reflected in the way in which Bion theorised about groups, but also in how he practiced group therapy. Nevertheless, he did not see the

group only as an additional element in the life space, but also as a transformational arena within which it was possible to induce emotional change (Armstrong, 2005).

Also, when Bion looked at the group-as-a-whole, he looked at both the conscious and unconscious processes. He conceptualised the structure of the group on two levels, namely, the unconscious group-as-a-whole (basic assumption group), oriented towards the irrational, and the conscious group-as-a-whole (work group), oriented towards reality (Bion, 1961).

According to Bion, the group-as-a-whole has a group mentality in terms of which it acts upon certain basic, and primitive, assumptions that are shared by all the group members (Bion, 1961). Sutherland describes the phenomenon of a group acting on shared basic assumptions as follows (Sutherland, 1985):

...the group dominated by an assumption evolves an appropriate culture to express it, for example the dependent group establishes a leader who is felt to be helpful in supplying what it wants. Moreover, the assumptions can be strong enough for members to be controlled by them to the extent of their thinking and behaviour becoming almost totally unrealistic in relation to the work task. The group is then for each member an undifferentiated whole into which he is pressed inexorably to conform and in which each has lost his independent individuality. The individual experiences this loss as disturbing and so the group is in more or less constant change from the interaction of the basic assumptions, the group culture and the individual struggling to hold on to his individuality. (Sutherland, 1985, p. 51)

It is important to note that we are again confronted with the struggle between belonging to the group and retaining individuality although, this time, the struggle is not among the theorists, but among the group members themselves.

In other words, where the work group focuses on the task at hand and elicits rational contributions from its members towards that task, the basic assumption group focuses on the unspoken, unconscious emotional needs of the group and acts 'as if' the group has actually come together in order to address those needs, and not to address the task at hand.

At this point it is important to point out that we are not literally talking about two different groups but, instead, we are talking about two different states of mind that coexist in all groups. Accordingly, when the group of six members in the example cited meet for a session of group therapy, they will, at times, act as a group therapy group in which the members take responsibility for being in a therapeutic relationship with each other, the group and the therapist and, at other times, they will act 'as if' they are pursuing some other unspoken goal (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).

The group is, thus, perceived to oscillate between basic assumption and work mode. It is interesting to note that Bion's schema does not allow for group development, but for an ongoing oscillation between the work group and the basic assumption group only. In other words, once the need for going into one of the two modes has been satisfied, the need for going into the opposite mode is relatively stronger and, thus, the group moves into the other mode (Pines, 1985).

Regression from the work group to the basic assumption group is invoked specifically when the group experiences its identity or structure as being under threat. According to Konig:

Regression is a concept central to Bion's view of groups. A group in the state of basic assumption acts irrationally because of regression. Basic assumption states are ways of dealing with impulses so as to satisfy the defensive needs of group members: they are compromise formations between impulse and defence, which make do with a state of ego-functioning, regressed to an infantile level... Regression in groups is triggered by a lack of structure. (Konig, 1985, p. 151)

The following table presents a summarised comparison between the work group state and the basic assumption state of the group-as-a-whole:

**Table 3.1: The work group and the basic assumption group**

<b>Work group</b>	<b>Basic assumption group</b>
Oriented towards reality	Oriented towards the irrational
Critical thinking on the part of the members	Absence of members' critical ability
Individual distinctiveness is apparent	Individuals become less visible while the group becomes more visible
Emphasis on the task	Emphasis on the group's emotional needs
Members feel free to act and contribute	Members feel compelled to 'play along'
Actions are geared towards the overt group goal	Members act 'as if' there is a goal other than the overtly stated goal

### 3.3.4.2 *Three basic assumption states*

Bion (1961) identified three general patterns of unconscious processes in groups, namely, the basic assumption state of dependency (Ba dependency), the basic assumption state of fight/flight (Ba fight/flight) and the basic assumption state of pairing (Ba pairing). However, I agree with Armstrong (Armstrong, 2005) that, when writing about Bion, it is not possible NOT to write about the basic assumption states, although the problem arises that these basic assumption states have been dealt with so exhaustively by so many authors that there is the risk of the topic losing both its original vitality and its potential to disturb our thinking about groups. Accordingly, in this section I will describe these states only as they have been described so often before, merely for the sake of thoroughness. However, in the next chapter, when I will show how the theoretical framework that I am developing also makes space for observing and analysing basic assumption behaviour, the mere consideration of the potential and complexities of basic assumption behaviour will infuse new life into the discussion that will follow below.

#### a) Ba dependency

The Ba dependency state refers to a state in which the group-as-a-whole acts 'as if' it is totally dependent on the leader for nourishment, security and growth. Kernberg, in Schermer (Schermer, 1985), describes it as follows:

The "dependency" group perceives the leader as omnipotent and omniscient while considering themselves inadequate, immature and incompetent. This idealization of the leader is matched by desperate



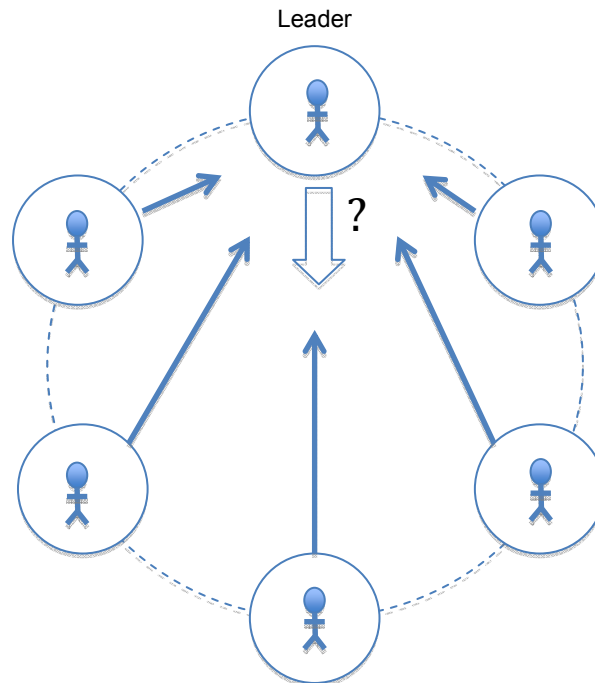
efforts to extract knowledge, power and goodness from him in a forever dissatisfied way...and its members feel united by a common sense of needfulness, helplessness, and fear of an outside world vaguely experienced as empty or frustrating [i.e. the infant's relation to the bad or absent breast]<sup>14</sup>. (Schermer, 1985, p. 140)

Ba dependency has also been linked to one of the biological imperatives of human groups, namely, child-rearing in terms of which the child is totally dependent on the parent for nourishment, safety and survival (Schermer, 1985). According to Bion (1961, p. 156), the ba dependency state is institutionally embodied by the church that organises dependence on a deity and, thus, aligns its explicit purpose with the implicit goals of ba dependency.

The following figure by Viljoen (2007) depicts the communication pattern and structure which characterise the ba dependency state:

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<sup>14</sup>Projection in object relations terms refers to the unconscious act of casting onto someone else an internal mental model of the self that is, inter alia, experienced as unacceptable or intolerable (Klein, 1962; 1957). Projective identification has an interpersonal component in terms of which the person doing the projecting acts in such a way that puts pressure on the receiver of the projection to identify with the projection and to behave in a way that the projector would expect from someone fitting that mental fantasy (Ogden, 1979). In a dependency group, for instance, pressure is exerted on the leader to conform to the image of an all-knowing and omnipotent figure, thus perpetuating the pattern of helplessness and dependency. Ogden (1979) maintains that the only way in which this cycle may be broken is if the receiver of the projection is able to withstand the pressure to identify with the projection and, thus, contain (Bion, 1961) the projected feelings in order for these feelings to be transformed and given back to the projector in a less anxiety provoking way. If the leader were, thus, able to refrain from joining in the fantasy drama that he/she is omnipotent and the group is incompetent, and continues to act, despite the pressure created by the helpless stares and accusations, as if the group is actually able to help itself, then the dependency feeling can be contained and transformed so as to enable the group to move into 'work' mode.



**Figure 3.8: Ba dependency**

b) Ba fight/flight

A group enters a Ba fight/flight state when it perceives itself to be under attack. Kernberg, in Schermer (Schermer, 1985), describes this state as follows:

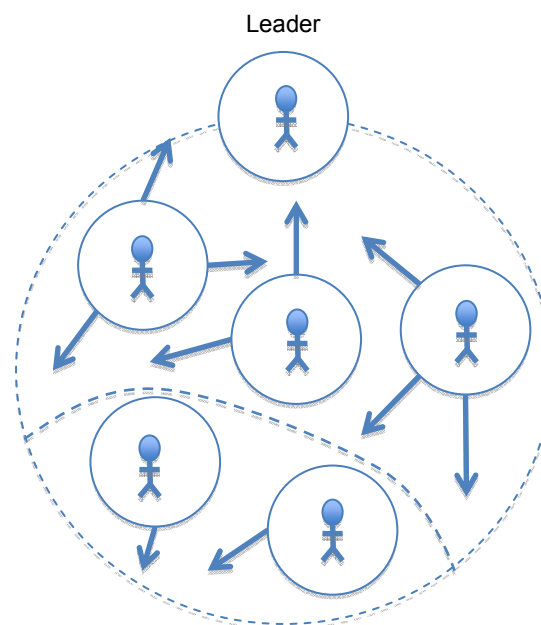
The fight/flight group is united against vaguely perceived external enemies, as well as to protect the group from any in-fighting. Any opposition to the “ideology” shared by the majority of the group, however, cannot be tolerated, and the group easily splits into subgroups that fight each other...In short, splitting, projecting of aggression, and ‘projective identification’ is predominant (and) conflicts around aggressive control, with suspiciousness, fight, and dread of annihilation prevailing. [Clearly, Melanie Klein’s paranoid position<sup>15</sup> en

<sup>15</sup> Klein differentiated between the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position on a continuum. The paranoid-schizoid position refers to a psychological place in which the projector of split-off part objects finds him/herself: the intolerable parts of the self (for example, aggression, the ability to kill, or an infinite number of possible aspects of self that are too anxiety provoking to acknowledge) are defended against by splitting it off and projecting it onto another person or group in the fantasy that once ‘out-there’ it can be dealt with through

*masse*. Note also that the ‘bad’ internal object seems omnipresent and the dynamics of the group reflect a continual ineffectual attempt to extrude it.] (Schermer, 1985, p. 142)

Schermer (1985) links the Ba fight/flight state to the biological imperative of protecting the group from internal and external dangers while Bion (1961) argues that the ba fight/flight state is institutionally embodied by the army ‘to defend the realm’ (Brown, 1985).

The following figure by Viljoen (2007) depicts the communication patterns and structure that characterise the state of ba fight/flight:



**Figure 3.9: Ba fight-flight**

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persecution of the other. Yet the knowledge remains embedded in the unconscious that these split-off parts cannot really be terminated by persecuting the other, and a paranoid fear of retribution by the other (who personifies the split-off parts for the projector) ensues: thus, the label ‘paranoid-schizoid’. In the depressive position the person is able to accept both the positive and negative aspects of self in a mature way. We are all always somewhere on this continuum, moving between the extremes and engaging in our own dramas of splitting, projection and ultimate reconciliation in order to come to a more mature view of both ourselves and the world around us.

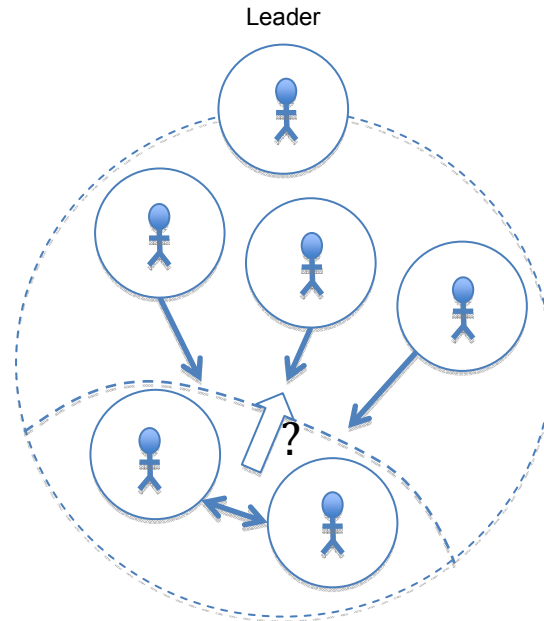
c) Ba pairing

In the Ba pairing state, the group acts ‘as if’ a messiah, or a magical solution, will be born if they allow two members to pair off. According to Kernberg in Schermer (Schermer, 1985):

The pairing assumption leads the group to focus on two of its members – a couple (frequently, but not necessarily heterosexual) to symbolize the group’s hopeful expectation that the selected pair will “reproduce” itself, thus preserving the group’s threatened identity and survival. The fantasies experienced about this selected pair express the group’s hope that, by means of a ‘magical’ sexual union, the group will be saved from the conflicts related to both the dependent and fight-flight assumptions. The pairing group, in short, experiences generalized intimacy and sexual developments as a potential protection against the dangerous conflicts around dependency and aggression. (Schermer, 1985, p. 142)

Schermer (1985) links the Ba pairing state to the biological imperative of reproduction while Bion (1961) perceives the aristocracy as the institutional embodiment of the pairing assumption, with the aim of ensuring the next generation of superior leaders.

The following figure by Viljoen (2007) depicts the communication patterns and structure that characterise the state of ba pairing:



**Figure 3.10: Ba pairing**

#### *3.3.4.3 Recent developments: A fourth basic assumption?*

Bion did not ever suggest that the three basic assumption states that he had identified were exhaustive, thus, clearly allowing in his own thinking the possibility that other observers can identify more such unconsciously shared assumptions. However, today, approximately 50 years later, Bion's original formulation of the three basic assumptions is still the most widely applied. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to take note of some developments with regard to identifying more basic assumptions.

Pierre Turquet identified a fourth basic assumption (Turquet,1974), namely, the baoneness state. This fourth state was then further developed by Hopper into what he termed the ba state of aggregation/massification (Hopper 2003b). The latter refers to the group's defence mechanisms against acknowledging its own incohesion. In a oneness or massification state the group acts as if it is extremely cohesive, in fact, so cohesive that all individuals are merged into one to the extent that there is a total loss of individuality. This relates to Anzieu's concept of the "group illusion" (Anzieu 1984). Here the group acts as if it is an extremely cohesive unit in order to defend itself from the underlying shared awareness that the group is not at all cohesive and will, inevitably, cease to exist at some point in the future.

Key characteristics of massification behaviour include 'speaking in tongues', a 'group language', 'member-individuals' (group membership and its concomitant required behaviours are valued more highly than one's individuality), and gossiping (Hopper, 2003b). Aggregation behaviour is the opposite of massification behaviour. In terms of aggregation behaviour the group acts as if it never was a group in the first place and that it never intended to be more than an aggregate of individuals only. Accordingly, the group is not exposing itself to the risk of loss if the group, as a result of its incohesion, ceases to exist (Hopper, 2003b). In a state of aggregation the group, thus, acts as if it has no task and as if there is no interdependence, nor any need for interdependence, between the group members.

With regard to membership, Hopper (2003b) distinguishes between three membership states, two of which are observable in the massification-aggregation group. The member-individual state, in terms of which one is first a group member and then an individual, has already been alluded to. The other state is the membership state of isolation or, as Hopper (Hopper, 2003b) terms it, the isolate. In groups in the massification state, one is either a member-individual (the group *über alles*) or an isolate, where the refusal of the individual to be engulfed by the group results in the individual being isolated from the group. A healthy state of group membership, the individual-member, in terms of which both individuality and membership are valued, does not occur in incohesive groups (Hopper 2003b). In cohesive groups, on the other hand, the tension between individuality and membership is maintained and any concomitant anxieties contained by both the group and its members.

#### *3.3.4.4 Application of Bion's conceptual structure*

Although there is disagreement with regard to the application of Bion's exclusive focus on the group-as-a-whole to group therapy (Malan *et al.*, 1976), there is, nevertheless, widespread agreement with regard to its usefulness for training and organisational consulting (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000; Armstrong, 2005). The Tavistock Institute (United Kingdom) and the A.K. Rice Institute (United States of America) are two of the many international organisations which sponsor and present group relations conferences. Although each conference has a unique focus, issues around authority, role and organisation are usually paramount in the conference participants' experience of intra- and intergroup dynamics (Miller *et al.*, 2004).

The following include some of the questions that are explored (experientially, not didactically) in relation to the issues of authority, role and organisation:

*Authority:* How does the group respond to the authority wielded by the conference staff? Is this authority being challenged, either overtly or covertly? Does the group surrender all authority to the leader and, thus, become dependent on him/her? Are the group members permitted to act based on their own sense of authority? How is authority distributed/delegated within the group? The emotions experienced with relation to authority in one's primary group– the family–are, thus, transferred to the current group, especially as regression sets in as a result of a lack of structure.

*Role:* What role is the member, or subgroup, fulfilling on behalf of the group-as-a-whole? What is the function of this role in terms of the group? What is the effect of this group role which is being acted out? Are roles being taken up based on own authority within the group or are individuals drawn and fixed into roles by the group? In what way can a member's behaviour be seen as a group role or a 'voice for the group'? How can a member's behaviour be seen as doing (carrying, expressing, fighting) things on behalf of the group? The concept 'role' is, thus, perceived as both a function of the group-as-a-whole and the individual within the group, as the individual can have a greater or lesser 'valence' for certain roles within the group (Bion, 1961). For example, the scapegoat could fulfil the role of carrying all the guilt for the group, thus providing the rest of the group with the illusion of total innocence.

*Organisation:* How is the group organising itself in terms of roles, norms, boundaries, activities etc.? What function could the group's organisation serve and what is the effect of this? Against what is the group defending itself by organising itself in a specific way? Of significance here is the notion that social groups organise themselves in specific ways in order to defend themselves against specific anxieties. For example, if the group members decide to take turns to introduce themselves at the start of a session, this turntaking, as a form of internal organisation, can be a defence against the anxiety caused by a lack of structure or the newness of the situation.

These areas for exploration in group relations conference that originated from Bion, and later from the work of both Miller (Miller & Rice, 1967; Miller *et al.*, 2001; Miller *et al.*, 2004) and Rice (1963), are important for this research study as the group that is being analysed in this study is a training group. Although the group was not conducted in a strict Group Relations Small Study Group fashion, but rather in a more eclectic

fashion, drawing from the Group Analysis, Tavistock and Systems-centred approaches, it can be expected that many of the same phenomena would arise. Accordingly, it is essential that the conceptual model developed in the next chapter should be able to take note of these phenomena.

#### 3.3.4.5 *Organisation-in-the-mind*

Later developments with regard to Bion's original ideas have increasingly sought to integrate his thinking with diverse theoretical fields, most notably that of open systems thinking (Miller *et al.*, 2001). Today, the Tavistock approach is described as a systems-psychodynamic approach. Of significance is Armstrong's description of the idea of the organisation-in-the-mind that had its roots in Bionian thinking (Armstrong, 2005):

The "organisation-in-the-mind" has to be understood literally and not just metaphorically. It does not (only) refer to the client's conscious or unconscious mental constructs of the organisation: the assumptions he or she makes about aim, task, authority, power, accountability, and so on. It refers also to the emotional resonances, registered and present in the mind of the client. This is the equivalent to Larry Hirschhorn's graphic phrase "the workplace within" (Hirschhorn, 1988). What a psychoanalytic approach to working with organisations does is to disclose and discern the inner world of the organisation in the inner world of the client. (Armstrong, 2005, pp. 6–7)

Conceptualising the organisation-in-the-mind or, in the case of this research study, the group-in-the-mind in this way, is congruous with Lewin's first meta-theoretical rule of using psychological terms when talking about psychological responses (Gold, 1990; Lewin, 1951). For, it is clear that the emphasis here is not on the real organisation as it exists 'objectively', but rather on the way in which the organisation is experienced and perceived by the individual<sup>16</sup>.

The group-in-the-mind, or groups-in-the-mind, serves as a reminder of Dalal's (1998) argument that, in our study of behaviour, it can be that we should not see

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<sup>16</sup> It is necessary at this point to raise a caveat that will be dealt with later, namely, that the focus on the perception or the experience of reality vs reality itself is not to be accepted uncritically.



individuals, but rather groups, as the most basic units of enquiry and, thus, we should not talk about individuals within groups, but groups within individuals.

Accordingly, the group becomes an internalised object within the individual with this internalised object impacting on the way in which the individual behaves. The individual behaves 'as if'... thus behaving according to an assumption he/she has with regard to the group. According to Armstrong, it is significant that this assumption is a shared assumption and not merely a totally individualised, internal object of the group (Armstrong, 2005). There is, thus, in the organisation-in-the-mind both the real, shared, emotional experience that resonates throughout the organisation, as well as the individual's personal ways of responding to that emotional experience by structuring and organising it into an internal entity, or 'world', within his internal world.

The links with both systems- and Lewinian thinking are clear: firstly, the notion of a world within a world within a world is a clear systems perspective that is also evident elsewhere in writings of Bion (Armstrong, 2005). The systems-psychodynamic approach to understanding groups and organisations is, in fact, a deeply systemic approach, for example, the consultant acknowledges the hierarchy and isomorphism between himself as a system, the client representative as a system and the organisation as a system consisting of various subsystems. Through accessing the system to which he/she has the most direct access, him/herself, the consultant analyses his/her emotional responses to the clientsituation in order to formulate hypotheses of what might be happening on a different systemic level, that is, the organisation or the group.

In Lewinian language, the emotional experience of the consultant-system in interaction with the group-system, through an acknowledgement of both the principles of hierarchy and isomorphy (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000), alerts the consultant-system to the possibility that the group-system is acting according to a shared, but unspoken, assumption – 'as if' the group is perceived as something other than it is, or 'as if' the group has a different purpose than the one it is espousing explicitly. Once this hypothesis has been formulated in the mind of the consultant-system, he/she can start to evaluate the observable evidence produced by the group-system, its subsystems or member-systems. Of course, the observable evidence can be nothing other than behaviour (either communication or other forms of behaviour) which, in Lewinian language, can result from nothing other than a resultant of driving and restraining forces (Lewin, 1951). Forces are always seen to work towards a specific direction, or

goal. Accordingly, it is possible to ask questions regarding the behaviour being observed, the inferred goal that is implied by the behaviour and, finally, the organisation-in-the-mind that gave rise to the implicit goals towards which the behaviour in the group-system is oriented. The evidence should be observable as a pattern throughout the organisation-system and its subsystems, including the interactions with, and the resultant emotional experiences, of the consultant-as-a-system.

### 3.3.5 Unique contributions by Foulkes

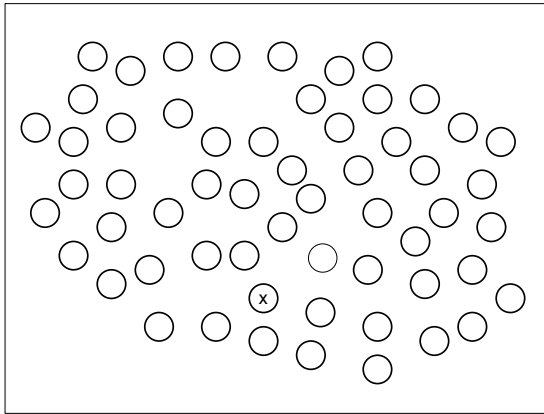
#### 3.3.5.1 *The group as an abstraction*

Foulkes perceived the group as an abstraction that needed to be framed in order to be studied. Accordingly, it is important, when intending to study a group, to bear in mind the need to answer the question “Which group?” (Foulkes, 1975). This sounds almost too obvious, but the reality is that human beings are all simultaneously nested in various groups at the same time (Dalal 1998) and that all groups are subgroups (subsystems) of other groups and consists of various subgroups (Agazarian, 1997). Accordingly, it is necessary first to delineate the group we are planning to observe (Ringer, 2002). This group then becomes the foreground to be studied against the background of the complexity of all the other coexisting sub-systems<sup>17</sup>. The group we are going to study, thus, depends on the level of abstraction with which we are choosing to work in order to demarcate that which belongs to this group and that which belongs to other groups (Foulkes & Foulkes, 1990a). The figure below illustrates this situation:

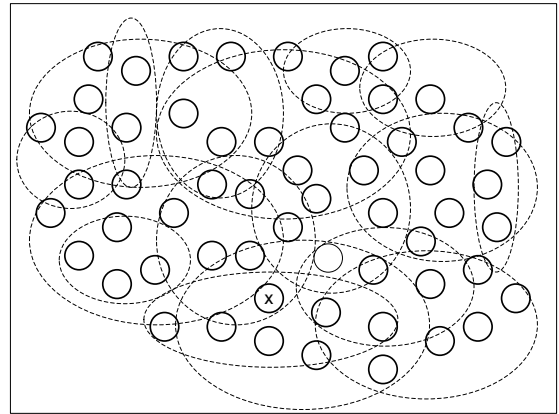
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<sup>17</sup>This links with the notion of figure and ground that was discussed earlier. Even the individual is, thus, perceived as a system (and this corresponds with systems theory) which must be viewed against the background of its sub- and supra systems in order to be understood. The links with field theory’s concept of the life space are also apparent.

Picture 1



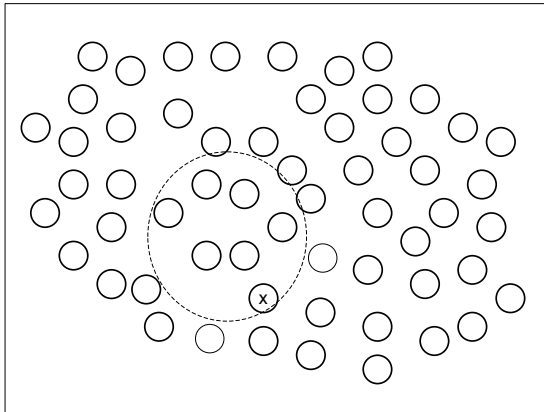
Picture 2



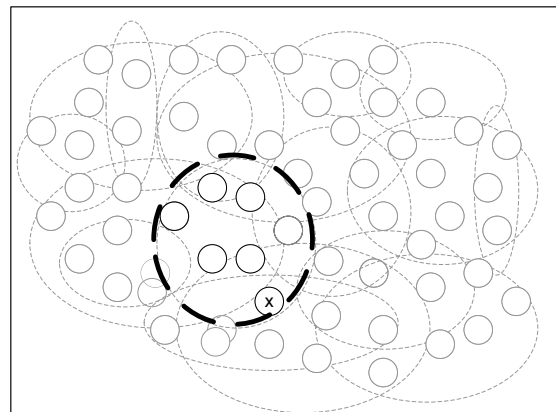
**Figure 3.11: Demarcating the group with which we want to work - A**

Picture 1 is unrealistic. It depicts a collection of people as if there were no links between them. Dalal (1998) and Stacey (2003) argue convincingly for the fact that humans can be conceptualised only as belonging to groups, and not as isolated individuals. These arguments are derived from the work of the sociologist, Norbert Elias (1897 –1998) which, in turn, strongly influenced the pioneering group psychology work of Foulkes (Foulkes, 1975). Accordingly, this means that, if we examine organisations, it is not possible to study anything connected with an organisation without taking into account the fact that the people in the organisation are not acting as isolated individuals, but as interconnected members of various groups on various levels. Ringer's (2002) statement that organisations are groups within groups within groups in an endless web of systems and subsystems relates strongly to general systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) and also, specifically, to the way in which systems theory was applied to group work by Helen Durkin and Yvonne Agazarian (Agazarian, 1997). This means, therefore, that Picture 2 provides a far more accurate view of this collection of people. Picture 2 depicts a complex network of overlapping groups and subgroups. Accordingly, if we are to understand the behaviour of person X, it is essential that we view that behaviour within the context of, and as a function of, all the various groups of which person X is a member as well as the way in which these groups are influenced by the other groups with which they are connected. The problem is that, where picture 1 depicts an oversimplified and, thus, unrealistic way of approaching the study of behaviour, picture 2 is so complex that it is almost impossible to carry out a scientific study of human behaviour on a level of such complexity.

Picture 3



Picture 4



**Figure 3.12: Demarcating the group with which we want to work - B**

As depicted in Picture 3, we need to put a frame around the group we wish to study and then move this group into the foreground with the interrelated web of surrounding, overarching and embedded groups in the background – see Picture 4. We are now able to talk about influences from 'outside' the group on the group as well as influences from subgroups within the group on the group. The group under scrutiny is, thus, always an abstraction as we have to draw the lines of focus ourselves and these lines are as much unreal as they are real. In other words, despite the statement that Picture 1 is unrealistic, Picture 1 is the only picture that depicts that which can be observed with the eye only. The paradox with which we have to contend when we work with groups is the fact that, when we look, we see collections of individuals only, but if we want to understand their behaviour, we are not able to do so without seeing them as members of groups (Agazarian & Peters, 1981).

### 3.3.5.2 *The group matrix*

The concept of the group matrix is probably Foulkes's (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957; Foulkes, 1975; Foulkes & Kissen, 1976; Pines & Hopper, 1998) greatest contribution and, in addition, it occupies a central place in much of the thinking and writing in group analytic circles. In fact, Dalal (Dalal, 1998), as did Armstrong (Armstrong, 2005) with regards to Bion's (1961) basic assumptions theory, laments the fact that the popularity of the term, with regard to its uptake, extensive use and exhaustive description, amongst practitioners and researchers alike is detracting from its creative potential. At this point, I intend emulating Stacey(2003) by first discussing the way in which Foulkes described the matrix, and then adding various different perspectives on what the

matrix is, how it can be defined and its implications for both theory and practice. I will, in the main, follow Dalal (1998) and Stacey's (Stacey, 2001; 2003) critique and modification of the term 'matrix', as derived from their insights drawn from both sociology and complexity theory.

Foulkes (in Stacey, 2001) describes the matrix as a supra-personal psychic system that:

- a) forms the context of the group;
- b) forms the background against which the individual becomes figural;
- c) comprises the total, unified field of mental happenings of which the individual is a part;
- d) consists of transpersonal processes that go through individuals, similar to x-rays, but which can be modified, elaborated on and contributed to by the individuals;
- e) consists of interacting mental processes that permeates the individual through various communicative actions, messages, movements, expressions, covert transmissions of moods, which are both conscious and unconscious.

According to Foulkes (1975), the group matrix is, thus, the pool, or collective mind, that develops in the group and into which all communication behaviour is poured by individual members. In fact, not only do the members contribute to the matrix, but they are also permeated by it. He also describes the group matrix as a neural network, with the members forming the nodes of this network with all the nodes in the network contributing to the overall communicative functioning of the network. However, when a nodal point (through which communication flows in a healthy neural network) becomes a focal point (an area of injury in the neural network), this should be seen not in isolation, but within the context of the broader network. It is important to remember that Foulkes (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957) sees the task of the therapy group as promoting and developing ever-increasing effective communication. Accordingly, when pathological communication manifests in an individual (focal point), this can be best understood both within the context of the network and against the background of the group matrix. The aim of therapeutic intervention on the part of the leader or the group members should then be to try to alter the communication patterns and processes to enable the focal point to become a healthy nodal point in the group communication matrix once more. There are, thus, two aspects to the notion of the group matrix:

- a) The matrix as the dynamic pool into which all conscious and unconscious material is poured and within which all behaviour within the group should be understood;
- b) The matrix as a communication network/web that exists both within the group and between its members.

Foulkes (1975) developed his concept of the group matrix one step further (although Dalal (1998) and Stacey (2001) considered it to be one step backwards) by distinguishing between the foundation matrix and the dynamic matrix. According to Foulkes (1975), the foundation matrix – a concept, to use Dalal's (1998) language, belonging to 'orthodox' Foulkes – represents the shared meanings that stranger members bring to the group in the first place. Foulkes (1975) maintained that these shared meanings represent the mutual biological and cultural heritage that we all share and that is present in the group as the more or less static foundation upon which the dynamic matrix develops. The dynamic matrix is the shared sense of meaning that develops in such group, now and throughout the group's history, and represents, according to both Dalal (1998) and Stacey (Stacey, 2001; Stacey, 2003), the radical thinking on the part of Foulkes' (S. H. Foulkes, 1975), in terms of which he accords priority to the group over the individual. However, the criticism is that, while Foulkes made a concerted effort to move away from the individual/group or inside/outside or psychological/social dichotomy, he actually reinforced it with his distinction between the foundation and dynamic matrices (Dalal, 1998).<sup>18</sup>

Stacey (2001; 2003), however, proceeds with the rather fascinating project of trying to discard the notion of a supra-personal psyche, that develops in the dynamic matrix and stands in a dynamic tension with an individual psyche, as brought into the group's foundation matrix from the outside<sup>19</sup>. He describes the group matrix not as a system, but as "processes of interaction in which intersubjective narrative themes pattern the members' embodied experience of being together" (Stacey, 2001, p. 226).

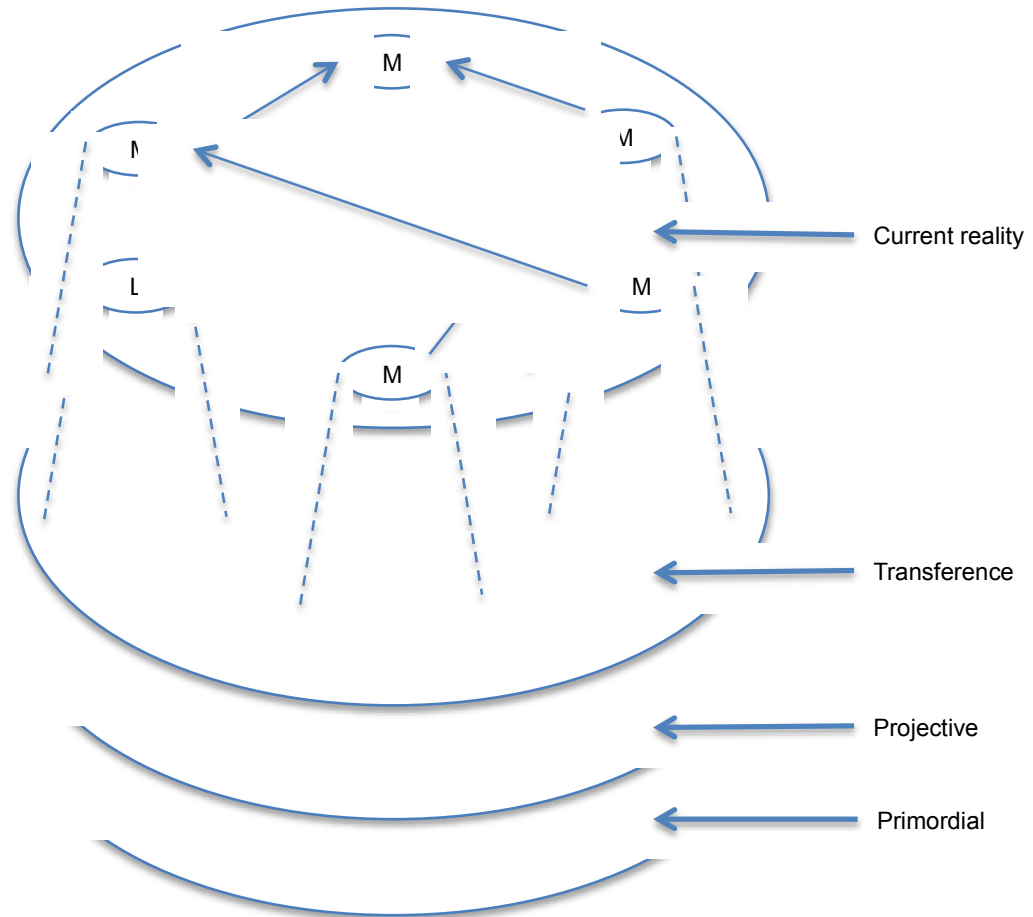
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<sup>18</sup> Be this as it may, I do not see a problem in working with both the individual and the group as departure points, where first the one comes to the fore and then the other.

<sup>19</sup> Stacey's (2001) complete argument can be read in his article in Group Analysis. In short, he draws first on Mead's theory of mind as "a process in which a gesture can call forth the same bodily response in the one making it as in the one to whom it is made." (Stacey, 2001: p226). He then combines this with complexity theory to the effect that, in an endless possibility of various gestures and responses, certain patterns will emerge over time. These patterns eventually form 'schemas-of-being-with' (Stern, 1985; 1995) which contribute to the gesture-response patterns in the group in which the narrative themes form and are being formed by the patterns of communication between human bodies.

### 3.3.5.3 Levels of exchange

Foulkes (1975) also distinguishes between different depth levels in terms of the communication exchange in the group matrix (Pines & Hopper, 1998).



M = Member

L = Leader

**Figure 3.13: Levels of exchange (Pines & Schlapobersky in Viljoen, 2007)**

- a) The level of current reality is that which is observable by all the members of the group. If the meeting were to be recorded with a video camera and transcribed, what would be the exact words being spoken, the topics being addressed and the patterns (frequency, sequence and direction) of communication?<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup>As will be seen in the subsequent chapters, this research had access to both the level of current reality and the levels of transference and projection, although the latter two to a lesser degree. The level of current reality was, of course, the literal speech interactions as they took place between the members during the life of the group and as they were video-recorded and

- b) The transference level (whole object level) is the level at which the focus is on the way in which different systems interact and link together – in other words, the level at which certain characteristics are transferred from one system to another. This can be between the intrapsychic systems of individual members, between members and the group-as-a-whole, between members and the therapist, or various combinations of these (Schlapobersky, Le Roy, James, Brown, & Zinkin, 1994; Viljoen, 2007).
- c) The projective level (part-object level) describes the movements and interchange of the parts of the members' intrapsychic systems (aspects of the self) and their relocation within the group network as a whole, and vice versa. In object relations language the dynamics of projection and projective identification would be on this level in the Foulkesian schema (Schlapobersky *et al.*, 1994);
- d) The primordial-collective unconscious level of communication (Pines & Hutchinson, 1993) can bear reference to the archaic shared foundation matrix that is both biologically and culturally informed. There is also a Jungian feel to this with regard to archetypical phenomena in the group (Schlapobersky *et al.*, 1994).

The basic idea is that all these levels of depth are always present in all communication and that all that differs is our ability to access it or not. However, these levels of depth do not refer to what Agazarian (Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) terms different hierarchical systems (individual, member, sub-group, and group). The systems perspective helps us to view the communication – on all possible levels of depth – from different systemic perspectives. From the perspective of the member-system, we would view the communication (on all four depth-levels) as both hierarchically and isomorphically related to the individual-system as well as the subgroup and group-as-a-whole-system.

#### 3.3.5.4 *Mirroring*

Foulkes (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957) once described the group as a hall of mirrors. In other words, the group member is able to see, in the behaviour of other members, a reflection of him/herself in the group. However, this is not to say that the reflection is

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transcribed. The transference and projective level could be partially accessed on an emotional level and by paying close attention to the emotions being aroused in the researcher (counter-transference).



the same as the original object, for example, the member, or specific behaviour on the part of the member. Nevertheless, the concept of mirroring makes it possible to view the responses of members towards one another as reactions towards one another in terms of which reactions aspects of both the self, the group-as-a-whole and the other become visible. This, in turn, provides ample opportunity for exploration by the group as an illumination of the 'here and now' impact that members are having on each other as well as providing feedback on each member's being-in-the-group – Stacey's (2001) term. The act of mirroring is an inevitable part of being in a group while the images being reflected to and from all form part of the group matrix of communicated meanings and sub-meanings (Nitsun, 1996; Pines & Hopper, 1998).

#### *3.3.5.5 Free-floating discussion*

Foulkes (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957) used the term *free floating discussion* to refer to the psychoanalytic process of free association within the group setting. Foulkes (1957) argues that, as the group is allowed to engage in free floating discussion, the discussion increasingly creates associations for group members, associations upon which they then build. As the free floating discussion progresses, this associative process becomes, increasingly, a function of the group-as-a-whole, as mediated by its members, and not a process of individuals sharing isolated individual material only (Nitsun, 1996). Accordingly, the group discussion acquires a life of its own from which deductions can be made regarding what might be going on in the group on a group level and not on an individual member-level only. This correlates with Agazarian's notion (which will be described in more detail later) of the visible and invisible group (Agazarian & Peters, 1981) in terms of which she uses group dynamic thinking to discern from the free floating discussion what might be going in the group, and also psychoanalytic thinking to hypothesise why a specific member at a specific time becomes invested in a group topic of discussion.

#### *3.3.5.6 Resonance*

Resonance refers to the uptake and enhancement of specific emotional tones within the group by different members (Nitsun, 1996). One member can resonate with another's anger (originally expressed, for example, in a story about his/her father) in the immediate group situation by attacking another member that might express her anger towards both the group leader and the institution within which the group is situated. Such an escalation of group emotion can be very powerful and exert

significant pressure on the group as container for emotional material. As the group, over time, learns how to contain its strong emotional resonances, it develops its capacity for containing even stronger emotional resonances. However, should either the group or its leader fail to connect with the resonance and contain it, this can be experienced as traumatic and damaging to both the members of the group and the group itself (Nitsun, 1996).

#### *3.3.5.7 Translation*

Translation refers to the group's ability to translate its experiences from the unconscious (pre-verbal) to the conscious (verbal) (Nitsun, 1996). This differs from the process of rendering the unconscious conscious in the one-on-one psychoanalytic situation in that the entire group is involved in learning how to express their deeper, difficult-to-verbalise experiences in words. However, as the group succeeds in making sense of its deeper levels of exchange, it also becomes more able to articulate these deeper emotional experiences. In other words, the group learns a new language in which feelings, which the group was previously unable to express, can now be formulated and discussed. This correlates very strongly with the way in which Foulkes (1975) frames the goal of the therapy group as helping the members of the group to become effective communicators as they become increasingly able to translate their experiences from the unconscious to the conscious.

#### *3.3.5.8 Nitsun: The anti-group*

Nitsun (1996), a prominent member of the group analytic community, describes the anti-group as a group-as-a-whole phenomenon that is always present in the group. This anti-group refers to the group's unconscious wish to destroy itself with this wish being related to people's ambivalence towards groups – on the one hand, the longing for the nourishment that can be found in groups and, on the other, the fear of the group's ability to disappoint any expectations of it. It, thus, refers to the group's ability to hurt the members, combined with the fear on the part of the group member of losing his/her individuality in the group (Nitsun 1991).

One of the major theoretical contributions of Nitsun (1996) with his 'anti-group' was the bridge he built between Bion's (1961) pessimistic and Foulkes' (1975) optimistic views of groups (Nitsun 1996). Nitsun (1996) indicated how the recognition of, and the working with, the interplay between the negative and the positive, the destructive and

the constructive, can give birth to new and surprising realities within groups. The contention is that the anti-group is always, albeit latently, present in all groups and that the recognition of this anti-group can unlock creative forces within the group. Accordingly, working with the anti-group becomes an integral force and process in the development of the group. In other words, the group is not able to move to the next step in its development if the destructive forces and tendencies within it are not acknowledged and worked through. In addition, an overly optimistic view of groups runs the risk of concealing these destructive potentialities – either by unconsciously defending against the destructive or by consciously avoiding the destructive and, thus, stalling the group's development and maturation process.

The notion of the anti-group, when explored in greater depth in the empirical data in this study, will probably provide a helpful space in which to make sense of the group, the participants' struggle to be in the group, and the interplay between the group and its surrounding social context.

### 3.3.6 Bion and Foulkes: Other areas of diversion and conversion

The Tavistock tradition, particularly in terms of its formulation of interventions (consultations) during group relations conferences, focuses almost exclusively on the group-as-a-whole (Bion, 1961) as opposed to Foulkes' (1975) focus on both the group and the individual. Another difference between Bion and Foulkes with regard to their conceptualisation and practice is the way in which they approach the issue of leadership. According to Bion's (1961) approach, the leader 'consults' to the group from the outside and in group relations conferences the leader is termed the consultant and not the facilitator or leader (Miller & Rice, 1967; Miller *et al.*, 2001). The consultant, thus, interprets to the group what he/she experiences on a group-as-a-whole level. These interpretations are directed at the group-as-a-whole with the language use emphasising the position of the leader as 'outside' the group. For example, "It seems as if the group is harbouring the fantasy that, by silencing the consultant, all its problems might disappear".

Foulkes (1975), on the other hand, describes the leader as a dynamic administrator and refers to the leader as the 'conductor'. In other words, the leader is conceptualised as being part of the group, or inside the group, while providing just enough assistance and direction for the group to function on its own.

Bion (1961) himself, and, specifically, the way in which his work has found expression in the group relations movement, also used the concept of authority and the group and its members' relation to and experience of authority extensively in making sense of what might be going on in the group. Interpretations regarding member behaviour are often based on an interpretation of the behaviour as a response to authority. In group relations work, this is often a fairly accurate interpretation as the group relations conference is usually set up in such a way as to induce regressive behaviour specifically as a response to the way in which authority is being enacted and enforced by both the staff roles and the structure of the conference.

Another difference between Bion (1961) and Foulkes (1957) that has already been briefly mentioned is the fact that Bion held a rather pessimistic view of groups while Foulkes held a more optimistic view. It is the gap between these two extremes that Nitsun (1996) tries to bridge with his notion of the anti-group.

### 3.3.7 Conclusion: Why the psychoanalytic approaches are not enough

As can be seen from the section above, the two main psychoanalytic group theoretical traditions spearheaded by Bion (1961) and Foulkes (1975) respectively have made hugely valuable contributions to our understanding of groups. Not only did they move 'groups' into the scientific spotlight of the psychoanalytic framework with its relentless focus on achieving deep understanding and change, but they also made tremendous advances in terms of describing and explaining certain phenomena inherent to all groups.

However, as a theoretical framework to guide the analysis of the data for this research project, the psychoanalytic group approaches are not sufficient. Firstly, as became clear in the discussion on the differences between Foulkes (1975) and Bion (1961), there is no one, uniform psychoanalytic language in which to speak and think about groups. This makes data analysis difficult. It would appear that, in order to have a uniform approach to the huge set of data in this research, it is essential that a uniform language and framework in terms of which to approach the data, is used. Secondly, as discussed in chapter 2, the data in this research study comprises videorecordings and transcripts of the group sessions. These transcripts are of the communication behaviour between the group members. Accordingly, it is essential that the theoretical lens be able to focus on observable behaviour, and this would make it difficult to maintain a consistently pure psychodynamic approach. It is for this reason that a

specific lens, which allows for an integration between psychodynamic, systems and field theory concepts, will have to be developed to focus on the dynamics of, or the forces involved in, being a group member.

### 3.4 Systems theory

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

Yvonne Agazarian made an invaluable contribution to understanding and working with groups. She trained as a psychoanalyst in the classical Freudian tradition before enrolling for a degree at Temple University's Group Dynamics Centre (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). In her *The visible and invisible group* (Agazarian & Peters, 1981) and *Autobiography of a theory* (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000), she describes her process of grappling with the conflict between psychoanalytic and group dynamics theories and how she proceeded to reconcile them using the mediation provided by Ludwig von Bertalanffy's (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) general systems theory. In essence, the conflict was between focusing on the intrapsychic dynamics of the individual (through applying psychoanalytic theory) and focusing on group-level properties and dynamics (through group dynamics theories). However, the mediation provided by general systems theory involved viewing the group as a system with subsystems (individuals and sub-groups) that are hierarchically and isomorphically related (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). In this section, Agazarian's systems-centred approach to groups will be discussed in more detail as her ideas will inform much of what will be developed as a theoretical lens in the next chapter.

#### 3.4.2 The visible and invisible group

Agazarian and Peters (Agazarian & Peters, 1981) refer to the visible and the invisible group in order to distinguish between the individuals who can literally be seen, and the 'group' that lies between and around these physical individuals, permeating them, but which cannot be seen. Agazarian and Peters (Agazarian & Peters, 1981) point out that, even although we are only able to see and hear individuals speaking and behaving, we are not able to make sense of their behaviour if we ignore the invisible, intangible, group of which they are part. They go on to state that, despite the fact that psychodynamics can help us to understand individual behaviour, the visible group, we need the constructs provided by group dynamics in order to understand group behaviour. In other words, it is essential that we take into account both the visible and

the invisible group if we wish to understand the behaviour of people in groups. Thus, in accordance with the viewpoint of Bion (1961), the importance of the dynamics in the invisible group-as-a-whole are emphasised and, resonating with Foulkes' (1957) concept of figure and ground, and the group as an abstraction, the notion of the visible and the invisible group underlines the importance of not ignoring the one while focusing on the other. In other words, it is, thus, important to listen to and observe both the dynamics of the individuals as well as the dynamics of the group-as-a-whole to which they belong.

### 3.4.3 Hierarchy and isomorphism

The concepts of the visible and invisible group enabled Agazarian (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) to locate the position of both psychodynamics and group dynamics if one wished to understand group behaviour. However, this did not provide a logical mechanism in terms of which these could be integrated into one coherent schema. Until this point, group dynamics had helped us understand that, regardless of whom the individuals in the group were, certain roles would be played in the group at certain times (Agazarian & Peters, 1981) while psychodynamics had helped us understand the reason why a specific individual was playing a specific role within the group (Agazarian & Peters, 1981). This links with Bion's idea of valence for a role (Bion, 1961). Nevertheless, although Agazarian (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000), like Bion (1961), recognised the existence and importance of the group-as-a-whole, she did not describe the behaviour within the group-as-a-whole in psychoanalytic and, specifically, object relations, terms, thus reserving the individual for the application of psychoanalytic theory and the group for the application of group dynamics theories.

However, general systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) provided a solution. While on assignment with the American Group Psychotherapy Association, Agazarian, with, among others, Helen Durkin, discovered that general systems theory provided the mechanisms with which to deal with the problem of relating the behaviour of the individual to that of the group (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). If the group is conceptualised as a system,<sup>21</sup> then it is possible to apply the systems theory notion that "systems in a

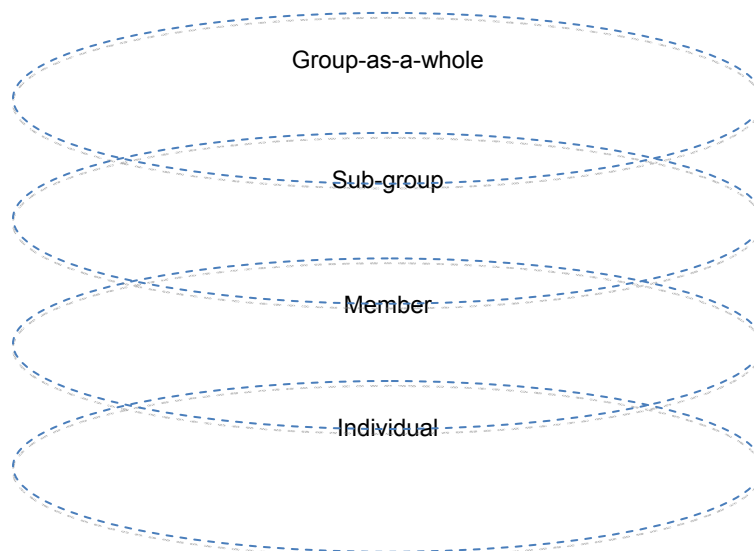
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<sup>21</sup>Again, the system is an abstraction in the same way in which I described Foulkes's notion of the group as an abstraction. This means that, if we demarcate the system as the local high school, then systems-principles apply to the school, its subsystems (grades, classes, teachers, children, and parents) and its suprasystems (school district, department of education, and broader society, etc).

hierarchy move from simple to complex” (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000, p. 237). Hierarchy means that the components making up the system are seen as subsystems and that the system itself becomes the environment for the subsystem whilst operating in the environment of its suprasystem. Information output from one system becomes the information input of another system. In other words, the subsystems’ outputs become inputs for each other, as well as for the suprasystem, while the suprasystem’s outputs become inputs for its subsystems. This input and output of information from one system to another is characteristic of open systems and, thus, of all living systems. Based on the information exchange between systems, the concept of isomorphism implies that observing behaviour in one particular system enables one to make inferences about what might be happening in the systems above and below it. Systems in a hierarchy are, thus, similar in both structure and function (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000, p. 241).

#### 3.4.4 Groups as systems

Agazarian proceeds to define a group as a hierarchy of systems that are isomorphically related. She conceptualises the group-as-a-whole system as consisting of subgroup systems that, in turn, consist of member-systems – see figure 3.14 below (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).



**Figure 3.14: The group as a hierarchy of systems**

The individual and the group can, thus, be conceptualised systemically and hypotheses about the one can be made by observing the other.

The systems that systems-centred therapy defines for group are the member, subgroup and group-as-a-whole systems, each with an equivalent structure, function and dynamic principles of operation...becoming a systems-centered therapist depends upon learning how to see the group as a hierarchy of living human systems. Thus, in addition to their attunement to the individual people who come into membership in a systems-centred group, the SCT therapist discovers that, however different the group, its members and subgroups appear, when framed as isomorphic systems, they all have in common their structure and the principles by which they function. (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000, p. 241–242)

This implies that “what is learned about the structure and/or function of any one system applies to all other systems in the defined hierarchy” (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000, p. 241) and that, by influencing the dynamics of any one system in the hierarchy, it is possible to influence all the hierarchical systems.

#### 3.4.5 Boundaries

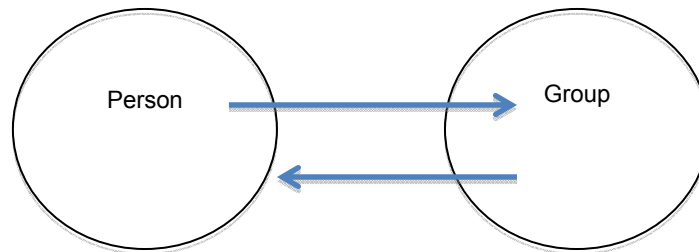
Structurally, each system within the hierarchy is defined by its boundaries (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). These boundaries include:

- a) Geographical and temporal boundaries: the space and time boundaries that define physically where the system is located and when the system starts and ceases to exist.
- b) Existential boundaries: the boundary between the existential reality and existential potentiality of the system as determined by the permeability of the boundary and, thus, its capacity to maintain its energy.
- c) Role boundaries: the functional role boundaries are connected to a goal/purpose.

Transactions across the system boundaries are equated to the flow of information across system boundaries and, thus, between systems. Agazarian (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) makes use of Shannon and Weaver’s (1964) communication theory to

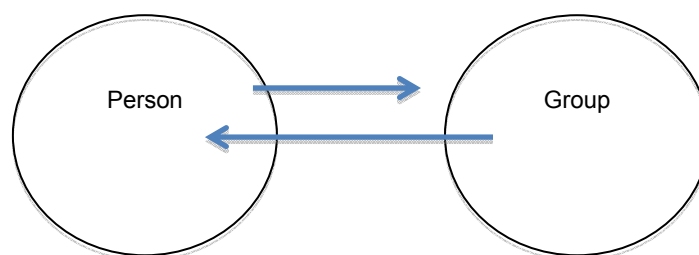


distinguish between the three different types of communication relationships between systems:



**Figure 3.15: An independent communication relationship**

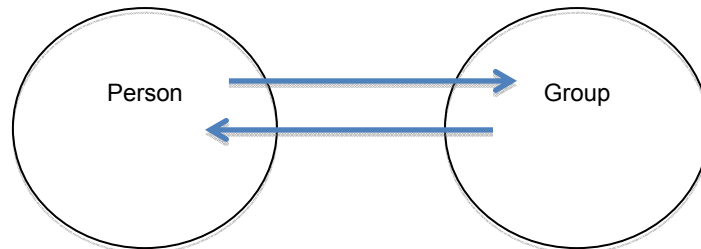
Figure 3.15 depicts an independent communication relationship. This means that the person-system boundary is impermeable with regard to information from the group-system, while the group-system boundary is permeable with regard to information from the person-system. Information can, thus, flow from the person to the group but not from the group to the person. This, in turn, implies that the person is able to bring about change within the group but not the other way around. It would appear that an independent communication relationship portrays a situation in which a person is physically part of the group, but psychologically apart from the group and closed for inputs from the group, although the person's presence and behaviour does affect the group.



**Figure 3.16: A dependent communication relationship**

Figure 3.16 depicts a dependent relationship between the person-system and the group-system. This means that the boundary of the group-system is closed for inputs from the person-system while the person-system's boundary is open for information from the group. The group can, thus, effect change in the person but the person is not able to effect change in the group. It would appear that the membership situation which Hopper (2003b) terms a situation of being a member-individual is at play here.

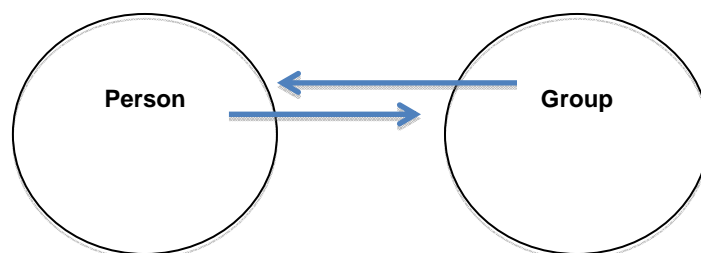
The person is, first and foremost, a member of the group. His/her own individuality is relegated to the background and not brought to bear on the group situation. In other words, the group dictates and the member follows.



**Figure 3.17: An interdependent communication relationship**

Figure 3.17 portrays a situation in which there is an interdependent information flow between the person- and group systems. The boundaries of both systems are permeable with regard to inputs from the other and each system is able to effect change in the other. This interdependent relationship is indicative of Hopper's formulation (Hopper, 2003b) of the individual-member in terms of which the group allows unique contributions from the member, while the member is able to receive inputs from the group and alter his/her perceptions accordingly. There is, thus, space for both individuality and for the fact that the member belongs to a larger system.

A fourth relationship that can exist is that of mutual exclusion. In such a situation both the boundaries of the group and the person systems are closed for inputs from the other.



**Figure 3.18: A mutually exclusive communication relationship**

Clearly, from the discussion above, it would appear that the ideal situation is one of interdependence in terms of which information is allowed to flow freely between the person and group systems. Shannon and Weaver (1964) proceed to point out the

elements in the communicative act itself which make it either more or less probable that the information output from one system will be received and integrated by another system. They indicate that it is the noise in the communication which renders it less probable that the information will be received while defining noise as redundancy (too much is being communicated), ambiguity (the message is not clear) and contradiction (contradicting messages within the message). Accordingly, noise in the communication acts as a restraining force with regards to the goal of ensuring that the output of one system is integrated into another system.

However, as mentioned earlier, all living systems have a natural tendency to move from simple to more complex organisation (Von Bertalanffy, 1968). This means that all living systems have an intrinsic drive towards growth and development, thus, maturation (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). If maturation is perceived as an increased ability to differentiate and integrate and, thus, as an increased ability to detect the differences in the apparently similar and the similarities in the apparently different (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000), this means that, although the noise in the system's communication outputs (as described above) can act as a restraining force against intersystem communication (growth), then the inherent tendency of systems to grow will act as a driving force. In Lewinian terms, system development can then be enhanced by weakening the restraining forces and, thus, eliminating the redundancy, ambiguity and contradictions in the communication process, in order to release the driving forces and, thus, the inherent ability to differentiate and integrate (Lewin, 1951).

The ability of a system to differentiate and integrate, or to mature, can be understood in terms of Korzybski's theory of man as a map-maker (Korzybski, 1948), Lewin's concept of the life space (Lewin, 1951) and Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). For example, with regard to Lewin's concept of the life space (1951), if the life space is defined as a map of the environment as perceived or experienced by the person (including the person him/herself), then in terms of systems language, we would talk of the system space as a map of the system's perceived or experienced environment (i.e. its supra-system) which also includes the system itself (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). Korzybski (1948) adds an extremely important element which alleviates the tension between the psychological and the physical reality that arises from Lewin's insistence that the focus should remain on the psychological

aspects of physical occurrences (Gold, 1990).<sup>22</sup> Korzybski sees the person as being constantly busy with making a map of his/her surrounding environment and hence, the closer the resemblance between the map and reality, the greater the possibility that the person's behaviour will achieve the desired results (Korzybski, 1948). Thus, in some cases, a person will change his/her map to fit the environment more accurately while in other cases the person will keep his map unaltered and change his/her perception of his/her environment. However, the latter strategy, in its most extreme form, can be regarded as delusional should the person's internal map become so far removed from reality that his/her behaviour becomes totally irrational. If we then add to this cognitive dissonance theory, then we can see how a system can manifest an internal resistance to integrating new information as a result of the fact that it would require a shift in the system's equilibrium (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).

Agazarian (2000), thus, points out that information will sometimes be received by the system and, hence, it will cross the system boundary, but not be integrated into the system as a result of the system's resistance to updating its internal map of the external environment. The latter would clearly necessitate a change in the way in which the system perceives and responds to its environment. The link, for me, to the unconscious and, thus, to psychoanalytic theory, is as follows:

- a) Firstly, the internal mental map of the system is formed from birth and is based on early interactions and attachment experiences.
- b) Secondly, this internal map (early object relations) then serves as the organising principle for new information that enters the system, not only with regards to the way in which the new information is integrated or not, but whether or not it is perceived in the first place. For instance, the internalised object of the strict and overbearing mother can become the organising principle according to which information about the real mother is received, filtered and integrated. The process of maturation will, thus, involve the process of adjusting the internal representation (object) of the mother as bad and strict by also integrating the information (previously blocked out or stored away and safely

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<sup>22</sup> In a personal communication with Professor Emeritus Leopold Vansina, distinguished scholar and practitioner in the field of group and organizational dynamics, he pointed out the danger of remaining focused on the psychological dimension only: "(with) everything reduced to the psychological dimension, (it can lead), in the extreme, to the creation of delusions: a prison cell may become an ideal place for meditation but it still is a prison!" (Vansina, 2011, personal communication).

out of reach in order not to upset the internal equilibrium) pertaining to the good aspects of the real mother as she exists out there in reality.

- c) The intrasystem resistance to the integration and differentiation of new information regarding the real territory often comprises unconscious defence mechanisms that must be undone so as to allow for a more mature and realistic map (system's life space) of the environment.
- d) In this context Foulkes' concept of resonance (Nitsun, 1996) would refer to the fact that this process of integrating, or defending against integrating, new information and then acting according to the internal map of reality – whether it is realistic or not – does not occur in one system in isolation only, but in all systems in the defined hierarchy and it, therefore, resonates isomorphically throughout the hierarchy of the entire constellation of systems<sup>23</sup>.

#### 3.4.6 Application of the systems-centred approach

In applying her systems-centred approach to group therapy and group training, Agazarian focuses her attention on the hierarchy of systems that comprise the group-as-a-whole (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). All the work conducted by the leader, or therapist, is, therefore, aimed at reducing the forces working against system development in order to release the forces inherent in all systems which are aimed at development and maturation. The systemic level of focus for all, or most, of the interventions on the part of the leader is the level of the subgroup-system. This makes logical sense, as the subgroup-system is that system that shares its boundaries with both the membersystem and the group-as-a-whole system. Changes on the subgroup-level will, thus, as a result of isomorphy, have a direct impact on the development of both the membersystem and the group-as-a-whole system.

Interventions are, thus, focused mainly on the ability of the subgroup to integrate and differentiate. There are various methods used for this:

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<sup>23</sup>I experienced an extremely acute instance of this amplification and resonance dynamic during the Institutional Event of the 2008 Leicester Conference, directed by Dr. Eliat Aram who is currently the CEO of the Tavistock Institute. It literally felt as if an emotion of paranoia and fear had spread throughout the entire conference in a matter of seconds – like a veldfire, only much quicker.

#### 3.4.6.1 Contextualizing

The first step in contextualising involves orienting the members to the type of group and the type of work in which they will be engaged (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). Members are brought to understand their roles and boundaries as self-observant, systems-centred members of the group, and not just as self-centred members. The attention and energy of the member is, thus, placed in context of his/her role and position as member-system, together with other member-systems, in subgroup-systems and in the system of the group-as-a-whole. Members are also made aware of the aim of the group with regard to exploring emotionality in the here and now context and, thus, members are given the opportunity to become self-observant, membersystems in a hierarchy of systems. In short, members are taught how to be members of a particular group that will be conducted as a systems-centred group<sup>24</sup>.

#### 3.4.6.2 Boundarying

With regard to the technique of boundarying, the focus is on ensuring that communications between members and subgroups are actually able to cross the boundaries between them and be integrated into the systems (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). Agazarian (2000) follows a system of defence modification in which she addresses the defence as it arises. In this way the ambiguity, redundancy and contradiction in the communication are pointed out, explored in terms of that against which they are being used to defend, and modified to enable the communication within the system and between subsystems to become increasingly effective. The restraining forces against development and maturation are, thus, reduced in order to allow the

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<sup>24</sup>I can attest to the fact that being a member of a systems-centred training group is much different from being a member of a psychoanalytically oriented training group. I had the privilege of being a member of a training group conducted by Yvonne Agazarian in 2010. The main, overriding difference involves the activity level of the leader. Where Foulkes and Bion would allow the group to meander through free-floating communication (free association in the plural sense) in order to create the grist for the mill, so to speak, the SCT therapist or training group leader pounces on any defence mechanisms as they are manifested by the member, not only driving the member into a corner where the only way out is to 'grow' out of it, but also teaching and correcting the speech and communication patterns as they occur. The idea behind this course of action is that, rather than allowing the members to act out their defences, they are forced to verbalise them. I experienced this as both extremely difficult (literally having to find words for that which may still have been unconscious and, thus, preverbal) and intrusive and I remember becoming very angry with her and her method. However, I must confess that working through the process of anger and verbalising my anger was very valuable. In fact, in that 60 minute session I made two profound discoveries about myself that I am not able to deny, even though I am still sceptical about her straightforward, in-your-face, approach.

inherent driving forces to be released towards the goal of development and maturation. Although her technique is very different to that of Foulkes (1975), the goal of enhancing effective communication is common to both techniques.

#### 3.4.6.3 Subgrouping

Agazarian (2000) distinguishes between functional and stereotype subgrouping. Stereotype subgrouping, in terms of which we group together based on superficial similarities and differences, is actively discouraged while functional subgrouping, in terms of which we group together in order to accomplish specific goals in relation to the group's task, is actively encouraged. One technique used involves every member inviting other members to join him/her regarding a specific contribution, question or exploration and ending his/her speech with the words "Anyone else?". Another technique involves the group leader actively encouraging members to join each other in exploring various emotions within the group. A definite advantage of this technique is the fact that it prevents the individual from being isolated and scapegoated as others are actively encouraged to take risks and join in discussing potentially shameful topics. Furthermore, by sharing the burden between more than one member an atmosphere of learning, experimentation and risk-taking is fostered.

At this point it is possible to discern the link with Dalal's (1998) argument that the group, and not the individual, should be seen as the most basic unit for analysis. Agazarian (2000) works with the subgroup, and not the individual in isolation, but she does not surrender to the Bionian (1961) notion of ignoring the individual almost completely (Dalal, 1998). There is also a link between the way in which functional subgrouping is practised and Nitsun's (1996) theory of the anti-group. Nitsun (1996) maintains that the anti-group becomes destructive if it is ignored and not acknowledged, but that it can also be extremely therapeutic and creative if acknowledged and worked with. In her "*A systems-centred approach to inpatient group psychotherapy*" (Agazarian, 2001) and also in my personal experience of her group work, it is evident how Agazarian actively invites members to subgroup around conflicting themes and emotions, thus bringing the anti-group into the open from the very start. By doing so she also diminishes the fear and anxiety around mentioning destructive or negative emotions or experiences within the group. In this way, behaviour and emotions are depathologised and rendered open for exploration as normal occurrences within groups.

#### 3.4.6.4 *Vectoring*

Vectoring and revectoring are techniques which are used either to direct or redirect the forces in the group towards the exploration of emotions and away from intellectual explanation (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). This is Agazarian's way of applying Lewin's vector psychology to therapy groups. Members are encouraged to 'sit at the edge of the unknown', rather than trying to find explanations based on past experiences, until they feel able to redirect their energy towards exploring the unknown within a subgroup of members who are also resonating with the need to explore a specific dynamic or emotion. She uses the concept of the 'fork in the road' and the necessity of having to choose between experiencing and defending against experience. This defending against experience echoes Bion's (1961) notion of the group's hatred of learning (Armstrong, 2005) and, thus, the group's use of various defence mechanisms against involvement in the group task.

#### 3.4.7 Conclusion: Why systems-centred theory is not enough

It cannot be denied that Agazarian (2000) made, and is still making, a giant contribution to our understanding of groups. Her application of open systems thinking to groups made it possible to bridge the gap between interpreting individual and group dynamics while she also made it possible, through the concepts of field theory, to integrate psychodynamic thinking with systems thinking into a comprehensive theory of groups.

However, it is not possible to use Agazarian's theory as a blueprint or theoretical lens for this research as a finer focus will be required on the forces at work on the membership level. Although her theory, together with Lewin's work, provides the basic structure for the theoretical lens, it does not specifically attempt to discern the psychological forces on the level of the membersystem as a subsystem within the broader, group-as-a-whole system.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The goal of this chapter was to provide a broad outline of the theoretical approaches to groups that will form the foundation on which the theoretical lens will be constructed in the next chapter. However, the goal of the chapter was not to provide an in-depth



description of these approaches but to sketch only the main tenets of each in order to enable us to proceed to constructing the theoretical lens.

Lewin's field theory, two psychoanalytic theories (of Bion and Foulkes respectively) and Agazarian's systems-centred theory were discussed and the differences and linkages between these approaches outlined. It became clear that it can be helpful to our understanding of groups, as extremely complex entities, to view the various perspectives as complementary ways of approaching groups and not to see one approach as the sole correct formulation of the way in which groups work. With regard to each of the approaches mentioned above, I also indicated why it was deemed necessary to augment the approach with other viewpoints in order to realise the aim of this study, namely, to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group.

Based on the theoretical foundation delineated in this chapter, chapter 4 will now proceed to construct a theoretical lens through which the empirical data can be analysed.

## 4

### Constructing a theoretical lens

I have no doubt that, for me, theory does not come from my comprehensive brain. Rather it comes from some subterranean force that has a rhythm of its own...So this chapter contains both the reasoned arguments and also the flow that demands apprehension before comprehension (Yvonne Agazarian in Agazarian & Gantt, 2000, p. 221).

#### 4.1 Introduction

It has become clear that, if we want to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group from a postfoundational research perspective, we will have to develop a method for conducting the exploration that will allow us to maintain the creative tension between the need to understand within context and the need to explain across contexts (Van den Berg, 1972; Van Huyssteen, 1990). Constructivist grounded theory, as espoused by Charmaz (2007) was adopted as the mould within which to develop the desired methodology with which to conduct this research project. However, the first attempt at applying grounded theory to the process of data analysis led to the realisation that a more structured approach to analysing the data was required and the need emerged for a lens, constructed from theory, through which to analyse the data.

The purpose of this lens would be to add more structure to the coding process. Accordingly, although the principle of a dialogical relationship between data (induction) and theory (deduction) will be maintained, this relationship will be less open-ended and more structured. The risk in adapting the approach in this way is the fact that structure simplifies, while we are actually trying to achieve a deep understanding of an enormously complex process. This means we could lose some insights along the way. On the other hand, the possible reward for adopting a more structured approach is the fact that it can prevent us from descending into a bottomless pit of interpretation and reinterpretation of endless layers of meaning upon meaning upon meaning.

Chapter 3 laid the theoretical foundations from which this chapter will proceed. The purpose of this chapter is, thus, to develop a theoretical lens through which to look at and make sense of the data. It is essential that this lens be able to help capture as much of the complexity of group membership as possible and, thus, not oversimplify. On the other hand, the lens would be of no use if it was so complex that it could not be applied to the data in order to assist with the data analysis process.

This chapter will now proceed to first formulate a definition for the terms 'group' and 'being a group member'. This will be done by examining the definitions of various theorists, apart from Lewin, Bion, Foulkes and Agazarian. After the main components of the working definition to be adopted for this research have been stipulated the chapter will provide an honest account of how the theoretical lens came into being. I will adopt a narrative tone for this section. Once the framework has been put on the table, its logical implications as well as its congruency with the work of Lewin, Foulkes, Bion and Agazarian will be discussed.

#### **4.2 Being a group member: Towards a definition**

In their seminal work charting the field of group dynamics in the 1950s and 1960s, Cartwright and Zander (1968) discussed the approaches of various theorists in terms of defining the terms 'group' and 'group member'. They concluded that a group is best defined as any collection of interdependent people and that one or more of the following characterise all groups:

- a) They engage in frequent interaction;
- b) They define themselves as members;
- c) They are defined by others as belonging to the group;
- d) They share norms concerning matters of common interest;
- e) They participate in a system of interlocking roles;
- f) They identify with one another as a result of having set up the same model object or ideals in their superego;
- g) They find the group to be rewarding;
- h) They promotively pursue interdependent goals;
- i) They have a collective perception of their unity;
- j) They tend to act in a unitary manner toward the environment (Cartwright & Zander, 1968, p. 49).

Martin Ringer (2002) supports both the Lewinian definition that a group is constituted by members who experience themselves as members of the group as well as that of Agazarian. As described in the previous chapter, Agazarian defined a member, in terms of a systems-centred group, as someone that is able to interact in the group as a reflective, systems-centred (as opposed to self-centred) member (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).

If we add to these definitions Bion's assertion that, without a goal, there would be no group (Bion, 1961), then it seems safe to define a group in terms of both interdependence as well as its goal, or task. Accordingly, for the purposes of this research, the following definitions are adopted for 'group' and 'group member'.

- a) *Group*: a collection of individuals who have joined together – and are, therefore, interdependent – with the aim of attaining a specific goal or performing a specific task.
- b) *Group member*: an individual who belongs to a collection of people who are joined together with the aim of attaining a specific goal or performing a specific task.

It would appear, from the definition of the term group member above, that there are three main elements that are of central importance, namely, a group member is:

- a) an individual
- b) who belongs to a collection of people
- c) to attain a specific goal or perform a specific task.

Agazarian stressed the process of becoming a group member by means of her technique of contextualising – as described in chapter 3 (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000), while Foulkes saw the members of a group as people in the process of becoming effective communicators (Foulkes & Anthony, 1984). This alerts us to the fact that 'being a member' can, perhaps, be better understood if it is perceived not as a static state, but rather as a dynamic process that allows for movement. However, as stated before, the empirical data that will be observed and analysed through the lens being developed in this research study, emanated from a training group consisting of nine individuals who were allocated to the group from a larger student class of twenty-seven students. These nine individuals, thus, comprised the membership of this group. This fact seems to contradict the notion of membership as a dynamic process of becoming or being. However, it is at this point that we, once more, turn to Cartwright

and Zander (1968, p. 49): “It follows from our definition of group that anyone who belongs to a particular group is affected in some way by the fact of membership.”

Accordingly, if this research focuses on the dynamics of being a group member, and a group member is defined as an individual who belongs to a collection of people who are joined together to attain a specific goal or perform a specific task, then it follows that the focus of the study will be on the dynamics of being an individual who belongs to a collection of people who are joined together in order to attain a specific goal or perform a specific task. In Lewinian language it is possible to translate ‘dynamics’ with ‘forces’ and still retain the notion of movement, or process. The research thus focuses on the forces involved in being a group member, or, to be more specific, the forces involved in being an individual who belongs to a collection of people who are joined together for a specific task. Accordingly, the more or less *static* fact of being formally included in the group places the member in the *dynamic* situation of being a group member.

#### **4.3 The emergence of an idea: A narrative account of how the theoretical lens came into being**

The scientist in me wishes that I were, at this point, able to report a logical step by step process in terms of which I developed the framework that will serve as the theoretical lens for this research study. However, the truth is that I am not sure exactly how it happened. All I know is that, at one moment, I was reading Foulkes in the Northwestern University library and, the next moment, I had scribbled a picture on my notepad. Looking at it I immediately knew it could work and, the more I played with it, the more I was able to frame it in the language of logic and existing theories.

It happened as follows. In 2007 we started training groups as the experiential component of the group dynamics module of the I/O Psychology masters students at the University of Pretoria. During that programme, and especially during the programme we ran for the 2008 cohort, I became acutely aware that some students found it extremely difficult to be members of the training groups. This awakened my interest in researching the forces involved in *becoming* a group member. I wondered what made it so difficult to ‘join’ the groups on a psychological level and I hoped that an understanding of the forces involved in *becoming* a member would enable us to facilitate this process of psychologically joining the training groups. This, of course,

required me to distinguish between physical and psychological membership, asserting that it is possible to be physically part of the group, but not psychologically.

I found the theoretical framework of Shannon and Weaver (1964), as described by Agazarian (Agazarian & Peters, 1981; Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) and discussed in chapter 3, extremely helpful in conceptualising the process of *becoming* a group member. I equated the process of becoming a group member with the twoway process of 1) the person-system boundary becoming more permeable with regard to communication inputs from the group-system and 2) the group-system boundary becoming more permeable with regard to communication inputs from the person-system. This, in turn, enabled me to position my observational focus on the forces that made these boundaries either more permeable or more rigid. In order to operationalise my data analysis process I was, at that point, considering Agazarian and Gant's System for Analysing Verbal Interaction (SAVI) (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000; Agazarian, 2001; Beck *et al.*, 2000) but, although all of this made sense, there was still something that was bothering me.

I realised that there were three questions regarding membership that could not be answered satisfactorily by taking this approach:

a) What about the group's task?

I was in discussion with Greyling Viljoen (long-time friend, mentor and colleague and one of the facilitators of the training groups) about my research, when we realised that taking into account the boundary between the individual and the group only, meant that not sufficient conceptual space is created in which to study the member's relation to the group's task. It seemed possible for the member to be in open communication with the group, but not working towards the group's task, as stated in Bion's work on the basic assumptions. However, would this make him/her less of a member?

b) Are they not all members from the inception of the group?

After a fervent exposition of my research focus on the process of *becoming* a member, and my use of Shannon and Weaver's model to Barney Straus, an A.K. Rice group relations colleague in Chicago, he confounded me with this question. I then realised that it was essential that I take seriously the physical fact that, once the group comes into existence, all those who are formally included in the group, are already members

and that the distinction between physical and psychological membership could be complicating the matter unnecessarily.

c) What about free-floating communication?

Foulkes's notion of free-floating communication in terms of which all verbal interactions are allowed and regarded as grist for the mill (S. H. Foulkes & Foulkes, 1990a), made me doubt my requirement of communication to 'cross the boundary' and to 'be integrated into the system' in order for membership to be established – particularly in view of the fact that Foulkes saw the purpose of the group as helping its members to become effective communicators over time (S. H. Foulkes & Anthony, 1984). Surely it is not possible to regard someone as a member only once he has become an effective communicator?

I realised these questions were forcing me to reassess my position in a significant way and perhaps to change my entire research focus from *becoming* a group member to *being* a group member. This realisation sent me into "flight" mode, away from my research to all sorts of fascinating reading, including Larry McMurtry (*Lonesome Dove*), Albert Camus (*The Outsider*) and Carl Jung (*The Undiscovered Self*).<sup>25</sup>

Carl Jung! For the first time in a very long while I read a psychologist who was arguing for individuality amidst a popular trend towards the societal mass (Jung & Jung, 1990; 1958). Of course, his argument made perfect sense. However, what about Dalal (Dalal, 1998), whose arguments for seeing people primarily as group members also made sense? Suddenly the tension between individuality and belonging dawned on me, not merely as a widely discussed psychological and group dynamic, but as an essential dynamic for understanding what it means to *be* a group member. I was suddenly jerked back into "working mode" with the goal of revisiting my definition of what it means to *be* a group member. Thus it happened that, sitting with a notepad and pen and a pile of books in the Northwestern University library, I reopened some old-old conversations ...

- Bion: "the group-as-a-whole..."  
Agazarian: "the member as subsystem..."  
Bion again: "no task, no group..."  
Foulkes: "to become effective communicators..."

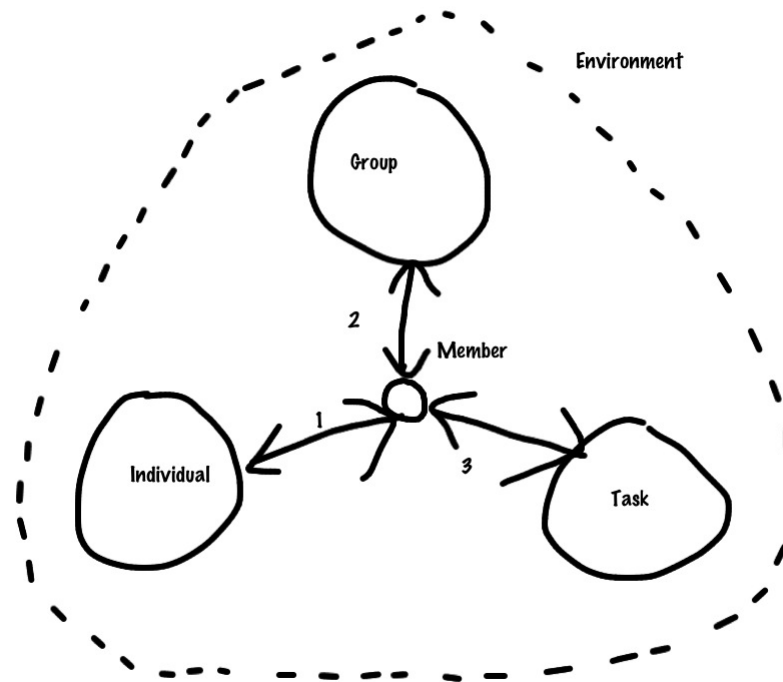
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<sup>25</sup> Note the underlying theme in these titles of which I was totally unaware at the time.

Agazarian: “from self-centred to systems-centred...”

Foulkes: “free-floating communication...”

Suddenly: Idea... Pen and paper ...Scribble and... The result:



**Figure 4.1: The initial idea scribble**

Could it be so simple as to depict the member in a field of forces between ‘group’<sup>26</sup>, ‘individual’<sup>27</sup>, and task? If so, it would mean that, just by virtue of being formally included into the group, all group members found themselves in a dynamic tension between these three ‘poles’, so to speak.

And so an idea was born...

I started to play around with the idea, testing it against various theoretical concepts. The more time I spent with it, the more I became convinced that not only could this framework be used as the theoretical lens through which to look at the data, but there can also be wider practical and research applications...

<sup>26</sup> This later became belonging.

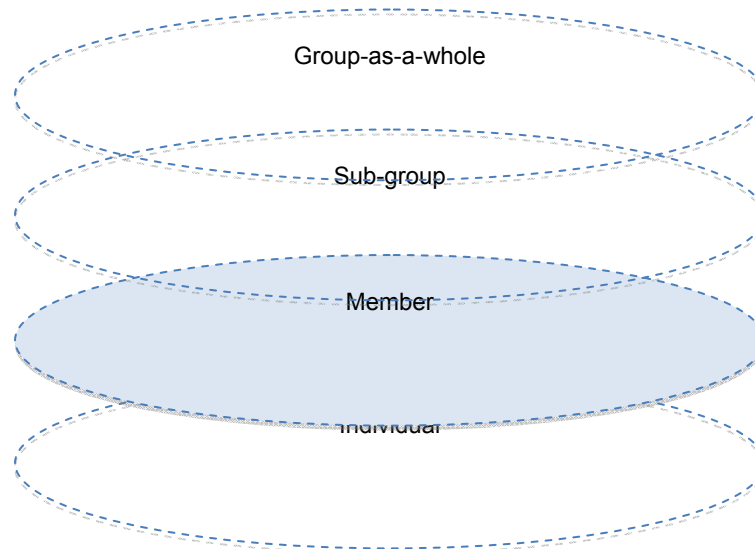
<sup>27</sup> This later became individuality.



#### 4.4 Formal discussion of the theoretical lens

##### 4.4.1 Level of focus

Firstly, the member is conceptualised as a system within a hierarchy of systems (group-as-a-whole, subgroup, member, and individual) (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). This, in turn, means that the member system is hierarchically and isomorphically linked to the systems of which it is part of as well the systems of which it is composed.

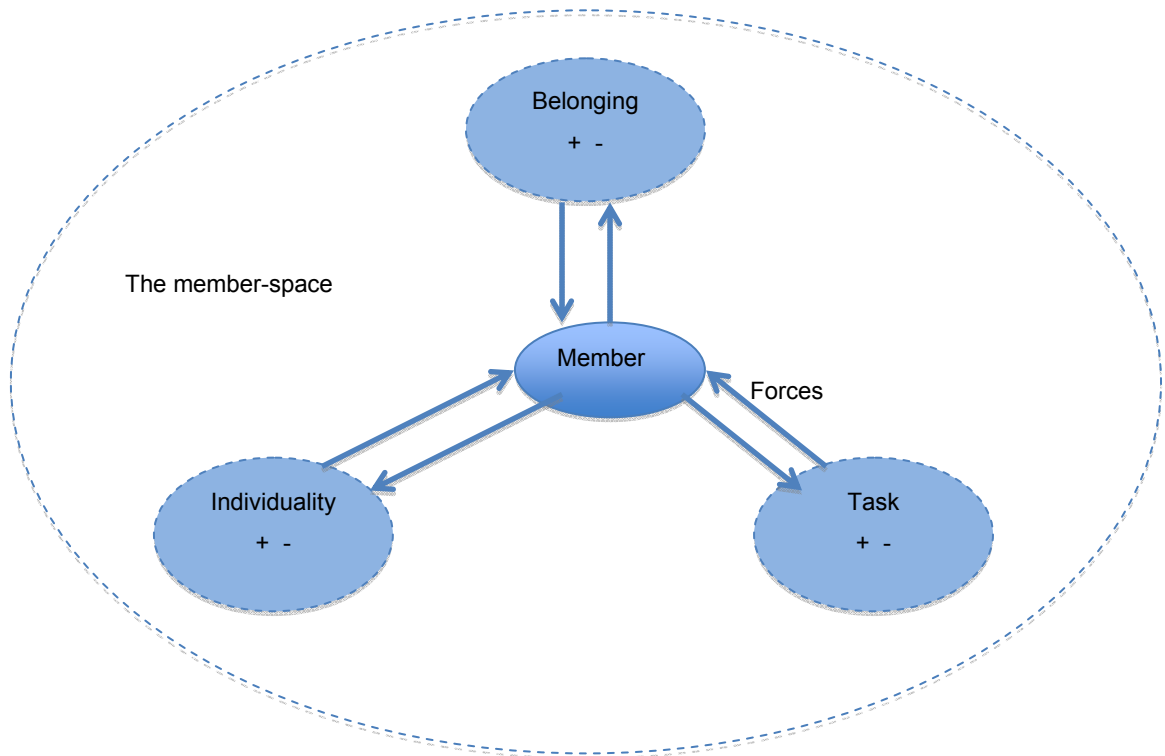


**Figure 4.2: The member as a system in a hierarchy of systems (Agazarian, 2000)**

However, the fact that the research focus is on the membership level does not mean that what is happening on the other systemic levels is not taken into account, although it does mean that, with regard to dynamics on the other systemic levels, the question will always be how those dynamics affect the forces that are playing out on the level of the membersystem.

##### 4.4.2 The member as a system in a field of forces

The member, however, is not only seen in a hierarchy of systems, but also as an individual who belongs to a group of people who have joined together to perform a specific task. Accordingly, the member, by virtue of being formally included in the group, finds him/herself in a simultaneous relation with his/her own individuality, his/her belonging to an interdependent collection of people, and with the group task.



**Figure 4.3: The member as a system in a field of forces**

When the observational focus is on the systemic level of member, the membersystem is seen as existing in a field of forces operating between three 'goal region complexes' termed belonging, individuality and task. These are, in turn, conceptualised as 'goal region complexes' because, in Lewin's language (Lewin, 1951), they harbour both goals (with positive valences for the membersystem) and aversions (with negative valences for the membersystem). These goals and aversions are conceptualised as being both positive and negative sub-goals of the goal region. Another way of conceptualising the goal region complexes is by means of a metaphor of magnetic polarities with the member somewhere in the middle of the forces both towards and away from the 'poles' of individuality, belonging and task. However, for the purpose of uniformity of language, I will use the concept of goal regions as it is used by Lewin (Lewin, 1951) in his conceptualisation of the life space.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> The only difference between this conceptualisation here and Lewin's field theory is the fact that the member's relation with each of these goal region complexes is seen as a combined function of his/her *experience* of the goal region complex as well as the *physical reality* of the goal region complex itself. I agree with Lewin's focus on the psychological experience, although it must be emphasised that it is not possible to see the psychological experience in isolation from physical reality, as this would, ultimately, result in a delusion. We are, thus, looking at both the map and the reality (Korzybski, 1948).

In this schema, it seems appropriate to speak of 'memberspace' rather than 'life space'. Accordingly, the memberspace refers to the life space as described by Lewin (1951), although, in this case, it is focused specifically on the membership situation as it exists as a result of the fact of membership. Thus, the memberspace represents the totality of the situation as it exists for the member and it includes the elements and regions in the life of the person-as-member as well as the member himself. The member's behaviour can, thus, be seen as a function of the member space while it is possible to infer the member space from observing his/her behaviour (Lewin, 1951).

It may seem odd that the idea of the life space in this context is limited to the memberspace. It may also seem as if factors from the individual's personal life are not allowed into this schema. However, this is not the case. The individual's personal drama, as it unfolds in his/her life space (which, of course, goes beyond his/her membership of this specific group) forms part of the individual system that is both hierarchically and isomorphically related to the member system (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). This, in turn, means that patterns of forces and behaviour that operate on the level of the individual system affect the membersystem in accordance with the systemscentred notion that the outputs of one system become the inputs of another (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). This is also valid for the dynamics of transference, projection and projective identification as derived from psychoanalytic theory and as discussed in chapter 3. The systemslanguage of the outputs from one system to another can also include intangible and covert outputs such as the transference of previous group experiences to this group, or, to use the language of Bion (Bion, 1961), projections of internalised objects originating from the primary group (family) onto the members of this group or the group-as-a-whole.

#### 4.4.3 The goal region complexes: Belonging, individuality and task

##### 4.4.3.1 *Belonging*

Belonging in this schema refers, in essence, to the fact that, in the group, the member is interdependent on others for the realisation of the group's goals. Of course, there are aspects of being interdependent that are attractive, for example, the meeting of the need to belong, or the increased likelihood of attaining the group's goals, but there are also aspects of being interdependent that are daunting, for example, having to sacrifice some of one's own expectations and needs, or the fear of relinquishing or, at

least, sharing control. Accordingly, the construct belonging in this context encapsulates both the positive and negative valences associated with it.

However, the question arises as to the reason why this component of the schema was termed belonging and not 'interdependence'? The answer is that all behaviours within the group that are directed at interdependence are positively connected to the attainment of the group goal, while all behaviours directed at belonging are not necessarily positively related to the group goal. As a construct 'interdependence' encompasses the entire interplay between individuality, belonging and task, with the need at this point being to dissect and analyse this interplay. One aspect of interdependence is, thus, the aspect of belonging to a collection of people. However, in order to belong 'interdependently' it is essential that some degree of control be relinquished, although not all, as this would result in 'dependency'.

In Bowlby's language (Bowlby & Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1969; 1980) we could, thus, refer to a healthy attachment to the group,<sup>29</sup> meaning not too little – as in resisting the need to belong – and not too much – as in total fusion with the group. According to Hopper (Hopper, 2003b), healthy attachment or interdependence refers to group cohesion as opposed to aggregation (acting as if the group does not exist and as if there is no requirement that members behave interdependently), on the one hand, and massification (acting as if total fusion and non-differentiation are required) on the other.

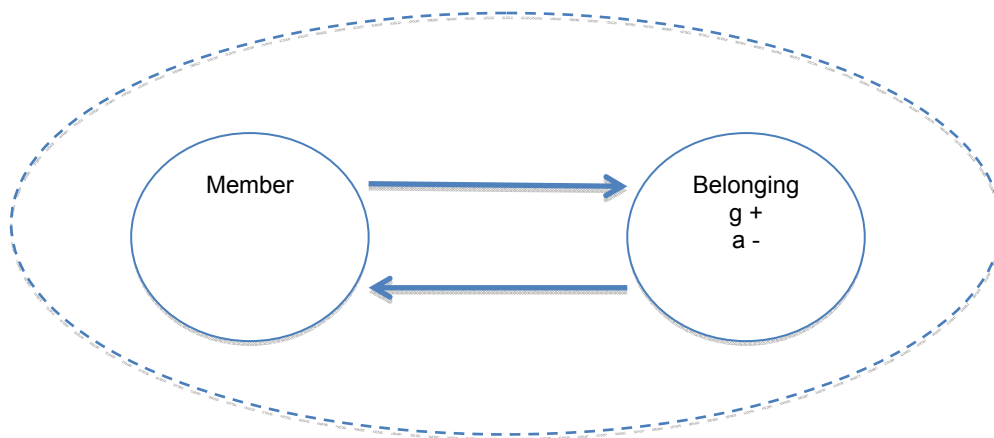
There is, thus, in the member a need to belong. This, in turn, can result in behaviour which either supports or obstructs the group's path to the goal. However, there is also a fear of belonging on the part of the member or, as Anzieu (Anzieu, 1984) puts it, a fear of being swallowed by the 'group-as-a-mouth'. This fear of belonging can also result in behaviour which either supports or obstructs an interdependent working towards the group goal. On the one hand, the individual's fear of being swallowed by the group can result in a total resistance to opening up and 'joining' in interdependent member-to-member relationships but, on the other hand, when the group-as-a-whole is in basic assumption mode it can be highly constructive if a member's fear of being swallowed up forces him/her to access his/her own unique ability to reflect critically on where the group is going. Thus, it can be seen how, although the main focus is on the

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<sup>29</sup>The notions of 'healthy' and 'pathological' will be dealt with later. At this point I will retain Bowlby's (1969) language but, as our understanding of this schema increases, we will see how it becomes unnecessary to refer to normal/abnormal or healthy/pathological.

member-level, it is not possible to ignore the group-as-a-whole level when interpreting member behaviour.

In the preceding paragraph I referred to the need to belong and the fear of belonging as existing as a tension system within the membersystem (Lewin, 1951). When this is translated from the membersystem (intramember) to either the member's environment, or the memberspace (intragroup), it is possible to refer to both the goals (aspects of belonging with positive valences for the member) and aversions (aspects of belonging with negative valences for the member). There will, thus, be forces towards the belonginggoals and forces away from the belongingaversions that will impact on the member. Also, once a goal has been attained or, in the terms of the tensionsystem, once a need has been fulfilled, the goal/need loses its valence for the member (Lewin, 1951).



**Figure 3.4: The forces between the member system and belonging**

At any given moment, there can, thus, be simultaneous forces operating, with the point of application being the membersystem ( $m$ ), originating in the goal region complex termed belonging ( $B$ ), driving the member towards a goal ( $g$ ) in the complex and also driving the member away from an aversion ( $a$ ) in the goal region complex of belonging. If the resultant force, ( $f_R$ ), between the forces 'towards' ( $f_{mg}$ ) (referred to as positive forces, not in the qualitative sense, but in the directional sense) and the forces 'away from' ( $f_{am}$ ) (referred to as negative forces) is greater than zero, there will be locomotion, which can be observed as behaviour, by the membersystem towards the goal of belonging.

For instance, if, in the group-as-a-whole system (of which the membersystem is a subsystem) a basic assumption state of dependency is operative: according to Bion's (1961) theory, this means that the members will act 'as if' they were both incompetent and totally dependent on the leader. A feeling of shared dependency will, thus, dominate, emphasising the group boundary or a sense of 'togetherness in our dependency'. In the membersystem, which is isomorphically related to the group-as-a-whole system (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000), there will, thus, be forces driving the membersystem towards the belonging goal of 'playing along with the group myth of dependency'. If these forces are stronger than the forces driving the membersystem away from the anti-belonging aversion for, for example, group mentality, then the membersystem will locomote in the direction of the belonging complex. This, in turn, will be apparent in forms of behaviour, for example, a statement such as: "But how can we be expected to learn if the leader just sits there and does nothing? We have no experience in this type of learning, he is the expert, why can't he tell us what to do?"

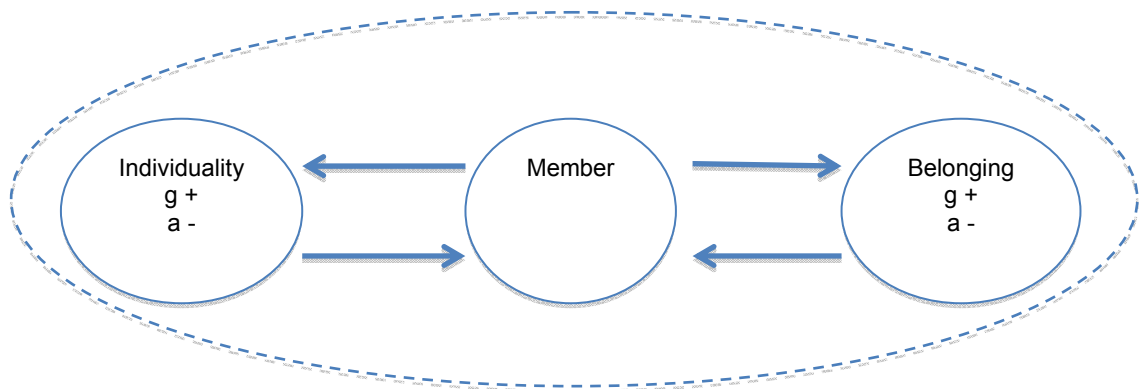
Furthermore, in order to illustrate the application of Lewin's (1951) notion of goal accomplishment in the memberspace or needsatisfaction in the intra-member tensionsystem, let us assume that the group enters a dependency basic assumption state as a result of the fact that the group members suddenly feel paralysed by the complexity of the task confronting them. It can be that the valence towards belonging for member A is the sense of security that he/she expects to gain from joining the other members in a state of dependency. If, after a while, his/her initial need for security is met, the valence that the belonging sub-goal of 'sense of security' had for him will decrease. This, in turn, means that the force towards 'sense of security' will diminish in power, resulting in a dynamic change in the combined effect of the forces impacting on member A. This will change the resultant force and, thus, also member A's behaviour.

#### *4.4.3.2 Individuality*

In this schema individuality refers to the much written about aspects of being an individual separated from other individuals by your skin (Mahler *et al.*, 1975). On the one hand, there are aspects of being a separate individual that are attractive, for example, exercising your own free will, creativity and autonomy. However, on the other hand, there are aspects about individuality that are daunting, for example, the fear of isolation and loss of love (Mahler *et al.*, 1975).

In the group the member is, thus, simultaneously drawn towards certain aspects of individuality while pushed away from others. Or, in the language of field theory, there are forces impacting on the member that either drive him/her towards those aspects of individuality for which he/she has positive valences (goals) and away from those aspects for which he/she has negative valences (aversions). Again, this is a dynamic tension and the satisfaction of one need can release tension that might lead to other needs becoming more dominant.

As a result of the fact that the essential dynamic interaction between the member and the goal region complexes are the same, it is not necessary to repeat the discussion presented in the section on belonging at this point. Instead, this section will focus on the interaction between individuality and belonging.



g = goals

a = aversions

**Figure 4.5: The member in a dynamic tension between 'belonging' and 'individuality'**

The dynamic tension illustrated in this figure refers to the tension that the member experiences as a result of the fact that the group situation has placed him/her both in relation to his/her own individuality and his/her belonging to a larger collection of people. Accordingly, there are forces which are simultaneously driving the member towards and away from both the goal region complexes of individuality and belonging. This is a result of the fact that there are aspects of belonging and individuality that are attractive while there are other aspects of both that are daunting. The way in which the valences either for or against these respective aspects, goals and aversions, will affect the membersystem's behaviour, or locomotion through the field, will either support or obstruct the group's movement towards its goals.

For instance, imagine the group experiences a sudden eruption of unacknowledged fight behaviour in a *ba* fight/flight stage. Member B can find herself caught between her need for a safe place in which to hide and her simultaneous need to join the group in destroying itself. The need for a safe place in which to hide creates a positive valence and a concomitant force towards belonging while the need to destroy the group creates both a negative valence and a concomitant force away from belonging. Simultaneously, Member B might also experience a driving force towards individuality corresponding with her need to prove that she is different from the 'rich, privileged group members'. However, she can also harbour a fear of revealing too much of herself lest she is caught in the crossfire of the current, antagonistic sentiments. Her subsequent behaviour (locomotion) would then be as a result of the forces towards and away from belonging and individuality. One option can be to engage in stereotype subgrouping (Agazarian, 2000) with someone who shares certain characteristics with her, for instance, not being from a rich, privileged background. This can serve the purpose of a safe place in which to hide – the subgroup – where she could become visible in terms of her difference. It can also protect her from being caught alone in the crossfire whilst still contributing to the fragmentation and destruction of the group through the dynamics released by stereotype sub-grouping.

It is significant to note that a force away from belonging does not necessarily imply a force towards individuality, and vice versa. A force away from belonging can, of course, correspond with a force towards individuality, but the one does not automatically imply the other. This, in turn, means that individuality and belonging are not seen as two extremes on one continuum, but rather as separate constructs.

#### *4.4.3.3 Task*

In this schema, task refers to the fact that, by virtue of being formally included as a member of the group, the member finds him/herself in some relation to the group's task. Of course, a subcomponent of the overall group task or group goal is the member's own formal role or tasks that he/she has to fulfil as part of being a member of the group.

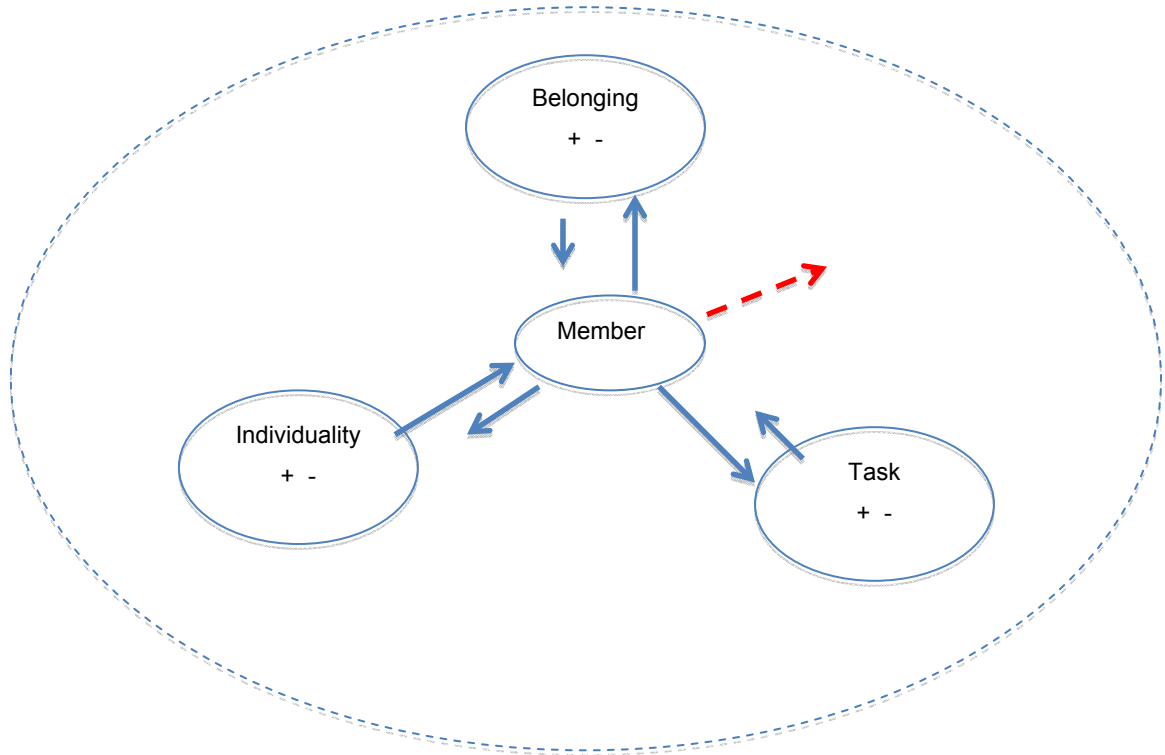
With regard to psychoanalytically informed training groups, Anzieu (1984) comments on the dilemma that the task creates for the member. On the one hand, the member is told that he/she can talk about anything but, on the other, the member is aware, albeit



unconsciously, that the only meaningful thing to talk about to which everyone in the group has access is the shared experience in the here and now. There are, thus, aspects of the task that appear simultaneously easy and inviting whilst other aspects can be both daunting and highly complex.

All people in all groups stand in some relation to the group's task, not only the members of psychoanalytically informed training groups and also not the members of formal groups only. There is also a task or goal in a social group. For example, a group that meets socially to play poker on a Wednesday night. Cartwright and Zander (1968) use the example of a poker group to illustrate the limited impact that one group can have on an individual's life versus the extensive impact that other groups, such as therapy or training groups, can have. If the goal of the members of the poker group is to get out of their houses and have some light-hearted conversation over an informal game of poker only, then this goal or task is the reason for the group getting together and, once the need for social interaction with the other group members no longer exists, the group will cease to exist. However, this goal or task can also have aspects with positive and negative valences. For example, for one member any social interaction can be daunting and, thus, carry negative valences. On the other hand, the poker game and the whiskey that contribute to the overall task of 'socialising over a game of poker' can facilitate the socialisation through the positive valences it carries for a particular member. Another member might love socialising but dislike gambling or drinking. Again, it will be the resultant of the forces either towards or away from the task that will determine the behaviour of the group member. However, it can also be that the goal of the poker group is to gamble for big sums of money. Such a goal will, again, have different sets of positive and negative valences for different members.

If we now add the goal region complex of task to the dynamic interplay involved in being a group member, it becomes even more complex:



**Figure 4.6: Adding task to the dynamic force field**

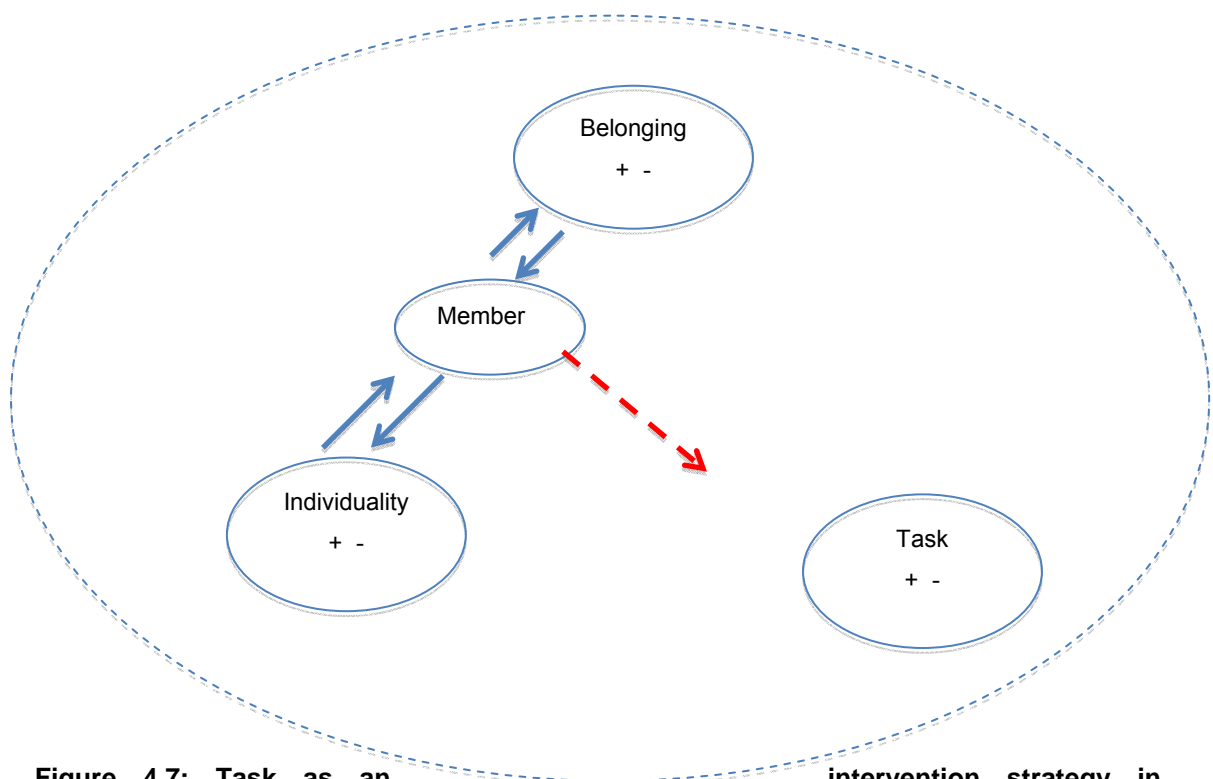
The figure depicts the following sets of forces:

- a) strong forces (as indicated by the arrow lengths) towards task and belonging and away from individuality
- b) weak forces away from task and belonging and towards individuality
- c) the resultant force (in red)

This implies that the resultant force and, thus, the locomotion which is observable as behaviour, would be more or less in the direction of the red arrow towards a position in the field that lies between belonging and task and far away from individuality. In a training group this can refer to Member C, who experiences a strong sense of responsibility for the value that her fellow group members will gain from the group at the expense of her own needs. It may be that Member C would rather downplay her own needs and concerns in the group in order to not take up too much time that other members could have used to discuss their feelings and needs. In organisational terms the classical example of the “company man” would fit this example – someone who sacrifices his own needs and wellbeing for those of the group and its members.

The classical study conducted by Sherif (1988) also emphasises the influence of task on the overall dynamic of being a group member. He divided a group of boys into two subgroups. These subgroups engaged in competitive tasks in a wilderness setting. He

then combined the two groups, who did not want to relinquish their subgroup identities, until they were faced with new tasks in terms of which they were forced to cooperate if they were to have any chance of completing these tasks. Sherif, thus, used task as an intervention strategy with which to redefine the group's outer boundary from two mutually exclusive subgroups to one group with a common goal, external boundary and membership. Although the Sherif (1988) study does reveal information about the impact that the forces towards a task can have on the integration of subgroups into one group, the findings, in our schema, also appear to be a logical possibility on the member-level:



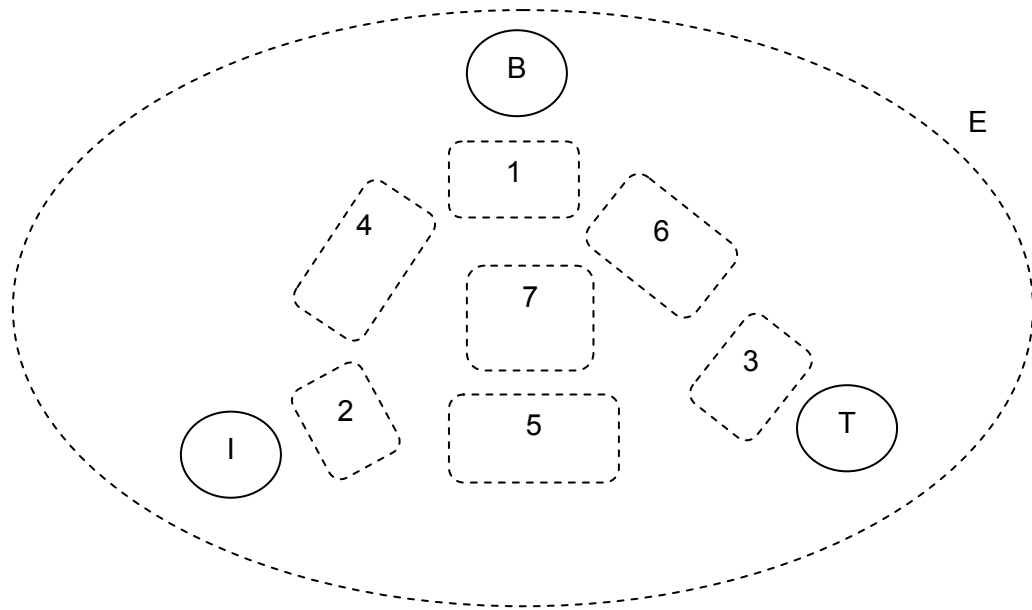
**Figure 4.7: Task as an intervention strategy in the struggle between individuality and belonging**

For instance, in a group in which the forces impacting on the member reach a state of equilibrium which leaves the member in a position in the field between the goal region complexes of individuality and belonging (as was the case with Sherif's subgroups with the struggle between retaining the identity of the subgroup vs. taking up the new identity of the larger group), an intervention on the part of the leader that can create a net force towards task, could change the overall equilibrium of forces and enable the member to find a more balanced position in the field between individuality, belonging and task.

Both the perceived and the real competency level of the member with relation to the group's task will also affect the valences for or against involvement in the task. In a case in which the member feels incompetent he/she can experience forces away from task in order to protect him/her from either embarrassment or from failure. In such a case either the group leader or the group can assist in helping the member to gain confidence in his/her ability to perform his/her share of the group's task. In other cases, however, it can be that the group member is, in fact, not sufficiently competent to achieve the required results as part of his/her formal role in the group. In such a case the leader's interventions will be of no avail if they are aimed at the perceptions regarding competence but, instead, they need to be targeted at either training the member or simplifying the task. It can also be that the member perceives him/herself to be competent when this is not actually the case. Again, the leader's intervention should take this into account. In addition, such a scenario emphasises how important it is for the group leader, and for the group members, to try to align their maps of reality with reality itself. This echoes Korzybski's (Korzybski, 1948) theory of man as a map-maker and the reason why it is vital not to focus on the psychological dimension only.

#### *4.4.3.4 Positions in the field*

As described in chapter 4, Lewin's field theory postulates positions in the field as psychological spaces occupied by the individual in relation to force fields, where the forces impacting on the individual are in equilibrium (Lewin, 1951). When this notion is applied in the theoretical schema being developed in this research study, it means that, in the field between the goal region complexes of individuality, belonging and task, there are a potentially infinite number of positions of equilibrium that can be taken by the individual, while each of those positions can again be taken up in a potentially infinite number of ways. In addition, in view of the fact that we are talking of a group as a highly dynamic system, it seems unlikely that a member will occupy a static position in the field for a prolonged time, if that position is defined in its finest and most specific sense. However, in terms of this schema, it can be helpful to describe seven broad areas within which specific positions can be taken up. Of course, these are not the only possible areas, but they are used as examples of one way, although not the only or even the most effective way (see discussion later) that this schematic lens can help to observe and make sense of member behaviour:



E = Environment  
B = Belonging  
I = Individuality  
T = Task

**Figure 4.8: Positions in the field**

The figure above depicts the three goal region complexes of individuality, (I), belonging, (B), and task, (T), as they exist in reality and are experienced by the member of the group existing in the environment (E). The positional areas can be described as follows:

*Area #1:* Here the member occupies a position in the area of closest proximity to the goal region complex of belonging. According to the field theory principles that we are applying, this means that a point of equilibrium has been reached between the forces towards and away from belonging, individuality and task that resulted in the member being located close to belonging. According to this schema, this would mean that this member is far more concerned about belonging to the group than about asserting his/her own individuality or with being involved with the group task. There can be a myriad reasons for this state of affairs although it is possible to understand them only in the context of a specific group at a specific point in time. For example, members within a group caught up in a basic assumption state of oneness or

massification (Hopper, 2003b) can be expected to be located in this area and they will manifest behaviour that emphasises concern for their groupness over and above their individuality and their relation to the group task. It can, for example, be that the complexity of some aspect of the task is sufficiently anxietyprovoking to precipitate the move into basic assumption functioning on the group-as-a-whole level with its concomitant effects on the behaviours of the group members.

*Area #2:* For a member occupying a position in this broadlydefined area in the field, the equilibrium of forces have played out in such a way that, at that particular moment, the member is far more attracted to individuality than to either belonging or task. In its most extreme form – a total ‘slide’ towards individuality – this would mean that the member leaves the group. It is for this reason that the goal region complex of individuality can also be seen as the ‘gate’ through which the individual enters and exits the group. Firstly, the member enters the group as an individual with no relation to either the other members or the task. Once in the group this member finds him/herself between the three polarities and, finally, the member exits the group as an individual. There may be various reasons for exiting the group, for example, 1) the task has been completed or the timeboundary for the group’s existence has been reached and the group has had to terminate. In such a case it is incumbent on the team leader to try to facilitate closure with regards to the separation from the group and its members; 2) the member decided to leave the group of his/her own volition. It may be that the member lost interest in the group’s task relative to other tasks and other groups that can be joined, 3) it maybe that there were dynamics at play on either the interpersonal or the group-as-a-whole level that made it more attractive for the member to leave the group than to remain in the tensionsystem between individuality, belonging and task; 4) the member was reallocated to another group as a result of circumstances external to the group. It should be borne in mind that, in such a case, it may be that the member was still feeling attraction to the belonging and task goal region complexes,5) the member was ousted by the group either by means of scapegoating or as a result of non-performance relating to the group’s task, violation of group norms, etc. Nevertheless, whatever the reason, the fact that the member finds him/herself near

the individuality pole does not mean that he/she is disconnected from the need to belong or to participate in the task as, even at this extreme position in the field, the member still is in the field and is still affected by the forces towards or away from belonging and task. Theoretically it should, thus, be possible to help the member move closer to belonging and task by trying to decrease the forces away from belonging and task in order to release the inherent driving forces towards belonging and task. However, this would only be possible if it were known what the restricting forces were, while this, in turn, would be possible only within the context of a specific group and by taking into account the systemic levels of group-as-a-whole, subgroup, member and individual.

*Area #3:* A member occupying a position in this area as a result of the equilibrium of forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task, would be far more concerned about being involved with the group's task than about his/her own needs or the needs of his/her co-members. At its most extreme such a situation would imply a total fusion with task in terms of which there would be little or no differentiation between the member and the group's task or, at least, his formal role as part of the overall group task. A total identification with the formal role and possible alienation from fellow members are possibilities in such a situation. An example in daily organisational life may be the 'workaholic' who pays little or no attention to anything or anyone beside the tasks at hand and where workplace illnesses such as burn-out become a real risk. At this point it must be mentioned that, despite the fact that all of the possible positions described here can, at times, be problematic, not one of them should be classified as categorically negative or categorically positive – it always depends on the specific group context. For instance, in a crisis situation in a commercial bank in which the IT systems were failing, the IT technicians would display perfectly normal, and expected, behaviour if they spent 24 hours over a weekend trying to fix the problem, without thinking of their need for sleep and without their usual banter with their co-members. Thus, if the task, which is the very reason for the existence of the group, is threatened, it makes sense for the members to sacrifice other needs temporarily. This, however, is not sustainable over a prolonged period of time.

*Area #4:* When an equilibrium of forces between individuality, belonging and task is reached in the area furthest away from task and between individuality and belonging, this may mean that the member's struggle between his/her own individuality and belonging to a larger collection of people is so prevalent that he/she loses sight of the group's task.<sup>30</sup> If that were the case, it can be hypothesised that a strengthening of the positive valences with regard to certain aspects of the group's task and a weakening of the negative valences with regard to other aspects, can move the member out of this area and into another area in the field which may be closer to task. Sherif's experiment with boys in a wilderness setting that was mentioned earlier is one example of the way in which the task was used as an intervention in order to release the group members from their struggle between holding on to their old identities and adopting a new one (Sherif, 1988). On the other hand, it may also be that the reason for the group member being strongly attracted by aspects located both in individuality and belonging has to do with the tensionsystem in the member which can diminish once the member's goals, with regards to aspects of individuality and belonging, have been attained. It is to be expected that all members in groups move through this area as an integral part of the group's development. In fact, it can be hypothesised that all members in all groups will move through a number of these areas during the life of the group.

*Area #5:* One reason for a member occupying a position in this area can be that he/she is experiencing extremely strong forces towards both individuality and task, possibly combined with a strong force pushing away from belonging. This can be true of a highly ambitious member who is more concerned with his/her own needs for growth and achievement with regard to the task than with maintaining good interpersonal relations with the other group members. It can also be that, during a basic assumption state of fight in the group-as-a-whole,

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<sup>30</sup> This is a dynamic often experienced by members at Group Relations Conferences in the Tavistock tradition. I have certainly experienced this myself. For me the best example was during the Institutional Event of the 2008 Leicester Conference where I had almost no sight of the group's task as I was caught up in my own dynamic of me-not-me in an on-going struggle between my own individuality and the pull towards fusion with the group.



the member finds the structure and security provided by the task attractive and decides, albeit unconsciously, to distance him/herself from the group members and protect him/herself by 'hiding behind' the task or by explicitly aligning him/herself with the group's task.

*Area #6:* In this case the group member finds him/herself in an area in which the forces towards or away from belonging and task are exercising a much stronger effect than the forces towards individuality. This would possibly fit a situation in which the concern of the group member is strongly focused on the wellbeing of the group, including both the fellow members and the task, to the detriment of his/her own needs and wellbeing. The metaphorical "company man" to whom reference was made earlier would fit this description. Again it must be emphasised that, depending on the situation, this can be both positive or negative. However, it does not seem as if a prolonged functioning by a group member in this area would be sustainable. This area suits the metaphorical description, often used by Anzieu (1984), of the member being swallowed by the group and its task. A group that is engaged in 'groupthink' can also find that most of its members are operating in this area where the group and its values, ideology and outward image, together with a lack of conflict amongst its members, can lead to a situation in which the critical thinking on the part of its members is either not allowed or is nullified.

*Area #7:* It feels instinctively as if this area should be the ideal position for a group member as this represents a situation of equally strong forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task.<sup>31</sup> In theory, this would be the ideal position, but theory often omits the real world from the equation. In the real world, the group is in a continuous interaction with various situational forces emanating from its broader organisation/institution, for example, the University of Pretoria as the institution where the training groups were hosted, and beyond, for example, the economic, political, technological and legal environment.

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<sup>31</sup>Later in this chapter, Nitsun's (1996) concept of the anti-group will be discussed in relation to this framework. It is interesting to note that, as a function of the anti-group, Area #7 could also be the area within which the member would be located if he/she is being pushed away from the three goal region complexes with equal force.

In order to 'sail through these winds of change' on an oceanic mass of variables the group and its members will have to take up various positions on an on-going basis in order to maintain the overall balance between the group and its environment. It is, thus, completely inaccurate to state categorically that, for all groups in all situations and for all members, *Area #7*, as depicted by this framework, is the ideal/healthy position and that the other areas carry a degree of pathology. The following metaphor comes to mind: imagine that the three polarities of this framework were painted on a circular wooden disc, which was balanced on a single metal coil right beneath what would be *Area #7*. Imagine the disc were large enough to support 4 people – the 4 members of the Balance-The-Disc Group. If member 1 climbs on the disc, surely she would need to stand in the position right in the middle, above the metal coil. However, as soon as member 2 climbed up, both of them would have to move to positions where they would 'balance each other out'. Similarly, for each additional member climbing on the disc, the other members would need to move around the disc until they all found a place of equilibrium where the disc would not tilt. Now, if one member decided to walk over to the other side of the disc, all the other members would be forced to move around, changing their locations in order to reach a point of balance again. In addition, if the ground underneath the coil shifted, the members would also have to move. Likewise, if a force from outside impacted on the disc, the members would have to move. Thus, occupying *Area #7*, as with occupying all the other areas in which the member system can be located as a result of an equilibrium of forces, is a function of the forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task, as these forces are played out in the situation in which the group finds itself.

Although the principles of field theory make it possible for us to stipulate what certain positions in the field can look like, the schema being developed would be still more useful for research purposes if the focus were not on the positions, but on the movements within the field or, in other words, the movements between positions. In fact, as will be shown in the next chapter, when applied for the purposes of research, the framework will focus explicitly on observing behaviour as locomotion in the field that is possible only as a result of forces. However, the positions that members take up in the field may yet serve as data with regards to what might be taking place both

inside and outside of the group – particularly as a qualitative self-reflection tool for the group. Members of a work team could, for example, be asked to position themselves in the field in relation to individuality, belonging and task. These public statements about where members experience themselves to be located in the field can then be used to stimulate honest discussion about the group, its members and its environment.

## **4.5 Comparing the schema with existing theory**

### **4.5.1 Introduction**

I decided to describe the development of the schema, not as a logical step-by-step process in terms of which I systematically worked through existing theories, but as a narrative account of the way in which, after months of reading, trial and error, the schema emerged in a more or less organic fashion. This I did in section 3 of this chapter. At this point, however, I would like to subject the schema to the scrutiny, firstly, of the main theorists whom I have chosen to provide the theoretical base for this research and then, secondly, to various grouptheoretical concepts as developed by various researchers in the social sciences.

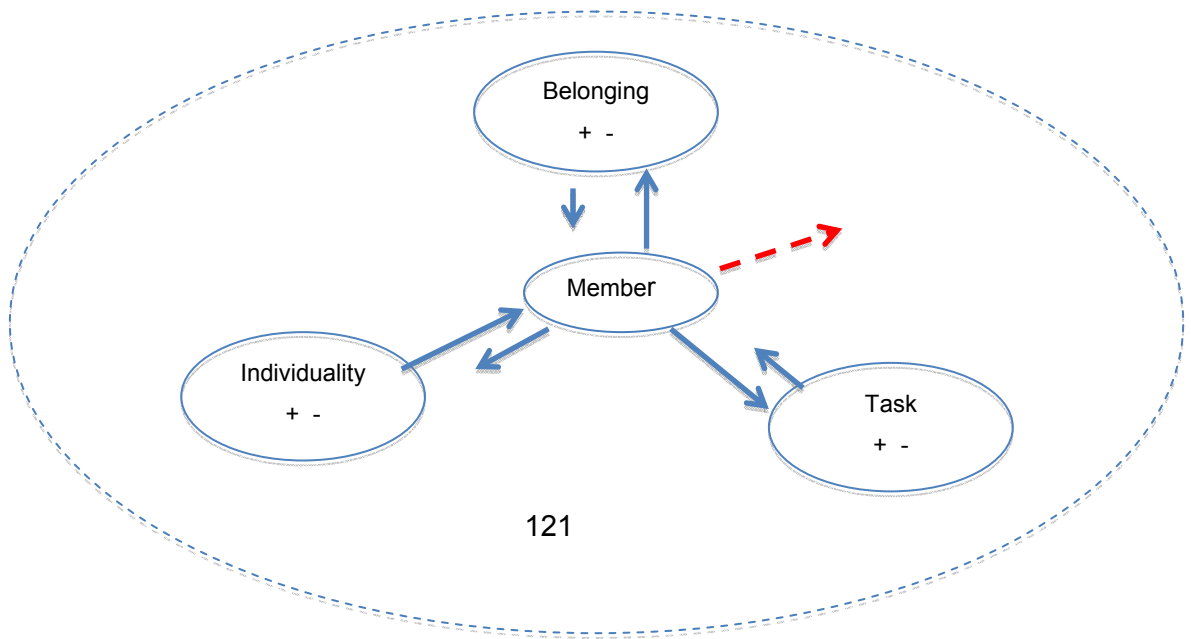
This section will, therefore, proceed to outline a general comparison between this schema and the theoretical traditions pioneered by Lewin, Bion, Foulkes and Agazarian. The section will then discuss a selection of popular grouptheoretical concepts not yet covered in this dissertation.

### **4.5.2 Field theory**

At this point it is helpful to refer back to the concepts of two field theories as described by Gold (1990) and discussed in chapter 4. From the discussions above it should be clear that the constructs that formed part of Lewin's specific field theory were used in much the same manner as initially described by him. The next section will examine these constructs and then subject the schema to the five rules emanating from Lewin's meta-theory, as distilled by Gold (1990) and as discussed in chapter 4.

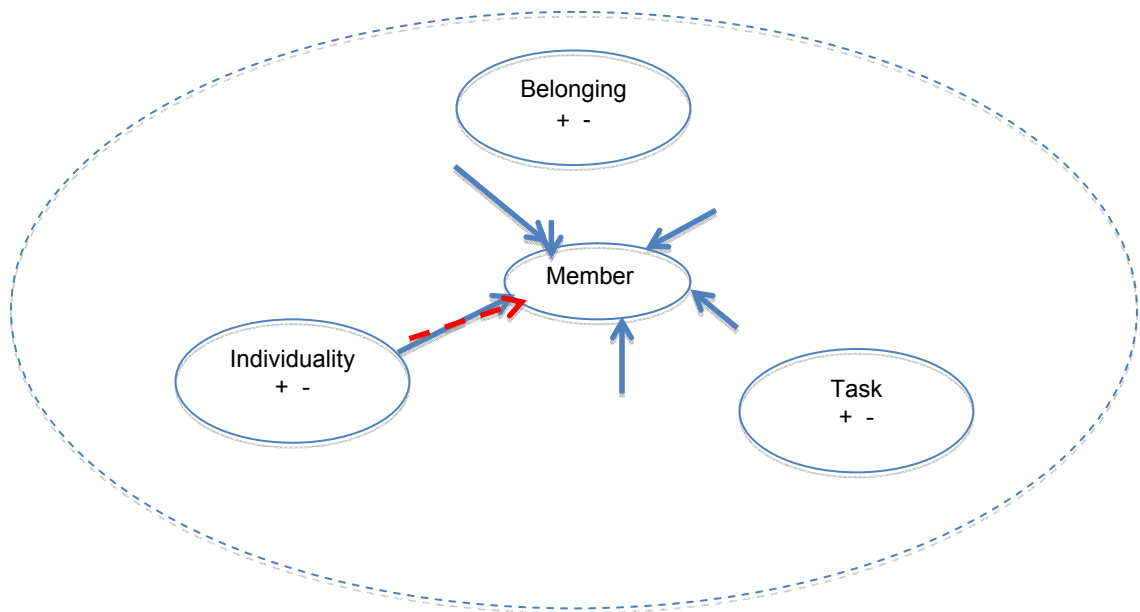
#### *4.5.2.1 Constructs from Lewin's specific field theory*

- a) *Life space*: The life space as used in this schema was redefined as the memberspace, according to Lewin's (1951) principles except that, in this schema, life space is limited to the person's membership of the group and is, thus, demarcated by the group's boundaries. It has already been discussed that the other areas of a person's life that impact his/her behaviour in the group enter the schema, in this case, through the 'individual system' – a subsystem of the 'member system' and, thus, isomorphically and hierarchically linked;
- b) *Forces, goals and valences*: These concepts are used in this schema exactly as described by Lewin (1951). However, one adaptation that was made was that of naming the three main 'polarities' of individuality, belonging and task goal region complexes in order to signify that these goal region complexes harbour both positive and negative valences for the member. Certain aspects of each of the three goal region complexes are, therefore, perceived as 'carrots' and others as 'sticks' – both coexisting within each goal region complex. With regards to forces, I have adopted Agazarian's adaptation of the notion of forces and resistances as driving and restraining forces, or as 'forces towards' and 'forces away from'. Although forces are also conceptualised as having a point of application, – the member-system – as per Lewin (1951), they were not represented in this way in the schematic representations above for the sake of simplicity. The representation in figure 4.9 below should be the same as in figure 4.10 further below in order to reflect accurately the notion of the member as the point of application. However, something is then lost in terms of conveying the notion of a set of opposing forces between the member and the three goal region complexes:



**Figure 4.9: The member as the point of application of the forces - A**

The figure above depicts forces of differing strengths (lengths) and directions (as depicted by the arrows) between the membersystem and the goal region complexes as well as the resultant force (in red), which indicates the direction of locomotion that can be expected. If the fact that all of these forces have the membersystem as the point of application, as depicted in the Lewinian format of the point of the arrow touching the point of application of the force, then the figure would resemble the figure 4.10 below:



**Figure 4.10: The member as the point of application for the forces - B**

The decision to depict the forces as in figure 4.9 is, therefore, based purely on elegance of representation and not because it is not believed that the forces have, as point of application, the membersystem.

- c) *Locomotion and positions in the field:* As in Lewin's work, locomotion is seen as movement through the various positions, relative to the goal region complexes in the field. In addition, locomotion is also seen as a result of forces. In terms of a group, all behaviour is seen as locomotion and, thus, as a result of forces in the member space.
- d) *Elements in the life space:* In this schema, the only elements that are broadly shown are the goal region complexes. However, the various attractive and daunting aspects (goals and aversions) of each of the goal region complexes have not been specified and neither have any other elements, including the behaviours of other members in the field, authority, physical location, and so on. All these elements and more are seen to exist in different ways for different members in different groups at different times with different effects on the behaviour of the members. When the way in which this schema will be applied as a theoretical lens is discussed in the next chapter, it will become clear how it is possible to use the schema inductively in order to identify the elements in the member space that impact on the member's positive and negative valences for certain aspects of individuality, belonging and task.

#### 4.5.2.2 *Field theory as meta-theory*

It is quite clear that Lewin's (1951) concepts, as used in his specific field theory, constituted a critical cornerstone in the representation of this schema. However, the question arises as to how this theoretical schema would stand up to his meta-theory, that is, the set of rules for the development of good theory. Each of the five rules that were discussed in chapter 4 will now be applied to the assessment of this schema:

- a) *Rule 1: Psychological phenomena must be explained by psychological conditions.*

A deliberate decision was made, and has already been discussed, to not only bring the psychological experience, or perceptions, of the member system into the schema, but also to create space for reality, as it exists 'out there'. Korzybski's (1948) notion of man as a map-maker and Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, as described by Agazarian (2000), were used to include the notion that it is essential to be able to distinguish between the member's perception of reality and reality itself, especially with

regard to the possibility of using the schema developed in this research study for intervention purposes. If, for example, we allow for the fact that a member's behaviour is both a result of his perceptions of the task of the group and the task itself as it exists in reality, then this implies that the leader's interventions which are aimed at strengthening the forces towards the task can be focused both on the member's perception of the task – taking pains to help the member perceive the alignment of group goals with personal goals in order to render involvement in the task more attractive – or the task itself – changing the member's formal role which represents the formal requirements of the member in relation to the overall group task. This rule has, thus, not been negated, but rather augmented by adding real events to the psychological perceptions of events.

*b) Rule 2: Theory building must be constructive.*

This theoretical schema was not developed by only observing empirical data, but mostly in order to observe empirical data. Accordingly, it is focused on uncovering the forces or the laws underlying member behaviour. In addition, it required creativity and the imagination of, for example, the 'magnetic polarities', in order to formulate the schema. This is exactly in line with the requirement that theory building must be constructive, as posed by Lewin's meta-theoretical thinking.

*c) Rule 3: We must take the totality of conditions into account when framing our explanations.*

This schema takes into account the group as a hierarchy of systems within its environment. In addition, despite the fact that the focus is on the systemic level of member, the influences of all other levels as open systems are recognised. It is not possible to understand any movement in the field (i.e. behaviour of the member) if not viewed against the background of both the specific situation of the group at that particular time and the context of the member in the group and in relation to the behaviours of the other members in the group. In this sense this schema is, in effect, a field theory of membership in terms of which the totality of conditions are seen as impacting on the member's movements between the three goal region complexes of individuality, belonging and task.

*d) Rule 4: The rule of contemporaneity: elements and conditions are able to influence behaviour in the present only.*

The schema developed here is seen as a dynamic schema in terms of which change is happening continuously over time. Exactly as postulated by Lewin (1951), it is in the present only where behaviour is influenced. Where past events, for example, the story of the team as developed in the dynamic matrix (Foulkes, 1975) play a role, it is always the way in which these past events are either experienced or relived in the present that is taken into account. Psychodynamic constructs, such as transference in this schema, have validity as they help us to understand the way in which the member's current experience of past events is being acted upon in the group.

e) *Rule 5: The rule of formalisation: good theory should be an effective hypothesis machine.*

Although this schema will not be used to generate hypotheses in this research project – it will be used as an observational and descriptive framework – it is, nevertheless, possible that various hypotheses can be formulated and tested in future research projects. Although one or two hypotheses to be tested in future research will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion chapter of the dissertation, I will cite a few examples of possible hypotheses in order to illustrate the way in which this schema complies with Lewin's rule of formalisation (Lewin, 1951). The possible hypotheses mentioned here are not fine-tuned for immediate use as research aims in experimental work, but are mentioned only in order to illustrate how the framework can be used to generate hypotheses that can be either accepted or refuted by means of rigorous empirical research:

- i. *Hypothesis 1:* When a member moves from Area #1 to Area #2, this is as a result of the fact that the equilibrium of forces towards and away from individuality and belonging has shifted towards 'individuality.'
- ii. *Hypothesis 2:* A member will move from Area #4 to Area #7 if the forces towards task involvement become stronger and/or the forces pushing away from task involvement become weaker.
- iii. *Hypothesis 3:* A group member's locomotion to Area #1 is indicative of the group's need to strengthen its outer boundary.
- iv. *Hypothesis 4:* A group member's locomotion to Area #2 is indicative of the member's need to strengthen the boundary between the individual and the group.
- v. *Hypothesis 5:* A group member's locomotion to Area #3 is indicative of the member's need to strengthen the boundary around the group task.



- vi. *Hypothesis 6:* A group member's locomotion from one position to another can be understood in terms of a change in the equilibrium of forces in the force field between the three goal region complexes.
- vii. *Hypothesis 7:* A prolonged fixation in a specific area can be changed by weakening or strengthening other forces in the force field.
- viii. *Hypothesis 8:* The behaviours characteristic of the various areas are a normal consequence of the interaction of forces with regards to group membership and need not be seen as pathological.
- ix. *Hypothesis 9:* Once the need for being located in a specific area has been fulfilled, the strength of the force towards that goal will weaken and the member will move to another location within the field.

As illustrated above, this framework adheres to the basic requirements for a good theory, as described by Lewin (1951), and it can, in effect, be termed a field theory of membership.

#### 4.5.3 The Tavistock tradition

Although the main ideas underlying the Tavistock tradition, as it was influenced by Bion (1961) and expanded upon by several others, were not used as explicit building blocks in the framework, as were Lewin's fieldtheory constructs, these ideas did, nevertheless, act as an ever-present compass with which to judge and evaluate whether the schema developed here was able to accommodate and describe them. These ideas will now be discussed individually.

##### 4.5.3.1 *The group-as-a-whole*

The first major contribution of Bion (1961) was the fact that he alerted us to the group-as-a-whole as a distinct entity that should be analysed if we are to make sense of the behaviours within the group. The way in which the group-as-a-whole enters the thinking in terms of this schema is not that there is an explicit focus on it- the explicit focus is on the member-level - but that a key underlying assumption of the framework is that it is not possible to interpret memberbehaviour without taking into account the dynamics in the group-as-a-whole. Agazarian's (2000) systemscentred framework makes it possible for the dynamics of the group-as-a-whole system to influence the dynamics of the membersystem. Accordingly, the group-as-a-whole and the member-level are never seen in isolation, but always in interaction.

#### 4.5.3.2 *The work group vs. the basic assumption group*

If we compare this schema with Bion's (1961) contributions regarding the work group and the basic assumption group, it is necessary to make a number of comments before testing whether the framework is capable of providing answers to the several useful questions posed in Bion's (1961) work. Firstly, as regards Bion's (1961) differentiation between the work group and the basic assumption group the following should be noted: In Bion's (1961) schema, the work group is perceived as the healthy – rational, sophisticated – functioning of the group in terms of attaining its goal while the basic assumption group is perceived as the pathological – irrational, primal – regression to primitive states by the group-as-a-whole in order to defend against the anxieties evoked in the course of the group's life. However, the terms "healthy" and "pathological" are seen as problematic when viewed from the perspective of the schema being developed.

In this framework, it is not possible to answer the question as to whether the group's behaviour is either 'normal' or 'abnormal' – healthy or pathological – by taking into account the group's, and subsequently, the group members' relation to the group's task alone, as it is essential that it also is viewed against the group's situational context. I am sure Bion would have agreed with this view, although references to the basic assumption states are, all too often, couched in pathological terms. For example, the case of the first meeting of a small study group in a Group Relations Conference: in the schema being developed here, the group's possible move into dependency or flight would appear as a normal and healthy response to the conditions existing in the overall conference structure. In fact, it would be rather abnormal if a group immediately engaged in the task of exploring the relations and relatedness as they unfolded in the here and now, except perhaps in a group whose members were experienced in being members of group relations conferences or training groups. The task of the consultant, according to the framework I am developing here, would, thus, be to allow the group its movement, including a reasonable amount of time spent in basic assumption mode, as a result of the fact that this could allow for important work with regards to the group members' needs for security, affiliation, creating common ground, acceptance, etc. Thus, in this context, the basic assumptions are seen as important developmental 'spaces' in which the group is allowed to pursue its 'as if' goals before being ready to resume its focus on the group's task.

It is possible to detect some very important links between the present framework and Bion's (1961) work, for example, if the group has dealt sufficiently with its 'as if' goals – its implicit goals – which exist in the goal region complexes of individuality and belonging, then the forces towards those goals will decrease as the valence of the members for these goals decreases. This, in turn, will result in a change in the resultant of forces and, possibly, in a locomotion in the direction of the goal region complex of task, that is, towards a work group state on the group-as-a-whole level. As in the case of Bion, it is not necessary for the leader, or, in a Small Study Group, the consultant, to intervene if the group is moving towards 'working' mode by itself (Armstrong, 2005). However, should the leader gain the impression that the group is spending a prolonged and superfluous amount of time, given the restricted overall time available, in basic assumption mode, then there will be an intervention that will be aimed at bringing the group's basic assumption functioning to the attention of the group so as to enable the group to address it consciously and, thus, to move into working mode again. In this case the assumption of the present framework, namely, that all members are influenced by forces towards and away from all three of the goal region complexes at all times, becomes important. It implies that, even in the most severe cases of basic assumption functioning, for example, when the group is in a severe state of ba-oneness, the forces towards individuality and task and away from belonging are still present, albeit much weaker at that moment than the forces towards belonging and away from individuality and task.

If the intervention on the part of the leader helps to shift the balance of forces, by helping either to weaken or strengthen the forces towards or away from the goal region complexes, so that the group system, and its member subsystems, are able to take up, or move through, new positions in the field, then the intervention can be regarded as effective. However, it is significant to note at this point both that the leader is not able to control the movement of the group and also that there is no guarantee that a disturbance in the equilibrium of forces that caused an extreme position close to belonging as a result of basic assumption functioning, will result in the group moving to a position closer to task. It can be that the disturbance of an equilibrium in one extreme, that is, belonging, can lead to a new equilibrium being reached in another extreme, that is, individuality.

#### *4.5.3.3 Defences: Pathology or normal human behaviour?*

At this point it is important to discuss in more detail one of the themes in the paragraph above, namely, whether group defences are to be seen as pathological or not. In the previous paragraph, I make the statement that defences are normal responses to circumstances and that they not be seen indiscriminately as pathological. I then used the example of a Group Relations Small Study Group to show that it appears perfectly normal that, under such conditions, the basic assumption defences would be evoked. However, later in the paragraph, I imply that, when a group exceeds the 'normal' time required to deal with its reasons for defending, the leader should intervene. Does this mean that the behaviour at that point is no longer normal and, thus, pathological? Also, where does one draw the line between allowing time for employing defensive strategies and intervening? In order to address these issues it is necessary to turn, first, to Armstrong (Armstrong, 2005), and then to Agazarian (2000).

Armstrong (2005), working from the Tavistock's systems psychodynamic tradition, points out that the defensive pattern becomes problematic only when the situation no longer requires it. For example, the infant, being small and vulnerable, has to be dependent on nourishment from the mother and exerts pressure on her, for instance, by crying, in order to provide for its needs. On the other hand, according to Armstrong, the adult member of a work team, or a Small Study Group, is not really dependent on the leader for his/her survival, although the said adult member can act 'as if' he/she were dependent. In such a case, the early relationship is transferred to the current situation, or else the internalised part-object of the withholding mother is projected onto the leader and pressure is exerted on the leader to provide direction and guidance. Of course, the adult group member is not, in fact, dependent on the leader for survival and the strong anxieties experienced when guidance, protection and spoon-feeding are withheld can be seen as irrational. Nevertheless, does it help to label these behaviours as 'pathological'? Not according to Agazarian (2000), and I agree with her way of describing defensive behavioural patterns as 'old-old roles' that have served the individual well in the past.

When seen as old-old roles, rather than as pathology, we are allowing for the fact that the defensive patterns are not emanating from the individual only, but are a dynamic consequence of various factors such as the ongoing responses, within a societal culture, towards an individual's behaviour in various group settings. In a training group, as well as in a therapy group, we are given the opportunities to explore these old-old roles and defences in order to come to a better understanding of where and why we use these defences and in what ways they are either helpful or not and also to

experiment with new ways of being members of the groups in which we find ourselves. Thus, for the group leader, this means that defensive behaviour need not be labelled as pathology, but rather that it be seen as a response to the cumulative effect of various interactional experiences of both the group and its members. Accordingly, the leader needs to help to create an atmosphere in which the group is able to identify which patterns of behaviour are helping them to perform the group task, and which are not.

In a systems-centred group these interventions are carried out immediately while, in a psychoanalytically informed group, they are timed in order to provide the group and its members with sufficient material upon which to reflect to enable them to discover and to ponder on the behavioural patterns. However, despite the above, according to the framework developed in this study, all behaviour is seen as a function of forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task on various systemic levels and the labelling of behaviour as healthy or pathological is deemed not necessary in order to work with behaviour according to this schema.

#### *4.5.3.4 The impact of the group's basic assumption behaviour on its members*

The three basic assumptions described by Bion (1961) as dependency, fight-flight and pairing will now be revisited. In this schema, one would expect to find the balance of forces towards and away from task to be strongly away from task with regard to all three of the basic assumption states. In ba dependency there may be stronger forces away from than towards individuality as members abdicate their unique, personal competencies, power and authority to the leader and blend into invisibility together with the rest of the group. However, this togetherness in dependency may also signify stronger forces towards than away from belonging as the group may be concerned with emphasising the group boundary rather than the individual member boundaries. On the other hand, during a ba fight-flight stage, the member can experience strong forces away from belonging to the group-as-a-whole together with strong forces towards belonging to factions or subgroups within the group. Similarly, strong forces towards individuality, especially in flight, and away from individuality – the need to not be caught in the crossfire – can be experienced while in a ba pairing phase the forces towards belonging and away from individuality can predominate as members join in

placing their hopes on what may come out of the magical union of the pair and, thus, abdicate their own critical abilities and possible contributions.

In order to code and analyse the data, it is essential that cognisance be taken throughout the process of what is occurring on the group-as-a-whole level as these group-as-a-whole patterns, as identified by Bion, exert strong forces on the members and it is not possible to interpret their behaviour in isolation from the group context within which they are operating.

#### *4.5.3.5 Authority*

In the Bionian framework (Bion, 1961), as assimilated into the Tavistock tradition, special emphasis is placed on the group's relation and responses to authority as well as the roles that members take up as a function of both the group-as-a-whole and their personal valences. This was discussed in chapter 4, but the question now arises as to where does authority and role fit into this framework?

In terms of the framework, authority which is related to leadership forms part of the myriad of factors inherent in group life that will influence the way in which a member will relate to his/her own individuality, to his/her belonging to a larger collection of people and to the group task. The way in which authority is enacted by the leader and perceived by the member will exert an influence on how the member is willing or unwilling to show and act with regard to his/her own individuality, form connections with other members and become involved in the group's task. On the other hand, the member's personal authority will be the result of the degree of autonomy, as a function of individuality and task, which has been achieved in the group in such a way that the other members will accept his/her authority. Thus, although the dynamics associated with authority can be explained in terms of the forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task, this framework places less emphasis on authority as a special contributor to group dynamics and places it on the same level as various other potentially influencing factors. Of course, this is the deductive or predefined component of the framework. Once the framework has been applied to the empirical data emanating from the dynamics of real groups, it may well be that the way in which authority is enacted and perceived can be seen to actually exert a more significant influence than other factors within the group. Nevertheless, this is not a presupposition of the framework and it will need to come to the fore through the inductive component of applying the framework. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

#### 4.5.3.6 Role

The member's role in this schema is perceived as the way in which a specific position between individuality, belonging and task is taken up in the field and the way in which this is being employed by the group-as-a-whole. However, this 'way of taking up a position' can only be ascertained inductively, that is, by looking at the data in order to see how it plays out in the group. The deductive component of the schema, namely, classifying behaviour either as towards or away from individuality, belonging and task, will help to identify the position being taken up in the field, while the inductive component, namely, describing what is happening on the basis of the data, will help to describe the way in which it happened.<sup>32</sup>The role of flight leader as described in the group relations literature (Miller *et al.*, 2004), can be dealt with as follows, using the theoretical lens developed here: According to the literature, the flight leader is the member who leads the group in its flight mode away from the group's task. Naturally this happens against the background of a group in a *fight/flight* state, as described by Bion (1961). In order to be labelled the flight-leader, the member's behaviour should indicate strong forces away from task while, in terms of the pattern of communication within the group, it should be obvious that the member's behaviour is precipitating flight behaviour on the part of the other members. For example, if one member continuously introduces new topics, that are unrelated to the group's explicit task, and invites others to join in the discussion *and the other members respond to this*, then this member can be regarded as a leader in the group's flight away from its task. It is important to note that responding in accordance with the role of the flight leader does not necessarily entail joining in the discussions and, thus, overtly supporting the flight although it may entail supporting the flight covertly by remaining silent and, thus, by not confronting the flight leader, colluding with the flight leader in taking the group away from its anxietyprovoking task.

#### 4.5.3.7 The organisation-in-the-mind

The way in which the group organises itself can provide helpful clues as to the way in which the group is held in the mind of its members. Hirschorn (1988) and Obholzer (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994) focus our attention on the way in which groups employ social defences, while Armstrong (2005) emphasises that these social defences

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<sup>32</sup>The way in which the schema will be applied deductively and inductively will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

happen in response to what he termed the organisation-in-the-mind of the group members – see chapter 3. Our schema will help in mapping out the behavioural patterns of the group's members both towards and away from various aspects of individuality, belonging and task. This will, in turn, through the systems principles of hierarchy and isomorphy, reveal something of what is happening on the group-as-a-whole level as well as on the level of the individuals within the group.

The ways in which patterns on the member-level are played out, can, thus, provide an insight into the way in which the group is being perceived and experienced in the minds of its members. There is also a link between Armstrong's theory and the present schema in the fact that both take not only the experience seriously but also the reality as it exists out there. The organisation in the mind of the member with regards to his/her membership can, thus, be seen as an internal mental model of the member's relation to individuality, belonging and task, and influenced both by the member's perceptions and subjective experience as well as the real emotional resonances within the group.

#### 4.5.4 The group analytic tradition

##### 4.5.4.1 *The group as an abstraction*

The schema developed in this research study assumes that, by virtue of a person's formal inclusion in the group, he/she finds him/herself in the field of forces between the goal region complexes of individuality, belonging and task. Of course, as did Foulkes (Foulkes & Anthony, 1984), it is necessary to define which group we are talking about as the individual is, simultaneously, a member of various groups. In addition, the fact that the schema refers to formal inclusion does not necessarily mean that the schema can be applied to formal groups only as opposed to informal groups such as families or social groups. In fact, various examples of informal groups have been used in this chapter in order to explain some of the aspects of this schema. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this schema has been developed specifically to observe and analyse the data emanating from a formal training group and, therefore, it is essential that the focus remain on formal groups. However, people are members of various formal groups at the same time and this schema, in line with Foulkes (Foulkes & Anthony, 1984) as well



as Agazarian (2000), acknowledges that the group is an abstraction that should be demarcated and defined before being studied. Accordingly, the schema works only when the group to which the member belongs has been clearly defined. This, in turn, means that the member's relations to individuality, belonging and task can be mapped out either for his/her immediate work group, the cross-functional project team to which he/she belongs, or for his belonging to the organisation as a whole. Different interpretations of member behaviour will be made for each of these cases in which the focus is on different demarcations of the boundaries of the group.

#### *4.5.4.2 The group matrix*

The question arises as to the way in which the notion of the group matrix is taken into account. As described in chapter 3 the group matrix represents the entire pool of meanings, interactions and communications, both consciously and unconsciously (Foulkes & Anthony, 1984; Stacey, 2001) that evoke, sustain and diminish the valences which the member has for the various aspects of belonging, individuality and task. However, the group matrix is also more than this: each behaviour and communication, thus, each locomotion through the field, by each member contributes to the group matrix and has an impact on the forces towards and away from the goal region complexes for each member of the group. With regard to the metaphor previously used of the group on a balancing disc, where each additional member, as well as each move by each member, would require of each other member to assess and adjust his/her own position, we now come to the notion of the group matrix as the pool of meaning that makes up the group and to which each member contributes throughout the group's life and by which the members are permeated.

The matrix can also be seen as a web of communications comparable to a neural network (Foulkes & Anthony, 1984; Stacey, 2001) and where each interaction by each member is seen as a function of the network as a whole and where a focal point can become a nodal point again – through which communication is able to flow freely – only through the collective functioning of the entire network. In terms of this schema this means that the forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task that are impacting on a specific membersystem, are also caused by each locomotion of each of the other membersystems in the groupsystem which are in turn caused by the forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task.

#### *4.5.4.3 Levels of exchange*

While this framework does not provide a predefined conceptual space for distinguishing between the different levels of exchange as identified by Foulkes (1975) and as described in chapter 3, the inductive application of the framework (which will be discussed in the next chapter) does allow for observing communication behaviour on different levels of depth including the current reality, transference, projective or primordial levels. The framework will, thus, allow us to identify communication towards and away from individuality, belonging and task on the different levels of exchange, as described by Foulkes (1975), and as they emerge from the data.

#### *4.5.4.4 Mirroring and resonance*

Both these Foulkesian concepts are dealt with in this schema through the systems perspective that the outputs of one system become the input of the next system. In other words, as one membersystem communicates within the group, that communication becomes the input for all the other membersystems. In this way emotional states can reverberate through the different membersystems and the group-as-a-whole (resonance) and, thus, one system can become aware of the way in which its outputs are being received by and responded to by another system (mirroring) (Nitsun, 1991; 1998) – see chapter 3.

#### *4.5.4.5 Free-floating discussion*

Free association in the group in terms of which the one discussion by one member leads to associations for other members (Nitsun, 1996) is also congruent with the principles of isomorphy as described above. This process also happens hierarchically while, over time, the free floating communication does not only tell us about the association of individual membersystems, but also about the associations of the group-as-a-whole and, thus, the unconscious themes that are operative within the group. When viewed in conjunction with the patterns of communication behaviour towards and away from the goal region complexes of individuality, belonging and task, these unconscious themes can provide access to what is happening in the group unconscious.

#### *4.5.4.6 The anti-group*

Another concept from the Foulkesian tradition that needs to be taken into account at this point is Nitsun's notion of the anti-group (Nitsun, 1996). As described in chapter 3, the anti-group represents the group's destructive tendencies towards itself. However, this anti-group has both a destructive and a self-destructive connotation and, according to Nitsun (1996), can become beneficial only when acknowledged and worked with. If ignored, it can literally result in the self-destruction of the group, as opposed to the concept of group therapy as therapy of the group by the group, as described by Foulkes (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957). This is one aspect of the present schema which is potentially troublesome: if a movement towards or away from individuality, belonging or task cannot be seen as 'good' or 'bad' in itself, then it means we cannot merely say that simultaneous strong forces away from individuality, belonging and task constitute the anti-group – we will have to weigh each movement, towards or away from the three goal region complexes, against the group context before we will be able to ascertain whether the movement (and its underlying force) worked towards or against the development and growth of the group.

#### 4.5.5 Systems-centred theory

The systems-centred approach by Agazarian was one of the critical ingredients in making this schema work. Like field theory, systems thinking is built into the very essence of this schema. Accordingly, the following section will re-emphasise some of the main concepts of a systems approach to groups.

##### *4.5.5.1 The visible and invisible group*

In her theory of the visible and invisible group Agazarian (Agazarian & Peters, 1981) distinguishes between individual psychodynamics and group dynamics – see chapter 4. The framework that I am developing here allows for the distinction to be made based on the broader tenets of Agazarian's (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) thinking on groups as systems – a distinction that was adopted in this schema. Both the invisible group-as-a-whole and the visible individuals are present in the focus on the membersystem as the member system represents the interface between the individual system and the group system.

##### *4.5.5.2 Hierarchy and isomorphism*

Several aspects of Agazarian's (2000) thinking are woven into this framework, including the entire notion of open systems that are hierarchically and isomorphically related. It was shown that, although the focus in this schema is on the level of the membersystem as a subsystem of the group, influences from the other systems within the hierarchy are taken into account through the isomorphic principle.

Another notion that was described above regarding the way in which the group matrix could be reconciled with the thinking in this research study, is that of the effect that behaviours on the part of various members have on each member. In systems language this would refer to the outputs of one system that become the inputs of the next and, thus, the locomotion of one membersystem in the field serves as communication inputs to the other membersystems and these will, in turn, affect their locomotion through the field.

#### *4.5.5.3 Subgrouping*

Another of Agazarian's concepts that can be easily reconciled with this framework is her distinction between functional and stereotype subgrouping (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) – see chapter 3. In this framework, functional sub-grouping will encompass forces towards belonging as well as forces towards task that will be dominant, while in stereotype sub-grouping the interaction will, as described earlier, be predominantly between forces towards and away from individuality and belonging. The way in which the framework has been operationalised for research purposes will be discussed in the next chapter. One specific aspect to be discussed will be the way in which the formation of subgroups will be treated in the analysis of the behaviours (locomotion) towards and away from individuality, belonging and task.

#### 4.5.6 Other group dynamic concepts

It would not be possible to provide a detailed discussion of each concept in the literature on group dynamics and how each concept could be described by the schema developed in this research study. However, the concepts of group development and group norms will be discussed as they are especially significant both in terms of the group dynamics literature and the data analysed through this theoretical lens.

##### *4.5.6.1 Group development*

As discussed in chapter 3, there are a number of different theories about group development. Various scholars identify different phases of group development while others, such as Bion, do not see the group as developing through phases. The way in which this conceptualisation could account for group development is to be found in the fact that the members' valences for certain aspects of belonging, individuality and task will change as the group moves from one stage in its development to the next. It can, thus, be said that, according to this framework, the equilibrium of forces will be disturbed as the needs of the members on a certain level of group development are met – in other words, the valences they had for certain goals return to zero. This, in turn, sends the members locomoting through the various positions in the field again until a new equilibrium on a new level of group development is achieved. Accordingly, it is not true, according to this framework, that the more mature the group is, the closer the members will be to Area #7 in the middle of the field. The group is faced with new challenges on each level of development and the members are, therefore, forced to deal with new anxieties and, thus, new defences in order to deal with these anxieties. For example, in a training group the group could move from one level of depth in terms of personal sharing and honesty regarding the emotions experienced in the here and now to the next level. This, in turn, can again send the members in different directions – towards and away from individuality, belonging and task – as they struggle to come to terms with the new, deepened task and what it requires of them. Some members may flee from the task and make jokes in order to relieve the tension, some members may join other members in subgroups while some members may fall into dependency, hoping that someone will rescue them from having to confront the new challenges of the task.

#### *4.5.6.2 Group norms*

In this schema group norms will become visible as patterns of behaviour that are met either with approval or disapproval by the group. If, for example, one member takes a step in the direction of the group task in order to discuss her experience of the group in the here and now, in a group that has established a norm of frivolous communication in defiance of the leader, this towardtask behaviour can be met with awayfrombelonging behaviour, that is, scolding, belittling or ignoring the member, and awayfromtask behaviour, that is, redirecting the conversation to superficial topics. This underlines the importance of interpreting the behaviour in the group against the contextual background of the group itself, as created through its lifetime – the dynamic matrix (Foulkes, 1975).

## 4.6 Conclusion

It became clear in this chapter that it is possible to conceptualise the forces involved in being a member of a small group as forces towards or away from the three goal region complexes of individuality, belonging and task. Conceptualising the member in a field of forces between these three polarities not only corresponds with the working definition of 'group member', as developed from various group dynamics theorists, but it is also congruent with the main theoretical foundations laid by field theory, psychoanalytic group theories and systemscentred group theory. Various grouptheoretical concepts can also be explained and interpreted by this schema. The next chapter will show that, although it can be that this schema could have broader application possibilities, it certainly can be used as an effective research tool for coding and analysing the data for this research in both a deductive and an inductive manner. The way in which the framework and its underlying principles have been operationalised for the purposes of the research will also be discussed in the next chapter and practical examples will be given with regards to the way in which the coding and data analysis were conducted.

# 5

## Revised method

There is nothing so practical as a good theory. (Lewin, 1951, p. 169)

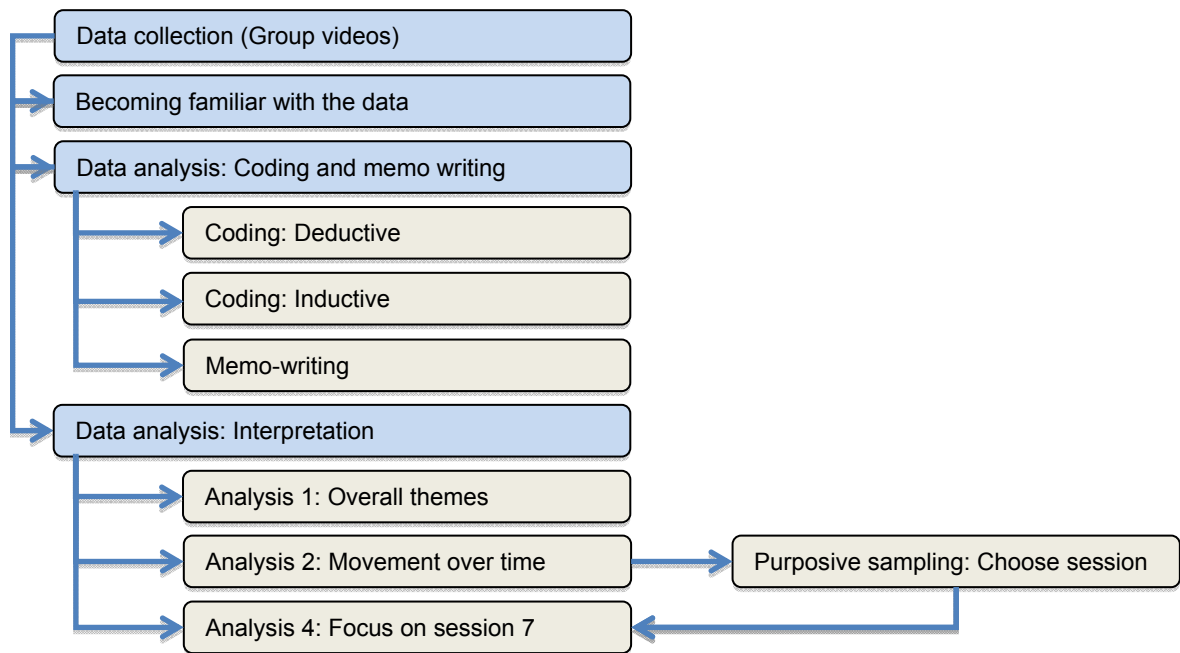
### 5.1 Introduction

As mentioned in chapter 1, one of the aims of this research study was to develop a methodology in terms of which to conduct an exploration of the dynamics of being a group member. Chapter 2 commenced with a description of the process of developing a research methodology based on Van Huyssteen's postfoundational approach as the

guiding philosophy for this research study. The essence of this research philosophy is the fact that truth is perceived as something worth striving for, but that it is essential that we acknowledge the human fallibility inherent in our search for truth. Knowledge is, thus, seen as tentative. This implies that, as social scientists, we must apply ourselves fully in striving to explain by means of general laws whilst remaining cognisant of the possibility that the individual case can elude our attempts at general explanations – hence, the simultaneous focus on both explanation based on theory (deductive reasoning) and understanding based on an exploration of the individual case (inductive reasoning).

Chapter 2 then proceeded by considering constructivist grounded theory as a research design, based on its congruence with the postfoundational perspective. However, with regard to the analysis of the data, the realisation dawned that, in our application of constructivist grounded theory, a more structured approach was needed as opposed to the initial openended approach that was adopted. Chapters 3 and 4 then embarked on developing a schema/framework that could serve as a theoretical lens through which to look at the data.

In this chapter, the focus will be on showing how the schema that was developed in the previous two chapters was operationally applied to the research data as an observational and analytic instrument. Schematically, the revised data analysis methodologies that were applied can be represented as a process that unfolded as follows:



**Figure 5.1: Overview of the revised data analysis process**

As a result of the fact that there were no changes to both the data collection process and to the process of becoming familiar with the data, these two steps in the overall process will not be discussed at this point as they have already been discussed in chapter 2. This chapter will proceed, firstly, to provide a detailed account of how the data was coded in a way that was simultaneously deductive and inductive. Following this, the way in which the data was interpreted on various levels of depth will be discussed, together with the additional and finer sampling that became necessary as the interpretation of the behaviourcodes became increasingly more in-depth and ‘closer’ to the data.

## 5.2 Revised data analysis: An abductive approach to coding the data

The fact that the data analysis was conducted in a deductive-inductive (abductive) manner, influenced both the coding of the data as well as its subsequent analysis and interpretation. The coding phase was carried out deductive-inductively while the analysis and interpretation phase was also done using both these types of logic (Charmaz, 2006)<sup>33</sup>. In this section the coding phase will be described.

<sup>33</sup>Due to the sheer amount of data, it wasn’t possible in this study to have another person to also do the coding in order to check the codes. In the final chapter it is recommended that



As mentioned in chapter 2, AtlasTi was used as the qualitative data analysis software for this research study. The video recordings and transcriptions of all ten sessions of the training group were imported as primary documents for analysis. After the transcriptions had been imported into AtlasTi, deductive codes were generated and stored in the system to be applied to the communication behaviours of the group members. The deductive codes were generated based on the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter. They categorised all communication behaviour in the group as either towards or away from belonging, individuality and task.<sup>34</sup>

- a) *Towards belonging*: Any act the result of which could be expected to increase the sense of belonging between group members. Also any act of which the result can be expected to emphasise the psychological boundary around the collective as opposed to emphasising the psychological boundary of a single member. This can be on the member-to member-level, for example, one member inviting another member to join the group, the subgroup-level, for example, two or three members who support each other's points of view as opposed to other opinions in the group or on the group-as-a-whole level, for example, a statement differentiating the group from other groups or indicating affinity for the group. It can also include both the attempt to facilitate the belonging of others to the group as well as the attempt to be included in either the group or a subgroup of the group. It is important to note that it is the act itself not the result of the act that is considered. It can, thus, be that the act – of which one would normally expect the consequence to be inclusion into the group – has the ultimate effect of exclusion from the group. For example, in the case of a group member who makes concerted efforts to be included in the group by means of attention-seeking behaviour. This attention-seeking behaviour would be coded as “Towards belonging” type behaviour, even

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another research team work on the same data in order to see how their codes differ or not from the codes generated here.

<sup>34</sup> This can be done legitimately according to the Lewinian principle of behaviour as locomotion (Lewin, 1981). The focus will, thus, be on communication as behaviour (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) and the behaviour, as per our schema, will always be a result of the forces towards and away from the three goal region complexes. Accordingly, all behaviour in the group may be expected to contain elements of at least one, but most probably more than one, of the six possible movements towards or away from the three goal region complexes.

though it might evoke “Away from belonging” behaviour from other members which can, in the end, result in the member being pushed away or isolated from the group. The focus here is on behaviours acknowledging both the fact and the importance of everyone in the group belonging to the group.

- b) *Away from belonging*: Any act of which the result can be expected to decrease the sense of belonging between the group members. Also any act of which the result could be expected to be the weakening of the group boundary in order to strengthen either an individual or a subgroup boundary. This means that one act which is aimed at inclusion in a subgroup based on shared features such as gender or language, would be coded as both “Towards belonging” to the sub-group and “Away from belonging” to the group-as-a-whole behaviour. At this juncture, the point made in chapter 4 should be emphasised, namely, that ‘away from belonging’ behaviour is not equal to ‘towards individuality’ behaviour. If one act by a member aims to separate the member from the group-as-a-whole through a critical comment about the group’s functioning, this act should be coded as both “Away from belonging: differentiating herself from the group” and “Towards individuality: using critical ability”. The descriptive tags to the codes will be discussed below in more detail as part of the inductive use of the schema, but are used here to show that the two movements involved in the same act are, indeed, two movements – one towards individuality and one away from belonging – and not one movement only. In fact, in this example another code would, in fact, be added, namely, “Towards task: critical reflection on group functioning”.
- c) *Towards task*: Any act which is aimed at involvement in the group’s primary task or that is aimed at making it easier for the group or its members to engage with the group’s task. In the training group the explicit task, as printed in the material to the group members, was to “learn about how groups function by studying your own functioning as a group in the here and now”. All behaviours that display this can be regarded as towards task while all that do not, are not. Examples of ‘towards task’ behaviours include critical listening; self-reflection; reflection on the group-as-a-whole; reflection and feedback on actions by fellow members; and comments regarding feelings, emotions and thoughts in the here and now. A statement that invites a fellow member to become involved in the group task would be coded both as ‘towards belonging’ and ‘towards task’. Also, behaviours that are aimed at enhancing the group’s ability to be involved in its task are also coded as ‘towards task’, for example, maintenance behaviour in terms of which the group reorganises itself, with regard to setting

boundaries and norms, in order to achieve better task involvement. Another type of behaviour that was coded 'towards task' was behaviour aimed at keeping the group atmosphere 'light and experimental'. This was based on the idea that a light and experimental mood increases the group's ability both to learn and to take risks, which is exactly what the group is supposed to do. However, 'joking' in order to flee from the group's task was coded as 'away from task'.

- d) *Away from task*: Any communication act that appears either to block or to resist other members working on the group's task would be coded as away from task activities, including any communication act that is directed away from the group's task or the anxieties associated with it.
- e) *Towards individuality*: Any act by any member that underscores the notion that the member is a separate individual with unique attributes, a unique history and unique wishes and opinions and abilities. Behaviours that emphasise this are seen as indications that the member values being seen, recognised and respected as an individual.
- f) *Away from individuality*: Any act by any member that appears either to hide or undermine the notion of the member as a separate and unique individual is coded as 'away from individuality' behaviour. For example, to 'hide' in the group – a member could either hide 'in the corner', thus no or limited participation, or hide 'behind the group or a subgroup' by repeatedly agreeing with the group or uncritically following the group, or hide 'behind the task' by, for instance, acting like an interviewer who places considerable focus on other members' reflections on their experiences in the group while comfortably hiding behind the 'microphone'.

However, in accordance with the principles of constructivist grounded theory and postfoundationalism, the coding was not done in a deductive fashion only. Instead the framework provides a theoretical outline only and requires inputs from specific cases in order to describe specific dynamics. For example, it is not possible to predict exactly how the basic assumption states will affect a member's behaviour although we are able to make certain suppositions based on the possibilities provided by the framework. Similarly, with regard to an issue such as 'authority', we can only state that, based on this framework, the way in which authority is enacted and perceived will have an impact on the forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task, but we are not able to say how this will play out. However, it would be possible to show how it played out by looking at the specific data from a specific group within a specific

context, that is, using inductive reasoning. The framework was, thus, specifically designed to provide a space that is congruent with current theoretical thinking, but that, simultaneously, allows us to take into account the uniqueness of a specific case.

We will now look at the following example from the group transcriptions:

*Erna*                      *Did you guys hear the story of my brother's wedding?*

In this case the speech can be coded as “Away from task” as it is not connected to the primary group task of examining the group as a group in the here and now. This, however, is not enough as it does not take into account the background to what was happening in the group as well as not allowing an analysis of what was happening ‘within’ each of the goal region complexes.

It is in such a case that the need for an inductive component to the coding process arises. Accordingly, in each case of coding, the coding was carried out against the background of what the research team believed was happening in the group at that time. In addition, every effort was made to make as few inferences as possible during the coding process so that the way in which the coding was carried out could be as close as possible to the way in which the data would have been coded by anyone else who had watched the videos and read the transcriptions. An inductive descriptor will, thus, be added to each deductive categorisation of the six possible directions of locomotion. With regard to the example cited above:

*Erna*                      *Did you guys hear the story of my brother's wedding?*

If an inductive approach is added to the deductive approach, then more possibilities for coding open up. One code can, thus, be “Away from task: Introducing external discussion topic”. If we view this communication act in the context of the fact that the group, at this point, had adopted a strong pattern of engaging in superficial discussions regarding topics outside of the group, then it also becomes necessary to code for the ‘groupness’ of this communication act in terms of which Erna had joined the group in its non-task directed actions. Another code could, thus, be added to the first, namely, “Towards belonging: Joining the group in topic discussion”. In addition, there is a slight difference between someone who only joins in the topics as introduced by others, and someone who actually introduces the topics. In the case cited above the speaker did not merely “addon” to a topic which had been introduced by someone else, but took

the initiative to introduce a topic and, thus, become more visible in the group than those members who were merely tagging along with the topics that had already been introduced. Accordingly, it is possible to add another code to this speech, namely, “Towards individuality: Becoming visible by introducing discussion topic”.

Thus, with regard to this single speech act, it was possible to allocate the following codes:

- a) Away from task: Introducing discussion topic;
- b) Towards belonging: Joining the group in topic discussion;
- c) Towards individuality: Becoming visible by introducing discussion topic.

When all the speech acts of all the members over all ten sessions were coded in this way, patterns started to emerge for analysis. It is important to note at this point that, when I carried out the inductive part of the coding, it was essential that theoretical inferences was avoided at all cost. The inductive descriptors described, as closely as possible, only what was observed in the data – nothing more and nothing less. For example, it would be counter to the principles of grounded theory to frame the inductive descriptor component of the “Away from task” code as “Leading the group in flight”. If Erna had, indeed, led the group in flight, then this would become evident during the analysis and interpretation of the patterns that emerged throughout the life of the group. However, to jump to theoretical descriptions at this stage, aside from the categorisation between individuality, belonging and task, would be to deny the data the opportunity to speak for itself.

### 5.2.1 Coding examples

A few examples will now be given to illustrate the way in which the coding process described above was applied to the research data.

#### 5.2.1.1 *Example 1: the pair with the secret*

The first example is that of a pair who emerged in the group towards the latter half of the group’s life. In an earlier session, there had been a moment where the two main characters, Francis and Debbie, had been involved in an interpersonal exchange during which Francis had indicated to Debbie that she had often wished that the two of them could be friends, but that she had never managed to take the initiative to telephone Debbie as she had felt that Debbie was ‘a little above’ her, that is, very

clever, mature, and so on. The example cited here had taken place in the seventh session, which had started on the third day of the group. Until this point, the group had had two evening in-group sessions, followed by a full day which had consisted of two in-group sessions, one out-group session<sup>35</sup> and two more in-group sessions. This interchange had taken place towards the end of the session, directly after issues regarding being judged in the group had been discussed. The discussion on judgement in the group had come up as a reflection on a conflict that had arisen in the group on the Thursday evening and which had focused on whether it is morally acceptable for homosexual couples to adopt children. One member apologised to another member, this member did not reciprocate, a silence followed, eye contact was made between Debbie and Francis, Debbie laughed, became silent, and laughed again...

DEBBIE (laugh) We were just having a moment ... nothing specific ... it's cool. I'm going to leave it up to you to worry about.

FRANCIS No, it's not that.

DEBBIE We went for a drink yesterday afternoon.

FRANCIS Ja, and then we just ... ja.

DEBBIE (laugh) ... just things that we saw, that is something that lingered with us, I guess, but for which the group is definitely not ready.

Ja. So.

STEPHAN So, the whole thing about Thursday evening was not complete? At least for some more than others?

DEBBIE Ja, but it is now. Ja, it's like ... ja, for us."

The following codes were allocated to this section:

- a) Towards belonging: Pairing between Debbie and Francis
- b) Away from belonging: Pairing between Debbie and Francis by withholding from the group
- c) Away from individuality: Debbie and Francis hiding in the pair and not willing to become visible as individuals in the group
- d) Away from task: Shying away from discussing material relevant to the group's task within the group
- e) Towards task: Here and now comment on the group's readiness with regard to discussing sensitive material

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<sup>35</sup>As discussed in chapter 3, the programme was structured around in-group sessions – the group was busy with its here and now task – and out-group sessions – the group moved to another room and the facilitators took up different roles. During these out-group sessions, the focus shifted from the here and now to the there and then and the group used the outside space to reflect upon what had happened in the group during the in-group sessions.

The reasoning behind allocating these codes included the following: Firstly, the basic principles for coding were adhered to in that the section was coded both deductively (as behaviour/movement towards or away from individuality, belonging and/or task) and inductively with the inductive descriptor describing what had occurred in the group without making reference to theory. In this case the first and obvious movement was ‘towards belonging’<sup>36</sup> as the pair had made a connection with each other, thus emphasising the psychological boundary of the pair as opposed to the psychological boundaries of the two individual members.

In this interaction Debbie and Francis were, essentially, informing the group that they had made a special connection over drinks outside of the group and they had a secret that they are not going to share with the group as the group was not ready for it. So, while on the member-to-member-level this interaction could be seen as ‘towards belonging’, when seen on the level of the group-as-a-whole, it was actually an ‘away from belonging’ act as a result of the fact that the boundary of the pair was emphasised over and above the boundary of the group. The group was, according to the pair, not ready to share in their secret and, thus, they had moved away from the group and into the pair where they could fulfil their need for belonging.

However, the interaction was also coded as ‘away from individuality’ as both members had chosen rather to hide in the pair than to stand up and become visible as unique individuals within the group that are separate from the other members and the group-as-a-whole.

In addition, the code ‘away from task’ was allocated as the pair had not openly discussed their experience of the group within the group, except for the statement “for which the group is definitely not ready”. This is a here and now statement of the member’s perception of the readiness of the group with regard to what she had to share and, thus, the ‘towards task’ code.<sup>37</sup>

#### *5.2.1.2 Example 2: an apology not reciprocated*

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<sup>36</sup>Although the full code name is “Towards belonging: Pairing between Debbie and Francis” I use the first section of the code names only here for the sake of brevity.

<sup>37</sup>Note that this discussion is on the coding process only. The way which all of this was analysed and interpreted will be discussed later in this chapter.

The following excerpt is taken from the same session as the excerpt above. It happened approximately halfway through the session. In this excerpt Maggie is referring to the conflict on Thursday night, although she says “Friday night” in her speech. As background to this interaction: during the conflict about same-sex couples adopting children, considerable emphasis had been placed on the fact that the Christian faith perceives homosexuality as a sin. A strong subgroup had emerged of members who aligned themselves with a conservative strand of the Christian belief. However, Maggie, who had identified herself as a Muslim, had been the first person to challenge the conservative Christian subgroup. After Maggie’s contribution that Thursday evening, several other silent members with more moderate views had been included into the conversation. Before we proceed with the coding, it is also necessary to indicate that Maggie’s tone, for which she apologises here, had not been at all judgemental. The judgemental stance within the group during the conflict had, in fact, been taken by the anti-adoption by same sex couples subgroup, led by Shelly. So, in the excerpt below, Maggie apologises to Shelly, but, in fact, opens the door for Shelly to apologise for her (Shelly’s) judgemental stance – possibly a strong contributing factor to the pair in the previous example not wanting to share their ‘secret’:

- JOEL            You wanted to check something with the group.
- MAGGIE        I actually wanted to say something. After Friday night and the conversation about gay couples adopting children ... I just thought a lot about it and I just wanted to say to Shelly that I understand entirely your religious beliefs and I didn’t want to make you feel that I was making a judgement of you by telling you to not judge them. I just needed to say that.
- SHELLY        Okay. (dismissive tone)
- MAGGIE        Did you feel like I was judging you?
- SHELLY        No, there was a time when you looked at me and you looked at me and you gave me this look and you said “Don’t judge other people”, and I was, like wow! All I’m saying is the only thing that was my personal beliefs were, I’m not saying that they were incapable of loving a child. I just didn’t think it was fair to put a child in that situation where a child has to explain from early on ... ..I’m just saying that’s me – how I feel.
- MAGGIE        ... I understand entirely what you’re saying, but like you have your beliefs, I have my beliefs as well. Maybe sometimes you just have to agree to disagree and do so respectfully. Maybe if I didn’t do it respectfully, then I apologise. I understand your perspective, at the end of the day, I’m still going to feel about the situation the way that I feel, and you’re still going to feel your way.
- SHELLY        Well, I think we’ve parted with ‘agree to disagree’.

When this interaction had started, a ‘pregnant’ silence had fallen on the rest of the group, almost in expectation that something really meaningful was about to happen



within the group. However, sadly, this did not happen. Judgement, being judgemental and fearing to be judged were still hanging in the air and it was not possible to address the issue directly. The following codes were allocated:

For Maggie's interactions:

- a) Towards belonging: Being apologetic
- b) Towards belonging: Opening up and becoming vulnerable
- c) Towards belonging: Direct question regarding other member's feelings
- d) Towards individuality: Taking a personal stand/risk
- e) Towards task: Open and honest reflection
- f) Towards task: Direct question regarding interpersonal relationship within the group

For Shelly's interactions:

- a) Away from belonging: Not meeting the level of vulnerability displayed
- b) Away from individuality: Not taking the stand/risk to assume responsibility for her actions in the group
- c) Towards individuality: Not willing to relinquish her initial position
- d) Away from task: Shying away from deep level honesty

The 'towards belonging: being apologetic' code was allocated to Maggie's interactions fairly frequently during the life of the group. She often started her interactions with: "I am sorry, but I just wanted to say..." In this case she had not apologised specifically for speaking, but she had been fairly apologetic – in the latter portion of the text that was not included here – about how judgemental she had been during the initial conflict. The irony is that the interaction to which she is referring was not judgemental at all – in fact, it was the exact opposite. This allocation of the code also echoes Foulkes' notion of the group matrix (Foulkes, 1975) – the pool of meaning developed by the group over time. The coding of any piece of interaction is, thus, never seen in isolation due to the fact that it is done from the different systemic perspectives as described in chapters 3 and 4. In fact, coding happens against the history of meaning that has been created by the group and its members over the lifespan of the group.

The next two 'towards belonging' codes that were allocated to Maggie's interactions appear to be fairly similar although, at the time of coding, it was felt that they should rather be kept separate. The act of "opening up and making vulnerable" is seen here as an act of making oneself available for the group, while the act of asking a direct

question regarding another member's feelings is seen as an act of asking another member also to become available for the group. With regard to the coding process it is important to note the following: Firstly, codes were also created for each speaker. These were termed 'speaker codes' and were allocated to each speech by each member. This made it possible to use the computer program (AtlasTi) to indicate all those instances where a specific behaviour code, for example, towards belonging: making vulnerable, was allocated to a specific member – in this case, Maggie. Secondly, it is preferable to generate codes that are more specific rather than codes that are more general. This means that, instead of coding the above two codes together as 'towards belonging: promoting vulnerability in the group', they were coded separately according to the more specific meanings they hold. The computer can be used to facilitate merging specific codes into more general codes if, during the analysis, it emerges that the more specific codes do not add extra insights. However, although codes can easily be merged, it is not possible to split a code automatically into two or more specific codes. Thus, if more specific codes are needed, it becomes necessary to redo the coding process.

This act of Maggie's can also be seen as an act towards individuality, as she took the risk of becoming visible within the group by opening herself up for feedback. Through this interaction, she differentiated herself from the group as she discussed her feelings and invited another member to comment on that member's feelings towards her (Maggie).

With regards to the 'towards task' coding the option was again taken rather to code more specifically rather than more generally. It can be that during the analysis no distinction will be made between "asking a direct question" and "reflection" in task mode, but it can also happen that, throughout the life of the group, certain patterns emerge regarding these different nuances in the ways of interacting within the group. It is clear that both these acts are acts in the direction of the group's task of learning about groups by looking at itself as a group. Accordingly, these acts can be seen on the individual member-level as Maggie reflects on her own emotions, and also on the member-to-member-level as Maggie appears to be trying to make sense of what was happening between her and Shelly and of the way in which she was experienced by Shelly. On the group-as-a-whole level, the interaction stemming from Maggie created an expectation that it can be possible both to discuss openly one of the group's dilemmas – Are we going to be judged in here and is it safe to be honest? – and that the conflicting emotions could be contained within the group.

Let's now turn towards the codes allocated to Shelly's interactions:

- a) Away from belonging: Not meeting the level of vulnerability displayed
- b) Away from individuality: Not taking the stand/risk to assume responsibility for her actions in the group
- c) Towards individuality: Not willing to relinquish initial position
- d) Away from task: Shying away from deep honesty

With regard to Shelly's interactions, a different set of codes was generated. The 'away from belonging' code refers to her refusal to meet Maggie in the step Maggie had taken in apologising to her, with a step towards Maggie by either saying that there was no need for Maggie to apologise or by apologising to Maggie and the group for her part in the judgemental tone of the conflict. This may have contributed to a containing environment in which the group was able to deal with both its fears regarding being judged and its guilt regarding having judged.

This interaction stemming from Shelly was coded both as towards and away from individuality. On the one hand, she was not prepared to stand up in the group as the one who had played a part in the creation of a culture of judgement but, on the other, she maintained the stance she had initially taken and, in the interest of preserving that selfimage, she stood her ground as an individual within the group. This alerts us to the fact that it is not only the movement between positions or the taking up of positions in the field that are important, but also the way in which this is done. Plotting movements in the field only means only half the story because – as is shown in this example – there are various ways of moving towards or away from individuality, belonging or task. One move towards individuality can contribute to the overall interdependent functioning of the group while another can obstruct it.

Shelly's interaction was further coded as 'away from task' as she had resisted exploring the dynamics between herself, Maggie and the group regarding blame and guilt. Once again the focus is on the coding process and not on the interpretation/analysis. However, when interpreting the codes we have asked questions in an attempt to ascertain what may have contributed to the behaviour and what the results of the behaviour may have been, but the focus at this point was on both categorising the behaviour in terms of the direction of movement and describing it as accurately as possible based on the data.

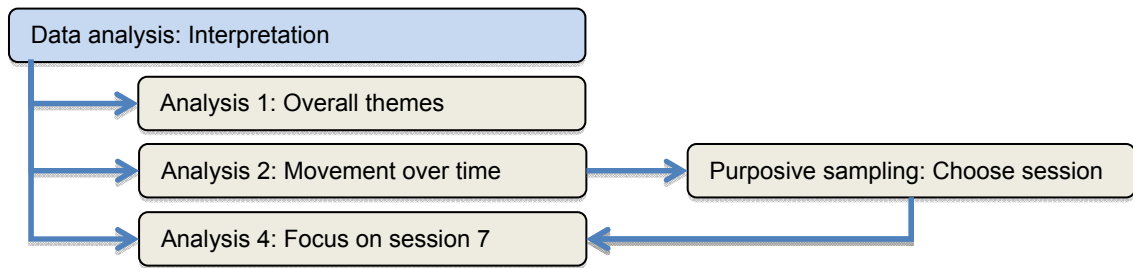
### 5.2.2 A summary of the coding principles as illustrated above

During the discussion on the examples above, reference was made at times to the reasoning behind coding the behaviour in a specific way. In fact, these reasons constitute the principles that guided the entire coding process. These principles can be summarised as follows:

- a) Code both deductively and inductively.
- b) One action can encompass multiple movements towards and away from the goal region complexes. Code for all of these movements.
- c) When coding inductively, describe only what is happening without using descriptions from theory.
- d) When coding deductively, focus on the coding only and do not attempt any analysis or interpretation.
- e) Take the history of the group into account.
- f) Take the systemic levels of individual, member, subgroup and group-as-a-whole into account.
- g) Pay attention to the boundaries between the different systemic levels.
- h) Take the group's physical, institutional and cultural contexts into account.
- i) Rather create too many specific codes than too few general codes.
- j) Take the feelings evoked (countertransference) in the facilitator pair and the research team into account.
- k) Code for the act in itself, and not for the effect that the act actually had on the group.

### 5.3 **Data analysis: Interpretation of the codes**

This section will explain the interpretation of the codes that were allocated. As indicated both at the beginning of this chapter as well as in the schematic representation below, the interpretation was carried out in a funnel-like fashion, starting off with an overall analysis and progressing to increasingly fine-grained and detailed analyses and interpretations:



**Figure 5.2: Overview of the data analysis process**

Each of the steps followed in this process will now be discussed in order to show why and how each analysis was conducted. In the next chapter – Chapter 6: Discussion of results – the results of each analysis will be discussed and interpreted.

### 5.3.1 Analysis 1: Overall code themes after ten sessions

The first analysis comprised a clustering process in terms of which all the codes that had been allocated were compared and grouped together so as to enable clusters or families of codes (that is, themes) to emerge (Charmaz, 2006). The purpose of this process was twofold: Firstly, it was used as a ‘code clean-up’ process in which duplicate codes were merged and missing codes created and, secondly, it served as a firstorder analysis so as to allow patterns to emerge from the data.

The network-function in AtlasTi was used for this first analysis. This networkfunction allows the user to create a network view of all the codes – or selected codes – that were created. In this case, three networkviews were created, namely, belonging, individuality and task. All the ‘towards’ and ‘away from belonging’ codes were imported into the belonging networkview, the ‘towards’ and ‘away from individuality’ codes into the individuality network view and the ‘towards’ and ‘away from task’ codes into the task network view. In each specific networkview, each code appears as a ‘node’ on the screen. It is possible to move these around, group them together or link them to other codes or memos. Where duplicate codes exist, they can be merged by using the ‘merge codes’ function which involves dragging and dropping one code onto another.

Once two codes have been merged in the network view, they are also automatically merged throughout the text documents. Where two or more codes are not exactly the same, but may refer to the same behaviour, the user is able to doubleclick on each node and read all the quotations in the text to which the codes were allocated. If it

becomes evident from this review process that two or more codes are actually referring to the same behaviour, despite the fact that they were coded slightly differently, then these codes can be merged.

It can also happen that, as a result of this code review process, one realises that a code has been omitted. In this case the new code can be allocated to the text and also imported into the network view. This process entails a thorough checking and comparison of all the codes with each other, with the data and with the memos that were created throughout the coding process. Memos can also be imported as 'nodes' into the networkview or else new memos can be created in the network view and linked to those codes that were clustered together in order to describe the reasoning behind the clustering process. At the end of this process there was a total of 289 codes, all of which had been compared with each other, with the data to which they referred and with the memos that had been created as the coding process had unfolded.

It must also be noted that, by end of this process, I was extremely familiar with the data. By this time:

- a) I had watched the group live over the TV monitor and made field notes.
- b) I had checked the transcriptions and formatted them (for importing into AtlasTi) over all ten sessions in line by line comparisons with both the video and the audio material.
- c) I had coded each session line by line by working through the transcripts in conjunction with watching the videos.
- d) I had worked through each node (code and memo nodes) in the networkviews, checked the quotations to which it was linked, compared it with the co-occurring codes that had also been allocated to the same quotations in order to ensure that I had been consistent throughout. I had also compared each node with all the other codes in each networkview.

The advantage of such close familiarity with the data is that there is less risk of 'abdicating' responsibility with regard to making sense of the data to the computer program. This has often been quoted as one of the pitfalls of making use of qualitative analysis software in a code-and-retrieve fashion (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Charmaz, 2006).

The clusters that emerged from this process provided interesting insights that will be discussed in the next chapter. However, it will also be shown in the following chapter that it is essential that an emergent clustering analysis such as the one in this research study be interpreted with great care in view of the fact that this investigation was aimed at data that had developed over time and not at static data about a specific phenomenon.

### 5.3.2 Analysis 2: The group's movement over ten sessions

In order to obtain a more dynamic view of the group's behaviour over the ten sessions, this analysis focused on the codes that had been allocated per session. Thus, although this view ignored the movements within sessions, it provided a view of the movements between sessions.

This was achieved in AtlasTi by creating a 'family' for each of the ten sessions. Each session's transcription comprised a separate primary document in AtlasTi and, once designated as a 'family' – in this case, a family of one member only – with the titles Session 1, Session 2 and so on, it was possible to use these primary document families as filters in order to generate outputs from the software per session. It was now possible, for each session, to ascertain exactly how many times a specific code had been allocated to a section of text. In addition, if all the 'towards belonging' codes were grouped together, it was possible to ascertain the number of times 'towards belonging' codes had been allocated to the session and this could, for example, be compared to the 'away from belonging' and 'towards task' codes. In order to provide an overall view over the ten sessions, a bar graph was created which showed the total number of times that 'towards' or 'away from' belonging, individuality and task codes had been allocated for each session. In order to make this bar graph easier to read, the 'away from' codes were given negative totals so that their corresponding bars displayed below the x-axis.

The results of this analysis are presented and discussed in the next chapter. An important factor that was borne in mind when these results were interpreted was the fact that it is not possible to equate the strength of a psychological force to the number of times that the force had resulted in observable behaviour. It was highly likely that a strong, underlying emotional current would manifest once or twice only or, inversely, that it would manifest through silence. The latter makes it difficult, if not impossible, to observe and categorise such an emotional current. In addition, the sheer density of the

data made it impossible to carry out a detailed analysis of the movements between sessions for the whole group over the entire lifespan of the group. It was, therefore, necessary to select a smaller section from the group's life in which the movements within a session and their underlying forces could be observed and interpreted in more detail.

#### *5.3.2.1 Purposive sampling: Choosing a specific session on which to focus*

The overall analysis of movements between sessions made it possible to decide on which session to focus for the purposes of a more detailed analysis. For this purpose it was deemed necessary to choose a section in the group's life that would enable us to perceive meaningful movements between the various codes and categories. In order to do this, the lifespan of the group was divided into four sections from which one session was chosen for the purposes of the third analysis to follow. These four sections were as follows:

- a) Section A: Sessions 1 – 4. The start of the group until the first break when the group went to another room to reflect on what had happened so far.
- b) Section B: Sessions 5 – 7. The group's willingness to work, based on what they had come to realise during the out-group reflection, and countered by their resistance to work and the gradual resolution of this resistance in favour of working.
- c) Section C: Sessions 8 & 9. The group's continuation of work, interrupted by another out-group reflection session, followed by further work and preparations for closing.
- d) Section D: Session 10. Closing.

It was decided to choose Section B (Sessions 5, 6 and 7) as a result of the strong movements towards work, away from work and the gradual movement towards work again. Both sessions 6 and 7 would provide good examples of intra-session movements, while session 7 was chosen as a result of the fact that there were a greater variety of movements as opposed to the one or two big movements in session 6.

#### 5.3.3 Analysis 3: The group's movement in session 7



The purpose of this analysis was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the behaviours of the group and its members as they occurred within a specific session in order to be able to make plausible inferences regarding the forces involved in being members of the group. Whereas the first analyses had progressed from broad descriptions of the behaviour to more abstract inferences regarding forces, this analysis aimed at an interpretation that moved extremely close to the data from where it would be possible to observe and interpret patterns by viewing the data against the external and internal contexts of the group as well as against existing theory on groups.

Accordingly, the sessions were first divided into meaningful sections or units. This was similar to the process used by Beck et al (Beck et al., 2000) to break sessions up into units through her TopicOriented Group Focus Unitising procedure. The aim of Beck's procedure was to provide as objective as possible a way in which to distinguish between units or segments in the transcript based on the group's process rather than arbitrary segments such as time, the number of lines or pages. In terms of Beck's procedure, the units are identified by looking at meaningful wholes in the text, for example, the group would take up a topic, elaborate on it and then move onto another topic. Such a demarcation of units is then made more objective by the fact that two researchers demarcate the data and then come together to reach consensus with regard to any differences. For the purposes of this study, it was not regarded as critical that the units be 'objectively accurate', as the study was not trying to prove anything by looking at the movements between units. Instead, the aim was simply to create units in order to explore and learn about the movements that had happened within the sessions as opposed to the movements between sessions. The sections are, thus, created only so as to render the analysis more manageable by focusing only on smaller units at a time in order to not to become lost in the analysis and interpretation of the entire session.

After the text had been divided into smaller segments, or units, I proceeded from segment to segment in chronological order and considered the codes that had been allocated to the statements in that segment. By looking at the codes and comparing them again with both the text and the video to which they had been allocated within the context of the group, it became possible to make plausible inferences regarding the forces at work when these inferences were tested against the rest of the data and against group theory.

This process was clearly intersubjective and interpretivist as it provided the opportunity to work in an open-ended fashion in order to arrive at a deep understanding of the data (Van Huyssteen, 1990). Again, it is not possible to elevate this deep understanding to the status of 'absolute truth' about the group but I was, at this stage, able to state with confidence that the results from this analysis were the most rigorous that I could possibly have come to, within my context and the limitations of the study, whilst still allowing for the context of the data to be taken into account.

In the next chapter, sections of the text will be included and discussed. In addition, the way in which the forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task played out will also be explored.

#### **5.4 Ensuring the quality of the research**

In order to ensure the quality of the research, it is essential that the research be both intelligible (Van Huyssteen, 1990) and trustworthy (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Intelligibility would be achieved if a person from outside of the context of this research would be able to make sense of the research findings within this context in order then to be able to translate the research findings to his/her own context. The postfoundationalist stance of the research has forced me continuously to make tentative use of the work of other theorists, thus, carefully evaluating their work against their context. I was also forced to be tentative in the extent to which I made truth claims based on my research, thus knowing and acknowledging the fallibility of human reason and empirical methods, whilst still endeavouring to maintain rigour and quality in my own work – in other words, being rational as a human being within context (Van Huyssteen 1990; Muller, 2007). In addition, throughout the study I have taken the issue of context extremely seriously – not only the context from which other theoretical works were born, but also my context, namely, the context of the groups under scrutiny and the contexts to which this research should be able to add value.

I also took certain basic and widely agreed-upon measures aimed at enhancing the quality of this qualitative research study. For example, I adopted the triangulation of theory, method and data. Accordingly, in the revised method section above I discussed the various data analysis strategies that had been triangulated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), as well as the triangulation of data that was used. I also indicated the way in which extensive memos were taken throughout the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Charmaz & Henwood, 2008) and then used as part of the grounded

theory analyses. Furthermore, the fact that the data collection, coding and data analysis were conducted by a team of researchers comprising the co-researcher, the research supervisor and me, enabled us to check our assumptions, decisions and interpretations on an ongoing basis. Experts in the field were also included in the process and were consulted at various stages of the research. These include:

- a) Yvonne Agazarian – founder of the systemscentred approach to group therapy. We corresponded regarding my initial conceptualisation of the group member in a field of forces between individuality, belonging and task.
- b) Ariadne Beck – researcher and writer on group development as well as group research in general. We met twice to discuss issues pertaining to my theoretical lens and data analysis.
- c) Vivian Gold – member of the A.K. Rice Institute and director of Group Relations Conferences. We briefly discussed my initial conceptualization of the group member in a field of forces between individuality, belonging and task.
- d) Leopold Vansina – author, researcher and member of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations (ISPSO). We met once to discuss our views on the Group Relations ‘movement’ and corresponded a few times during my initial process of formulating a research idea and then again regarding the problem of the psychological experience of an event and the event itself.
- e) Morton Deutsch – co-worker of Kurt Lewin and founder of the International Centre for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution. We corresponded about my understanding of Lewin’s work and my postulation of the group member in a field of forces between individuality, belonging and task.
- f) Morris Nitsun – group analyst and author. We corresponded about my initial ideas regarding the anti-group in my first attempts to formulate a research goal.
- g) ISPSO Annual Meeting June 2011. At this meeting I presented my ideas regarding the group member in a field of forces as well as my data analysis method, and received valuable feedback from the participants.

Trustworthiness is another way in which to measure the quality of qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Trustworthiness refers to the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of both the research process and the research findings. Credibility refers to the "compatibility between the constructed realities in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In other words, credibility answers the question "Does this ring true?" In this study, in addition to the triangulation and peer debriefing that have been discussed

above, I tried to achieve credibility by adopting the following procedures derived from the work of Lincoln and Guba (in Babbie& Mouton, 2001):

- a) *Prolonged engagement*: In terms of the grounded theory collection/analysis pattern I worked with the data long enough for data saturation to occur. Of course I had to maintain a balance between a prolonged study of the data and placing a tentative analysis on the table. However, this is in line with the postfoundationalist notion that all research findings are tentative;
- b) *Persistent observation*: I consistently pursued different interpretations of the data from different vantage points. Accordingly, I made use of various theoretical schools of group theory as well as using various methods of data analysis. In addition, in my abductive reasoning I remained tentative with regards to interpretations of the data and comparisons between data and theory.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the research is transferable by the reader of the research to other contexts (Denzin& Lincoln, 2008). Thus, if research is to be intelligible in the postfoundationalist sense, it should also be transferable, albeit tentatively. In order to ensure transferability, I made use of the following techniques in accordance with the language of Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln and Guba, in Babbie&Mouton, 2001):

- a) *Thick description*: I collected and described information pertaining to the context of the study in a rich and detailed way so as to enable the reader to decide how the research can be of value in his/her own setting;
- b) *Purposive sampling*: As described in the data collection paragraph of the method section, I carried out purposive sampling in this research in order to ensure that I had good data with which to work.

Dependability refers to the fact that the reader must be left with the sense that, if this research were to be repeated with the same, or similar, respondents under the same, or similar, circumstances, the findings would be similar (Babbie& Mouton, 2001). In this research study the use of a training group as a well-known type of group for research purposes, enhances the dependability. However, if the research is found to be credible and transferable, this usually also means that the research is dependable.

Confirmability refers to the degree to which it is possible that the research findings can actually be confirmed from the research data, and are not merely the result of the biases of the researcher (Babbie& Mouton 2001). The fact that the theoretical lens is rooted in theoretical works extending beyond my own biases, plus the fact that the

inductive component of the coding process attempted to be as close as possible to the data, increases the confirmability of the research. It is also possible for another researcher to verify my results by checking it against the data, due to the thorough audit trail that was kept in AtlasTi. In addition to this the following steps were also taken:

- a) All raw data has been kept in safe storage and is available for scrutiny.
- b) All field notes, memos and journal entries were kept.
- c) The resultant themes and categories which emerged from the data analysis were kept as well as all the notes regarding the data analysis process that had been followed and the decisions that were taken during the data analysis.
- d) All material relating to my personal intentions and biases, including personal notes and memos, were kept.

## **5.5 Ethical considerations**

In terms of research ethics, I made sure that participants provided me with their informed consent, that no harm was done to the participants and that anonymity and confidentiality were maintained at all times. I also subjected myself to the ethical standards as laid down by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The most critical ethical aspect of a psychological study of empirical data probably relates to whether the participants gave their informed consent with regard to taking part in the research. The values underlying the notion of informed consent are, firstly, the protection of participants' welfare and, secondly, the protection of participants' self-determination (Thompson, 1996). In line with these values, the following elements comprise aspects of informed consent, namely, voluntary consent; adequate disclosure; and the competency of the participants (Stanley B. 1996). I will now discuss each of these elements in detail and then test this research project against the required standards of each.

Voluntary consent means that the consent must truly come from the participant's own free will. This, in turn, has both a legal and a more subtle ethical dimension. From a legal perspective there should be no coercion or duress involved (Grisso, 1996). From a psychological perspective, however, there are more subtle threats to self-determination that should also be considered (Grisso, 1996), especially if the research takes place within an institutional environment. It can be that, as a result of the

institutional context, participants feel obliged to take part in the research. Accordingly, the voluntariness of consent can not be seen in a vacuum. In other words, the act of handing out, reading, signing and collecting consent forms always has a specific history, it happens in a specific way against a specific institutional backdrop with all of these subtle factors contributing to whether the participants took part in the research willingly and whether they felt that they did not actually have a choice. This is certainly one of the critical questions that should be asked of this research: How have I ensured that the consent of the participants was truly voluntary? This is particularly important in light of the fact that the empirical component of the research is situated within a university setting, and within the lecturerstudent relationship and powerdifferential. However, the issue with this study was not the participation in the training groups per se, as this formed part of their Masters programme anyway. The issue was whether they had given their consent for the material to be used for research purposes. To address this matter, I also included in the consent form a clause that, should any participant, during or after the training group, wish to withdraw his/ her consent to participate, they would be free to do so. It has already been mentioned in chapter 2 that one of the members of one of the 2009 groups did not give her consent for the data emanating from the group to be used for research purposes. This group was, therefore, excluded from the research. However, the student was not penalised for not giving her consent and, in fact, she received an 'A' grade for her excellent final paper that formed part of the academic course which made use of the training groups as part of its educational objectives.

The next element pertaining to informed consent is the issue of adequate disclosure of information (Stanley, 1996). There are currently three different standards with regards to determining the 'adequacy' of the disclosure, namely, the professional standard, the materiality standard and full disclosure (Thompson, 1996). The professional standard asks what the norm is for research of this type within this profession, the materiality standard asks either that which the prudent person would want/need to know in order to give consent (objective materiality) or what the specific individual would want/need to know in order to give consent (subjective materiality) (Thompson, 1996). Both objective and subjective materiality are not concerned with the norms of researchers, but rather with disclosing whatever information regarding the research can be deemed necessary to enable the participants to make their decision regarding either participation or nonparticipation. In this study, the third standard was adhered to, namely, full disclosure: The attached consent form, the letter to the participants prior to the group sessions, and the study guides all contained information on exactly what the

participants could expect. There was also an information session prior to the course where the two facilitators and me as course coordinator and researcher, explained the process and what they can expect. Their prescribed textbook, namely, Martin Ringer's Group Action (Ringer, 2002), which contains a discussion on training groups, was also available to them prior to the programme.

The third element contributing to informed consent has to do with the participants' competency to give consent (Thompson, 1996). In this case the participants were Masters students in Industrial and Organisational Psychology. This implies that one could safely assume that they were competent both with regards to reading and understanding the information disclosed, as well as making informed decisions for themselves.

In terms of anonymity and confidentiality (Stanley, 1996), I have kept all the information emanating from the data confidential and it was dealt with openly between myself, my coresearcher and my research supervisor only. I have also not disclosed any information on any of the participants when reporting the research in such a way which may have made known to whom I was referring. In order to do this, I made use of pseudonyms when discussing case narratives and I also changed identifiable information in such a way that it was still possible to communicate the research essence without the participants being either exposed or jeopardised in any way (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Also, in terms of analysing and reporting the research, I have endeavoured to remain rigorous and honest, whether or not my analyses supported my theoretical conjectures (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter I described how the theoretical lens was operationalised for data analysis purposes. The coding strategy was discussed as well the way in which the analysis and interpretations had focused on different levels of data. Finally, strategies aimed at ensuring the quality of the research and maintaining high ethical standards were discussed. The following chapter will present, discuss and interpret the results that emanated from the data analysis process.



## 6

### Discussion of results

#### 6.1 Introduction



The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the results of this research study. However, before embarking on this task it is important that we remain cognisant of the intellectual journey that we have taken thus far in order to ensure that we remain true to the direction that this dissertation has taken. We started by considering an argument in favour of an in-depth focus on the forces underlying group membership (chapter 1). We then considered the challenges regarding the accumulation of knowledge on groups as infinitely complex entities. This, in turn, enabled me to design a research process to help realise the objectives of this study (chapter 2). During this process of considering the dilemmas involved in researching groups, we realised that it was essential that we find creative ways in which to embrace the tension between our need to know and explain (episteme) and our need to understand deeply within context (hermeneutics). This led to the decision to adopt an approach to the research that would allow us to maintain a qualitative perspective, thus a focus on in-depth understanding and analysis within context, but also to structure this analysis according to predefined theoretical parameters. In order to set these parameters, various group-theoretical traditions were explored and integrated (chapter 3) in order to construct a robust theoretical lens that would provide structure, but without compromising the ability to make sense of the complexity of the data (chapters 4 and 5).

The challenge with regard to this chapter is, thus, to proceed with the analysis and discussion in a way that is congruent with all that we have achieved thus far. However, this proved to be no easy task. On the one hand, there is the inclination to quantify results<sup>38</sup> and to conduct quantitative analyses that will provide clear, albeit misleading, results. This, in turn, would also lead us into a positivist philosophical space and away from the postfoundational path chosen in chapter 2. On the other hand, there is the problem that an in-depth qualitative analysis of the interactions of the group-as-a-whole as well as each of the nine members over all ten sessions would be impossible. Firstly, it would be impossible to capture in words all the levels of meaning and complexity inherent in a social interaction and, secondly, it would be a task so ambitious and mammoth that we would not have sufficient space in a single dissertation to address it.

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<sup>38</sup> AtlasTi makes it relatively easy to count the number of times a specific code has occurred over the ten sessions, and also to count the number of times specific codes co-occurred over the ten sessions. However, once there was a number next to a code I found it required immense self-discipline not to limit the meaning of the code within its context to the number of times it had occurred.

Accordingly, in order to deal with the latter problem, it is essential that we be selective in terms of the scope of the analysis, that is, how wide (in terms of the section of the group's life to be examined) and how deep (in terms of depth of interpretation) should we go in order to attain sufficient outcomes pertaining to the core research questions, namely, What are the forces involved in being a group member and how do they operate? Furthermore, these questions exist within the broader context of a study that aims to be exploratory in nature. In other words, the objective of this study is not to provide definitive answers but to conduct a preliminary charting of the map that future researchers can use as a foundation from which to conduct further explorations and experimentations.

We will now proceed to examine the results pertaining to the second research objective, which was to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group. During this analysis and interpretation we will, implicitly, also be busy with the results pertaining to the first research objective, which was to develop a method for the exploration of these forces. This is as a result of the fact that we would not have been able to obtain the results that we will be discussing here, were it not for the fact that we had, indeed, developed a method. There are, however, specific aspects pertaining to this method that merit separate reflection. This, however, will comprise part of the next chapter, in which the final conclusions and contributions of this research study will be discussed.

As described in the previous chapter, the discussion of the results will follow a funnel-like pattern. Accordingly, we will first examine an overall summary of the behaviourcodes in the group as it stood at the end of the ten sessions. We will then look at the progression of the group over the ten sessions, again from a bird's eye perspective in order to gain a general overview of the movements in the group over time. Based on this overview of the group's progression, we will select a period in the group's life and examine this period in more detail so as to enable us to examine more closely the forces that can be inferred from the behaviours towards and away from belonging, individuality and task.

It is important to note that each analysis will be carried out against the background of the group's external environment as well as its own specific culture as it developed through the group's history.

## 6.2 Analysis 1: Interpretation of the overall code themes after ten sessions

### 6.2.1 Introduction: Analysis 1

In terms of this analysis and interpretation, the codes that have been allocated to member behaviours over the ten sessions of the group's existence, will be considered and analysed collectively. Specific strengths and weaknesses of this interpretative perspective will be discussed, and the foundation will be laid for proceeding with the next level of analysis.

### 6.2.2 Results

The following table presents the results of the comparison and clustering process that was undertaken during the first level of data analysis. The codes were clustered together, first according to their deductive code categories, namely, towards and away from belonging, individuality and task, and then according to the inductive code-descriptors. It is also important to note that the code families listed below comprise clusters of behaviours that emerged over all ten of the group sessions. It is, thus, possible to state that the forces underlying these behaviours, although we do not name them at this point, were present at various times during the group's life.

**Table 6.1: Overall behaviour themes after ten sessions**

<b>Code family: Towards belonging</b>	<b>Code family: Away from belonging</b>
Group emphasis: similarities, harmony, and participation	Pairing – on group-level
Member to member inclusion behaviour	Excluding others
Group-level: Hiding/fleeing	Stereotype sub-grouping on group-level
Member-level: Personal need for inclusion	Resisting participation
Pairing – on pair-level	Avoiding meaningful connection
Self-disclosure for cohesion	
Group-level: Sorting out relationship with leaders	
Stereotype sub-grouping on subgroup-level	
Belonging: All aboard?	

Functional subgrouping Group-level: Creating an external enemy	
<b>Code family: Towards individuality</b>	<b>Code family: Away from individuality</b>
Self-disclosure Struggle with own value from group Passing moral judgement Pairing – individuality dynamic Distancing 1 up Challenge/conflict Defending him/herself Non-verbal signifiers: I am here! Differentiating self from others Promoting own agenda Tending to own needs and expectations Critical and independent thinking Assertiveness Isolating him/herself Personal struggle with diversity	Hiding in a pair Devaluing own contribution Not prepared to take a risk
<b>Code family: Towards task</b>	<b>Code family: Away from task</b>
Reflecting on group value – time drags Reflecting on group process Critical reflection and feedback Reflecting on emotions from topic discussion Compliance with direct expectations for response Playfulness and naive curiosity, experimental mood Clarifying structural boundaries and content Critical presence in discussion Reflecting on own emotion in the group Reflecting on emotions of other member	Covert fleeing/hiding Overt fleeing from task Fear of honesty and conflict Task disconnect – does not have a clue Resisting efforts to pull towards task

### 6.2.3 Discussion

The codefamilies above are listed in rank order from those with the greatest number of codes and quotations connected to them, to those with the least number of codes and quotations. If it were possible to infer the strength of the underlying psychological forces from the number of times a specific behaviour occurred, or from the amount of time (which, in practice, could be approximated only to the number of words spoken) spent on a specific type of behaviour, then we would, literally, be able to compare the relative strength of the forces in order to indicate in which direction the resultant force in the group-as-a-whole would lie. However, it is not possible to equate the strength of

a psychological force only with the frequency or duration of the resultant behaviour (Lewin, 1981). It is, for instance, possible that a single verbal utterance can be the result of extremely strong, underlying psychological forces.

When further considering this table of results, one is, firstly, forced to admit that it has serious limitations in terms of answering the research questions. The level of abstraction at this point is such that little sense can be made of specific codeclusters and their possible underlying forces. This is as a result of the fact that we do not have the context in terms of which to conduct the analysis. Although we do have the context of the external environment, we do not have the context created internally by the group as it progressed through time. Based on the fact that this table is, in essence, a snapshot taken right at the end of the group's life, it is too static to provide us with sufficient insights into the movements, forces and dynamics as they played out throughout the life of the group and its members, within context. However, there is at least some value that can be derived from this table, provided that we proceed with caution.

The first and most obvious observation is the fact that the 'towards' code-families have more codeclusters listed under them than the 'away from' code-families. In fact, when we look at the unclustered total of 289 codes that were allocated, as well as the number of quotations in the text to which they were allocated, a similar pattern emerges:

**Table 6.2: Number of codes and quotations per code family**

<b>Code family</b>	<b>Number of codes</b>	<b>Number of quotations</b>
Towards Belonging	121	2552
Away from Belonging	13	184
Towards Individuality	62	862
Away from Individuality	4	94

Towards Task	70	1928
Away from Task	19	1705
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>7325</b>

It is possible to draw a number of inferences regarding the numbers presented in tables 6.1 and 6.2, for example, the high number of ‘towards belonging’ behaviours that are clustered in table 6.1 could refer to the need of both the group and its members to find security in an anxiety-provoking situation; or the more or less equal distribution of quotations between the ‘towards’ and ‘away from task’ codes in table 6.2 could be telling us that the group struggled with its task. Nevertheless, I would be hesitant to ascribe too much importance to these numbers in isolation, as a result of the fact that they raise the level of abstraction even higher, thus making it risky to make inferences regarding the forces in the group.

The summaries provided by Tables 6.1 and 6.2 will only become intelligible when viewed alongside results that are ‘closer to the data’. However, it is probably worth reflecting on the process of code allocation and the mechanics of the theoretical framework. Could it be that both the way in which the coding was carried out, and the way in which the forces towards and away from belonging, individuality and task have been conceptualised theoretically, contributed to the overwhelming difference in, for example, the frequency with which ‘towards’ vs. ‘away from individuality’ codes were allocated? Firstly, there might be factors present in the application of the theoretical framework that could have contributed to the skewed distribution of codes between the ‘towards’ and ‘away from’ codes. Secondly, it might be that the assumption – which was based on existing theory and reason – that guided the process of coding the data, namely, that the group member finds him/herself in a field of forces towards and away from individuality, belonging and task, was incorrect.

With regard to the first possibility, if we assume that the theoretical framework is valid, then there are various possible explanations for the significant difference between the number of ‘towards’ and ‘away from’ codes allocated. It may be that the subjectivity of the researcher influenced the process to such an extent that behaviours were incorrectly interpreted and coded. However, it seems unlikely that one researcher would have a vested interest in observing behaviours ‘in the direction of’ over observing behaviours ‘moving away from’. It seems more likely that it could be more difficult to observe the ‘away from’ behaviours than the ‘towards’ behaviours, or that

movement is more easily conceptualised as having a positive direction (towards something) than having a negative direction (away from something). It is, therefore, possible that some 'away from belonging' behaviours could have been coded as 'towards individuality' behaviours, or that one behaviour that resulted from simultaneous 'towards individuality' and 'away from belonging' forces were coded as 'towards individuality' only.

Nevertheless, this raises an important question: Is it at all possible to carry out an *objectively accurate* coding? Of course, from our qualitative perspective and postfoundational stance we can easily say that the aim was not to arrive at objective, absolute truths, but rather to show how we can arrive at a valuable understanding, based on our best efforts to carry out qualitative research that is trustworthy. However, this question also brings us to the following important caveat regarding the analysis and interpretation of this data: The coding was carried out based on the observable behaviour in the group, and not on the underlying forces within the group. Accordingly, in order to keep the coding as close to observable behaviour as possible, we were forced to stay as far away as possible from making inferences while carrying out the coding. However, the underlying forces that resulted in the observed behaviour can be 'known' only as a result of inference. It is, therefore, possible that, although the behaviour was observed as mostly being 'towards' either individuality, belonging or task, this behaviour could still have resulted from a dynamic interaction between the forces that operate both towards and away from the three goal region complexes, as described in chapters 3 and 4.

Also, as mentioned earlier, this first analysis did not prove helpful in terms of interpreting the forces involved in being a group member as a result of the fact that we were working with a static view over ten sessions, a view that was removed from the internal context of the group. Therefore, as seen from this angle and from this level of abstraction, it is impossible to make any inferences regarding the forces within the group. It is, thus, at this stage, still possible to accept that the coding process, together with the constant comparisons, was sufficiently trustworthy for the purposes of this research. Also, with regard to the theoretical framework, we could, for the same reason, argue that the mere fact that behaviours were more often observed as working 'towards' rather than 'away from' the goal region complexes does not imply an error in the theoretical conceptualisation, based on the fact that the codes were allocated to behaviours and not to forces.

Another reflection on a methodological level involves the process of clustering codes according to emergent meaning that is often used in qualitative studies, in general, and in grounded theory studies, in particular. In this connection, it must be borne in mind that, when working with a moving target such as a group over its life span, it is possible to miss certain extremely important meanings by adopting an emergent clustering approach only.

On a content-level, when looking at table 6.1, it is interesting to note how the codefamilies, especially with regard to the 'towards belonging' codes, are clustered around different systemic levels within the group. There are clusters of codes that focus, respectively, on behaviour on the systemic levels of group, sub-group and member:

- a) Group-level: Group emphasis: similarities, harmony, participation; Group-level: Hiding/Fleeing; Group-level: sorting out relationship with leaders; Belonging: All aboard?; Group-level: Creating an external enemy.
- b) Subgroup-level: Pairing; Stereotype subgrouping; Functional sub-grouping.
- c) Member-level: Personal need for inclusion; Self-disclosure for cohesion.

This corresponds with Agazarian's notion of psychological forces operating on different systemic levels (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).

Another question that arises from table 6.1 is how it is possible for behaviours associated with pairing to be allocated to both 'towards' and 'away from' belonging as well as to both 'towards' and 'away from' individuality? This will become clearer when we look at the more fine-grained and 'closer-to-context' results presented below, but for now, a brief discussion on this matter will suffice. When I looked at pairing from a group perspective, I saw how the act of pairing can serve to differentiate and, sometimes, even isolate the pair from the group. Accordingly, it was possible to code this act of pairing as an 'away from belonging' behaviour. However, simultaneously, for the group member an act of pairing also refers to his/her need for belonging, albeit not to the group, but to either a pair or a subgroup. This corresponds with Agazarian's concept of 'stereotype subgrouping' (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).

Furthermore, there were a number of instances in the group where pairing or subgrouping was used not only to demonstrate that one is different from the rest of the group, and, hence, the 'towards individuality' codes, but also to hide one's uniqueness by, on the subgroup-level, merging with another and, therefore, becoming more



'invisible' in terms of one's own individuality. Thus, where pairing was used as an act away from belonging to the group and, therefore, was an act that had shifted the focus away from strengthening the group boundary, I was forced to acknowledge that the pairing had also been used simultaneously as an act towards belonging on a different systemic level, namely, that of the subgroup and, therefore, that the act had shifted the focus to strengthening the boundary of the subgroup, or pair. Also, where the pair had been used on the group-level in order to demonstrate difference, it had also been used on the subgroup-level to hide difference.

#### 6.2.4 Conclusion: Analysis 1

The value resulting from this analysis was more on the level of the process than the outcome of the analysis. On a process level, this analysis required us to compare all the codes, quotations and memos and this resulted in the final list of 289 codes. In terms of the clusters that emerged, the greatest value was to be found in the fact that this analysis prompted us to ask critical questions of the process as a whole. In fact, it highlighted the fact that we should be cautious with regard to considering the link between the strength of a psychological force and the number of times a behaviour code had been allocated; it alerted us to the fact that it is not possible for a code clustering process – as it is often applied in qualitative research – to provide a dynamic view of the data if the data itself had developed over time; and it also raised a question regarding both the theoretical framework that had been applied to the data and the process that had been followed in applying this theoretical framework by highlighting the differences in the number of times which codes had been allocated to the different families, namely, towards and away from belonging, individuality and task. However, in an attempt to come closer to answering the research questions, the second analysis, namely, the analysis of the behaviour codes as they were allocated to the group over time, was carried out in order to obtain a dynamic overview of the group's progress.

### **6.3 Analysis 2: Interpretation of the group's movement over ten sessions**

#### 6.3.1 Introduction: Analysis 2

Where the previous analysis encompassed the entire collection of codes that had been allocated up until the end of the tenth session, this analysis will show the way in which these codes were allocated over time, on a session-by-session basis. Thus, despite the fact that this analysis will not provide us with an understanding of the

movements that took place within sessions, it will show the movements between sessions. With 'movements' we mean shifts in the number of codes that were allocated to the six respective categories, namely, towards belonging, away from belonging, towards individuality, away from individuality, towards task and away from task, from one session to the next. The purpose of this analysis is, thus, to provide an overview of the group's behaviour over the ten sessions. Although this analysis will not enable us to make inferences regarding the forces underlying these changes in behaviours between the sessions,<sup>39</sup> it will help us to:

- a) Choose a smaller section of the group's life for a more in-depth analysis, for example, a section in which major changes took place that we wish to examine more closely.
- b) Gain an overall understanding of the group's existence through time in order to be able to conduct the more detailed analysis of a smaller section within the overall context created by the group.

In order to achieve these objectives, this section will be structured as follows:

- a) The results, as they emerged from AtlasTi, will be presented in both table and chart format. These results will be accompanied by clarifying comments in order to facilitate the reading and interpretation of both the tables and the charts.
- b) A verbal description of the group's overall movement will be provided. This will be in the form of a report of the group's movements as observed through the group's life. No analysis or interpretation will be conducted at this point as the only goal of this section will be to provide an account of the group's life, as observed and captured on video, in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the context against which the interpretations will be made.
- c) An interpretation of the group's movement over the ten sessions will be carried out. This interpretation will be informed by both the data as discussed up to that point, existing literature and the theoretical lens that was developed in chapters 3 and 4.
- d) In conclusion, a decision will be made as to the section on which to focus in the subsequent, more detailed analysis. The strengths and weaknesses of this analysis will be evaluated and guidelines will be provided for the next analysis.

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<sup>39</sup>At this level of observation, we have only a broad overview of groups of behaviour which may indicate patterns but we would be hesitant to describe underlying forces as based on these aggregates.

### 6.3.2 Results: Tabular and graphic description of the group's movement through time

#### 6.3.2.1 *The group's behaviour over the ten sessions (in table format)*

**Table 6.3: Number of code occurrences per session**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Towards belonging	446	391	249	268	66	702	232	49	33	116
Away from belonging	33	45	15	12	0	0	45	4	28	2
Towards individuality	102	121	150	83	23	82	204	60	28	9
Away from individuality	28	33	15	13	0	0	2	0	0	3
Towards task	25	25	98	323	322	298	338	91	383	25
Away from task	283	289	55	193	12	416	53	9	0	3

The table above illustrates the number of times that a code from each of the six main categories was allocated to speeches made by group members in each session. In actual fact, this table is a summary of the full co-occurrence table, as generated by AtlasTi, and as displayed in Appendix C. In the complete table it is possible to see each code under each main category as well as the number of times that each code was allocated to speeches made by each individual member.

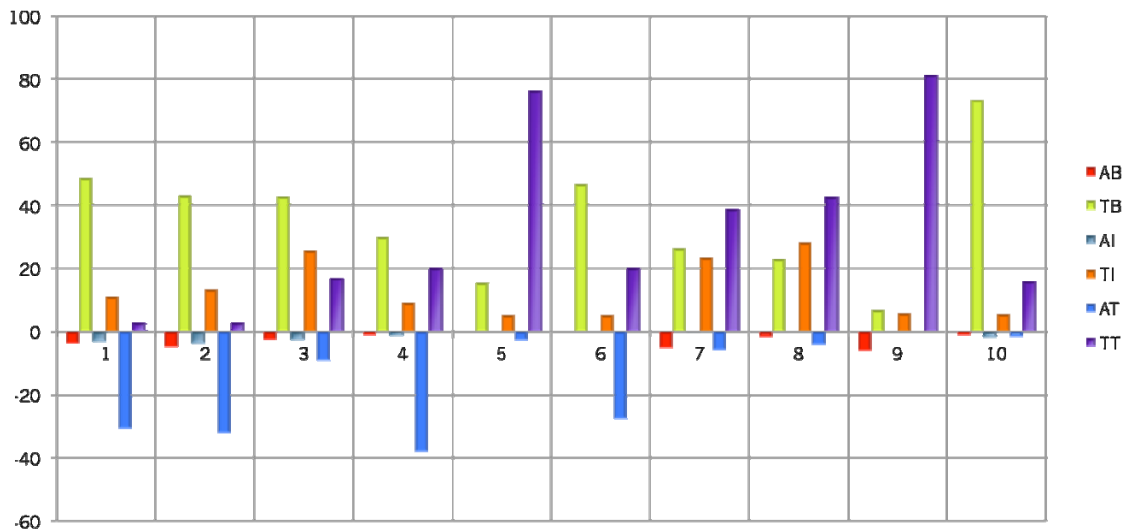
**Table 6.4: Code occurrences per session as a percentage of the total**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Towards belonging	49	43	43	30	16	47	27	23	7	73
Away from belonging	4	5	3	1	0	0	5	2	6	1
Towards individuality	11	13	26	9	5	5	23	28	6	6
Away from individuality	3	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards task	3	3	17	36	76	20	39	43	81	16
Away from task	31	32	9	22	3	28	6	4	0	2
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

As a result of the fact that the total number of individual speeches per session differed quite significantly, the table above was drawn up in order to demonstrate the number of speeches connected to each code category relative to the total number of speeches per session. The reasons for the significant variation in the number of speeches per session include the following: Firstly, the time allocated to each session differed slightly. This training group was not conducted according to the Tavistock model in terms of which the group leader (consultant) leaves the room at the predetermined time boundary. Instead, the facilitator pair allowed the group between 60 and 90

minutes per session and the session was terminated at the point at which a natural break or opportunity to conclude the session occurred. Secondly, as a result of the fact that the length or duration of specific members' contributions differed in each session, it happened that certain sessions were characterised by several shorter member contributions while others, in turn, were characterised by fewer, albeit longer, member contributions. Thirdly, in some sessions there were more periods of silence than in others. The purpose of depicting the behaviours per category over time as a percentage of the total coded behaviours per session was to enable us to compare the sessions in terms of the relative prevalence of certain behaviours over others so as to enable us to move closer to an understanding of the underlying forces involved.

### 6.3.2.2 The group's behaviour over the ten sessions (in graph format)



**Figure 6.1: The group's behaviour over ten sessions (1)**

In order to provide a graphic representation of the six main categories to which the codes that had been allocated to speech behaviours belonged, it was decided to make use of a bar chart so that the changes over time would be visible. For the sake of being able to represent the 'towards' and 'away from' codes on one graph in a way that made sense, it was decided to make all the 'away from' code-numbers negative so that they would be displayed below the x-axis of the graph. The code categories in the legend next to the graph are abbreviated AB for 'away from belonging', TB for 'towards belonging', etc.

### 6.3.3 Results: Report of the group's movement through time

As mentioned in chapter 2, this group was the second of three training groups that were conducted over three consecutive weekends as part of the Group Dynamics course for the Masters students in I/O Psychology at the University of Pretoria in September 2009. The course was structured in such a way that it started with the training group, as the experiential component. This was followed by a theoretical session about a month after the group experience. Other than the study guide and introductory letter, which explained the purpose of the training groups as well as the administrative arrangements pertaining to the training groups, the students had very little, if any, prior theoretical or practical exposure to this type of group work.

The group assembled in the seminar room adjacent to the group room at 18:00 on Thursday evening for an introductory session. During this session the facilitators were introduced to the group and the method of group training that would be followed was discussed. The long-standing tradition of using this type of group for group training was highlighted as well as what the group members could expect when they walked into the group room. There were clearly mixed emotions amongst the group members during this introductory session: they had no accurate prior experience to which to link their expectations and anxieties with the nearest type of experiences being the problem-solving activities in which they had participated as part of classroom-based or outdoor team building programmes. However, despite the fact that the anxiety in the room was palpable it was hidden behind frivolous banter and light-hearted conversation. This was aggravated by the fact that one of the group members, the only male member of the group, arrived late because he had ‘forgotten’ about the group session and was scheduled to travel abroad on the following day. However, this member, Joshua, cancelled his flight and participated in the entire group experience. Accordingly, the group started with a full complement of nine members – randomly selected from the overall Masters group of 27 – plus the two facilitators, Stephan and Joel<sup>40</sup>.

We will start with giving each member a chance to introduce him/herself through an excerpt from their personal reflections focusing on their initial experiences and expectations of the group:

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<sup>40</sup>Pseudonyms

- Debbie<sup>41</sup>: I was scared that I might say or do something completely wrong... Fear of being judged by the other members in my group made it difficult for me to join the group.
- Pam: On Thursday evening... the atmosphere was not stressful or uncomfortable. Feelings of doubt may have been felt, when the group noted that the session was unstructured, therefore, no rules or outcomes were stated or enforced.
- Shelly: Joel (one of the facilitators) told us that we could discuss anything we wanted to once we entered the discussion room. My honest thoughts were "Yeah, right!" I thought that Joel could not possibly be serious.
- Joshua: The lack of deep social connection with the group and any of its existing members lets one almost feel at the start as just being one of the group and a bit like an outsider...I (also) wondered how it was going to be being the only male in the group.
- Erna: My interest of learning about other people was more on a social level, and more on the outside of the group, and I was therefore not prepared or my mind-set was never set on the deeper emotional psychological thinking processes of people. This caused some difficulty for me to stay within the group.
- Aimee: I experienced the Thursday evening with various thoughts and emotions. Before the session started, I was relaxed. When we went into the other classroom for our first in-group session, I felt anxious and uncomfortable when I saw the camera and the seating. As we sat down and started talking, I felt more comfortable.
- Linda: Just the mention of an entire weekend with only a small group of unknown people seemed to make me quiver. What is it about the unknown that makes us react so defensively? Honestly, this must have been the one weekend I dreaded most. Nevertheless, I decided that I might as well make the best of it.
- Christa: As the first evening of discussions approached, a somewhat nervousness came upon me. I will admit that some of the nervousness may have been caused by the previous week's members, as I had heard from the members that participated in the week before ours that the sessions were going to be very intense. I was also told that I should not be scared and that all my truths were bound to be released...
- Maggie: Before class convened on Thursday evening, I found myself studying the group allocation of the Masters class in the study guide. I found myself pondering over all the different personalities of group 1 and group 3. Strangely enough I did not do this for my group, group 2. Instead, I looked at the names of the people in my group and thought back to specific interactions I had had with the people in the group, and reassuring myself of relationships I had built. I found myself preparing myself for the evening.

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<sup>41</sup>All the names mentioned below are pseudonyms.

In the main, the first two sessions followed the same pattern: One member, Erna, would start talking about a topic outside of the group's goal – to study themselves as a group in the here and now – and the rest of the group would sit in silence while Erna would continue for long stretches of uninterrupted monologue. It often happened that when she stopped, one of the other members would prompt her with a clarifying question or a comment that would set the pattern in motion again. In the field notes taken while observing the group for the first time from the adjacent video room, I made the following note: “The Erna juggling show.” I had the impression that the group had hired a juggler to entertain them and each time she dropped a ball, one of the members would pick it up and toss it back to her to continue the show. However, there were undoubtedly also traces of frustration with this pattern, which emerged from remarks made by members during the session, for example, sarcastically pointing out the pattern to Erna, as well as in the post-group reflection papers. Nevertheless, the pattern persisted for the entire first two sessions and resurfaced every now and again up until the seventh session.

Another pattern that formed from the start was the splitting up of the group into pairs. This started right at the beginning when the group decided to share what they had been working on in their assignments for another module, namely, diversity management. That project was carried out in pairs, which facilitated the pairing dynamic as the assignment pairs, who had formed voluntarily for that assignment, shared something about their assignments in this group. In addition, the mere topic of “diversity” brought cultural and language diversity to the table and the members, on a process level, also formed pairs and subgroups according to language, culture, religion and gender.

Content themes that surfaced during the first two sessions and retained significance throughout the entire life of the group included cultural diversity, competition between females, sexual harassment and moral judgement. The theme of judgement reached an important moment during the second session when the group was discussing homosexual couples adopting children. An anti-gay-adoption Christian subgroup formed and this led to conflict between the subgroup spokesperson, Shelly, and a Muslim member of the group, Maggie. Maggie argued that an individual's sexuality had no bearing on his/her ability to raise, love and provide for a child. When asked whether she, as a Muslim, was not also supposed to be anti-gay, the following scene played out:

- MAGGIE According to my religion, we don't believe in homosexuality, but my religion also says ... uhm ... don't judge. They will answer for themselves. We believe in a day of judgement. And each person is going to answer for all of their own sins ... they're going to be there on their own... it's not my case to say... that they're wrong ... you know I'm not saying that I'm completely liberated and that I don't have personal judgements. I mean I am human and I do, but on this particular subject I just think don't judge.
- GROUP Nervous laughter ...silence
- CHRISTA I don't think anybody wants to judge now.
- GROUP Laughter
- GROUP Silence

This moment also marked the start of a process of differentiating Maggie as a leader within the group, especially with regard to the group's task. However, the underlying theme of judgement and being judged remained with the group until the very end.

The third session, which started on the Friday morning after the group members had some time to reflect on their group experience of the previous night, saw an initial repeat of the communication pattern of the previous night – the juggling show – although this pattern was now being pointed out by the facilitators. Nevertheless, whenever the mood within the group became tense during this session, Erna would embark on a new topic and stay with it for minutes on end. The main work done during this session commenced with the members starting to share personal, mostly biographic, information about themselves in an overt attempt “to get to know each other better”. This evolved into an exploration of one of the members' responses to being asked about her cultural background. The enquiry, which was carried out in an extremely naïve and bona fide way, sparked a strong response in Shelly, the same member who had led the ‘judgemental’ subgroup in the previous session. The group worked with this response, the perceptions regarding race and accent, predefined “boxes” and the issue of freedom and responsibility with regard to asking each other questions within the group. However, the group became bogged down at a point at which the overall mood indicated that one should be careful what one asks or says in this group:

- MAGGY I don't feel like it is Christa's fault that Shelly was asked that question a lot in her life. Christa was only responsible for herself and her own curiosity and Shelly is responsible for her experiences and how she perceives that and how she accepts that or doesn't accept that.
- SHELLY Can I speak? I'm just saying, it's more like 'okay, here we go again'. It's not ... I'm not angry with you, I'm not upset with you ... this was just dejavu – do you



hear what I'm saying. I'm not concerned – don't ask me any questions ... don't ask me why I can't speak the language or not, or why I can't speak a language – I'm not ... I don't have ... I'm not offended ... I don't have ... I'm not going to look at you differently ... I'm not going to look at anybody else differently, I'm still Shelly. I'm not saying I'm not going to ... don't ask ... don't ask me not ... I'm not saying don't be scared to ask me any questions. It's more just about being sensitive towards certain differences that people have and also being open-minded about what you think and what you expect is not always the same.

STEPHAN But that's the stuckness again.

When the group returned after a 15 minute break following session 3, they started by blaming the facilitators for steering them in a direction of reflection on and conflict about the dynamics within the group while “the agreement was for the group to be unstructured and for “us to talk about whatever we like”. The group then spent almost the entire first half of the session talking about the goal of the group as “reflecting on deep emotional stuff vs. just talking about random topics” before embarking on actually using the latter half of the group for “just talking about random topics”. A significant moment in this session was when one of the members for the first time addressed the facilitators directly and asked them to join in the group's sharing about their New Year's Eve celebrations.

The transition between sessions 4 and 5 was fairly significant as this was when the group assembled in the seminar room to reflect on what had happened in the group room. During this session the facilitators assumed different roles to their roles in the training group as they led and directed the discussion. I also took part in these reflection sessions and, at times, made comments based on my observations of the group. On the one hand, this served the purpose of adding an external perspective to the discussion but, on the other, it also served the purpose of checking my observations with the members and also being transparent about my thoughts and ideas from a research perspective. During this specific reflection session, attention was paid to the relationship between the content of the group's conversations and the underlying group process. As can be seen from this excerpt from Francis's reflection, some of the group members were clearly surprised and impressed by the links made during this reflection session:

When the two psychologists started to explain why we spoke about the topics we did and what meanings it had for the group, I felt excited to see what was going to happen next. After our first

outgroup session, I thought to myself “now I know what is going on, but where do we go from here”. Only after our first outgroup session I really felt as if I belonged to a group and, more specifically, ‘my group’.

Session 5, which commenced after the lunch break that had followed the outgroup reflection, started off uncomfortably as the group struggled to make the transition back into the group. However, the group moved into working mode fairly quickly as one of the members, Debbie, started to explore the perceptions that the group members had of her and the impact this had both on the group and on her position within the group. This discussion lasted almost the entire session, with Maggie ending the session by voicing concern over where “these kinds of group discussions might end”.

If the pendulum in session 5 swung towards “work”, then it definitely swung back to “avoid work” during session 6. When the group entered the room for the start of this session, the last session of the Friday, the group members moved the chairs and sat on the floor. One facilitator, Stephan, decided to sit on a chair while the other facilitator, Joel, decided to join the group sitting on the floor. Debbie, the member around whom the previous session had mainly revolved, was the only member who also chose to sit on a chair. The group started to talk about frivolous topics and continued to do so for two thirds of the session. Then, two thirds into the session, the following occurred, starting with this question by one of the facilitators:

STEPHAN<sup>42</sup>      What do you make of all of this?  
DEBBIE            Can I start? I felt like this is kind of – it’s cool, but kind of a missed opportunity to explore deeper. It’s like we all made a conscious effort to keep things light and to avoid any sort of ... I don’t know.  
JOEL                Uhm. Missed opportunity and avoiding?  
DEBBIE            Uhm.  
STEPHAN          Somebody else? Okay.  
PAM                 What do you mean missed opportunity?  
DEBBIE            I don’t know – to learn more.

The rest of the session was then spent on discussing how far and how deep the group was prepared to go, and on how the boundaries of the levels of depth could be managed. The fear of being judged was again raised as the main obstacle preventing the group from moving on towards deep and meaningful work. Erna’s pattern of

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<sup>42</sup>Stephan and Joel were the facilitators.

communicating and her ambition “to just talk” was briefly reflected upon before the group adjourned for the day.

Session 7, the first session on the Saturday morning, saw the group exploring new communication patterns as they tried to work out how to be a group with their specific task. It started with Maggie apologising for “holding the group back” as a result of the comment she had made at the end of session 5. Pam, a member who had remained fairly silent until that point, challenged Maggie and Debbie – the pair in whom the towards work/afraid for what might happen dichotomy had become locked – to say what exactly it was that they wanted because they were always giving double messages about wanting the group to learn and explore, but being afraid that things might get out of hand. The group was still busy trying to work with this challenge, and the renewed debate of how deep or shallow to go, when Pam jumped in with a reflection on how she experienced herself in groups – first her workgroup at the office and then this group. This prompted Maggie to reflect on her role thus far in the group and the fact that she tried to take sole responsibility for the group, for both its learning and its safety. When these discussions subsided, the feeling arose that someone else could now step forward and explore his/her role within the group. However, this again brought the group up against its now well-known nemesis – the feeling of being judged...

DEBBIE	I just sense that there are people that are annoyed with me and ...
STEPHAN	Okay.
DEBBIE	... and I sensed it yesterday, and I sense it today again. So ... ja.
STEPHAN	Do you want to check that first, maybe? Are you annoyed?
DEBBIE	Christa, are you annoyed with me?
CHRISTA	No, Debbie.
ALL	Laugh
DEBBIE	Ja. Yesterday I felt distinctly that you were very annoyed with me at a stage.
CHRISTA	No.

However, this issue of “feeling judged” was not resolved at this point, and so Maggie returned to the conflict between her and Shelly of the first evening – the point at which ‘judgement’ had arisen for the first time. This, however, was not resolved here either, as will be discussed in the detailed analysis of session 7 to follow. The session ended with one of the facilitators, Joel, checking, in vain, with Erna, who fell silent, both verbally and in the way she was sitting, whether she is still on board or whether she had experienced herself as being silenced.

Session 8 started with Maggie and Debbie urging the other group members to make use of the opportunity for learning presented by this group experience. After some initial resistance, one member, and then another, shared stories about motor accidents that had left people close to them physically disabled in some way or the other. This continued until a quarterway into the session when Maggie suddenly used a statement made by Shelly as an opening for another attempt to make amends – she complimented Shelly and the compliment was gracefully received. Shelly then continued to explore with the group her own experience of being in the group and being perceived by the group. By this time the group was actively co-exploring these issues with each other and it became less necessary for the facilitators to do much during the periods when the group was ‘working’. The session ended with the group members checking with Erna whether she was still OK as she had, by this time, withdrawn totally from the group.

Another outgroup reflection took place between session 8 and session 9. This time the focus was on roles within the group and the group norms that were starting to emerge. The pattern of the previous session that had followed the outgroup session was repeated in session 9 with the group spending a considerable amount of time during session 9 in workmode. The group concentrated mainly on exploring members’ roles within the group and, specifically, on Joshua’s experience of the group and the impact he had on the group and its members. The work around Joshua’s role started out in rather a peculiar fashion with Joshua specifically asking the group to give him negative criticism and feedback regarding how they had experienced him in the group – in other words, to judge him and to judge him negatively. This, against the backdrop of the shadow of judgement that had been hanging over the group since the first session, was something of which I specifically took note in the field notes.

Session 10, the last and final session, was used mostly as a final wrap-up session and as a bridge between the training group experience and the academic and professional careers lying ahead of the group members. Members reflected on their professional identities as psychologists trained in an HR department. Care was taken to provide time for resolving issues that may still have been unresolved for the group and its members. Members were also encouraged to make use of an offer by the facilitators for individual consultations to help work through parts of the experience should the need arise. When compared with the Tavistock Group Relations format, session 10 (as well as the two outgroup sessions) was mostly reminiscent of a Group Relations Conference Review and Application Group, with the facilitator roles changing towards

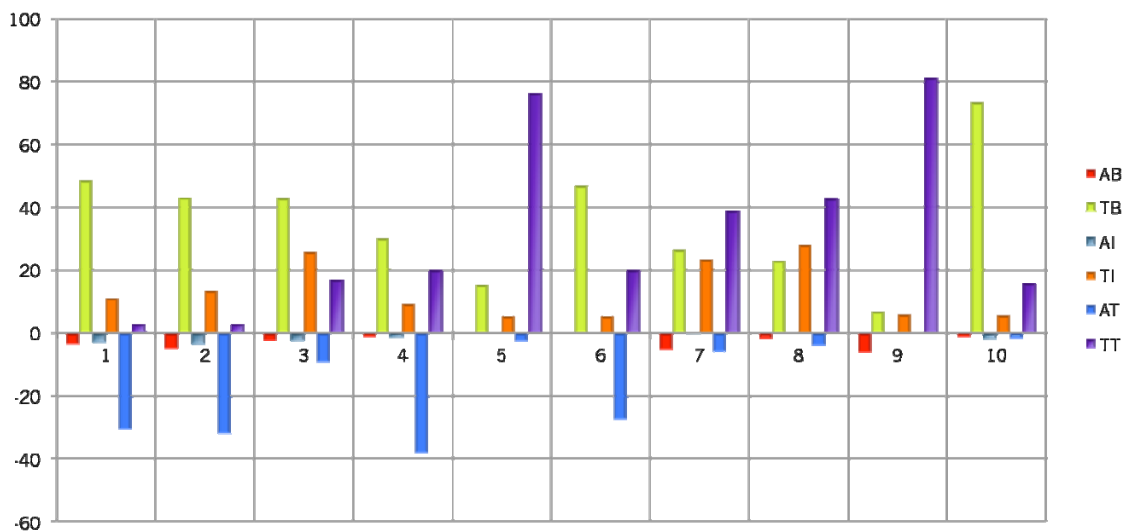
more participatory and also somewhat more directive than in the previous group sessions. When the group ended, the feeling that remained was one of incomplete satisfaction – satisfaction with regard to what had been achieved, but incompleteness because of the knowledge that there were still so much with which to work. In the words of the group members:

- Maggie: All in all, my experience of being part of this group was largely positive...I, too, had developed a fondness for the group by the end of the weekend. What I really appreciated is that it was clear to see our individuality still coming through within the group setting- but I still did feel 'part' of something.
- Christa: This definitely was 2½ days of continuous circles of fear and suspense. The group experience as a whole was one that I believe everyone should go through at some point in their lives... Although I did not manage to open up, my boundaries were tested and I was, therefore, able to learn something about myself.
- Linda: Again, what an experience, practical situations like this are much more effective in learning than just a theoretical class.
- Pam: Being part of this group made me realise that I must not assume or judge group members, but allow the opportunity to relate and recognise commonalities between one another. Each group member functions differently at his/her own pace and should be given the opportunities to take his/her responsibilities to challenge him/herself.
- Debbie: No one in the group wanted to say it directly, but we were all, somehow, trying to say that we would like to see where this group experience could take us, but we were each scared of being evaluated negatively by each other.
- Shelly: I found this experience to be psychologically and mentally draining. Although I did learn from this experience, I would not be in a hurry to participate in a similar type of exercise soon.
- Joshua: How the group reacted towards me in the sense that the comments they made about myself and my role etc. was perhaps the most important factor contributing to feeling part of the group.
- Erna: I don't like being psychologised...
- Francis: The two and a half days were really an amazing experience and it is very difficult to put in words the feelings and thoughts I had. I do not think that an opportunity like this will come along again very soon (or maybe never) and, therefore, I am very grateful to have had this opportunity and be part of the group or rather 'my group'.

#### 6.3.4 Analysis and interpretation: The group over ten sessions

As mentioned above, this analysis will look only at the major movements that occurred over the ten sessions. The information provided in the sessionbysession report in the previous section will serve as background information only so as to provide context. In order to illuminate the discussion, the graph will be presented again to facilitate the process of following the discussion while referring to the graph. However, before we proceed, it is important to bear the following in mind: the graph shows only the number of occurrences of a behaviour code category as a percentage of the total per session. This means that:

- a) The graph does not show psychological forces per se, it depicts behaviours only. In order to move from ‘behaviour’ to ‘force’ it is essential that we infer within context. We will, therefore, exercise care when speaking about underlying forces as a result of the fact that we are not dealing with the detailed codes but with the main code categories only;
- b) The graph does not claim to show the *strength* of the psychological forces. Although a high number of occurrences can tell us something about strength, it does not tell us everything about strength. The interpretation will, thus, be tentative with regard to the strength of forces;
- c) Accordingly, the only type of “safe” interpretation that is open to us based on the data before us in this section, is an interpretation of the overall patterns that we observed over the ten sessions and, even then, we will remain tentative in our assertions. It is only in the next section that we will be able to deal more boldly with our interpretations and analyses.



**Figure 6.2: The group's behaviour over ten sessions (2)<sup>43</sup>**

If we take an integrated view at the movements from sessions 1 to 5, the first obvious observation is the shift in pattern in session 3. Where sessions 1 and 2 exhibit very similar distributions of behaviours between the six broad code categories, session 3 shows a clear increase in 'towards individuality' and 'towards task' behaviours with less 'away from task' behaviours. Then, in session 4, the 'away from task' behaviours are more prevalent than before, but disappear in session 5, which is dominated by 'towards task' behaviour. The question, thus, arises: What happened there?

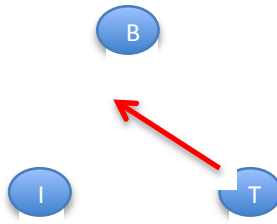
The first idea that comes to mind is Bion's notion of the group oscillating between work group functioning and basic assumption functioning. Through Bion's lens it is possible to observe the group in basic assumption fight-flight mode, especially during sessions 1 and 2. Not only did the group members immediately form pairs or subgroups, namely, the brown/black pair; the Portuguese pair; the Christian subgroup; the Afrikaans subgroup, but they also immediately adopted a pattern in terms of which one member was allowed to rescue the group from its anxietyprovoking situation by her entertaining monologues on everything except the task of the group. This flight behaviour was, thus, very easily observable through the group's effort to keep the 'Erna-juggling show' going. Fight behaviour was not as obvious, but it was, nevertheless, there: apart from the obvious conflict that emerged around polarising topics such as homosexuality, adoption, parenting and religion, there were also numerous references to competition between females for rewards (remember the group had one male member only plus two older, male facilitators) as well as long discussions on sexual harassment by older men with higher authority in the workplace. The pattern of forming alliances in pairs also alludes to the perceived danger in the group against which an individual should protect him/herself. We also saw the rise of the 'judgement' issue and the concomitant paranoia that is usually associated with a fight-flight, as described by Bion (1961).

Of course there is still much that can be done in terms of interpreting the sessions, but the purpose here is not to carry out a Bionian analysis of the group. Nevertheless, I want to draw specific attention to the movements:

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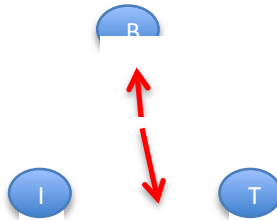
<sup>43</sup>This is the same graph as in Figure 6.1. It is repeated here to make it easier to refer to the graph while reading the text.

- a) First, mainly away from task and towards belonging with a slight tendency towards individuality (sessions 1 and 2)



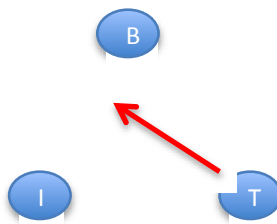
**Figure 6.3: Movement away from task**

- b) Then a slight increase towards task and individuality, with the behaviours towards belonging more or less remaining constant (session 3)



**Figure 6.4: Slight movement towards task**

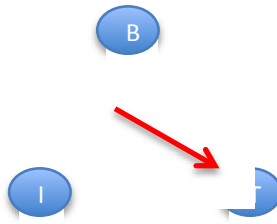
- c) This is followed again by a predominant movement away from task (session 4)



**Figure 6.5: Movement away from task, again**

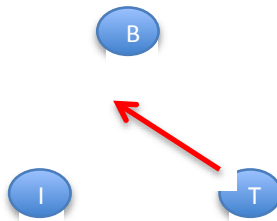
- d) Then back towards task (session 5)





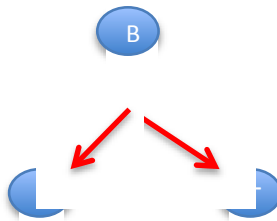
**Figure 6.6: Movement back towards task**

e) Again, away from task and towards belonging (session 6)



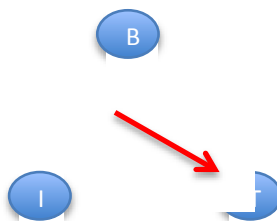
**Figure 6.7: Once more away from task**

f) This was followed by a steady increase in towards individuality and towards task behaviours (sessions 7 and 8)



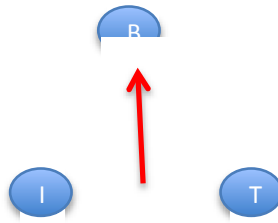
**Figure 6.8: Back towards task and individuality**

g) Then a final spike in towards task behaviours (session 9)



**Figure 6.9: Away from task, again**

h) Followed by towards belonging behaviours (session 10).



**Figure 6.10: Final movement towards belonging**

The Bionian representation of a pendulum oscillating between two poles – work on the one side and basic assumptions on the other side – is evident in this data, thus leading me to agree with him tentatively with regard to his observation of the group as always moving between the states of basic assumptions and being workdirected.

However, Bion's view of oscillation did not leave room for group development, which I do in fact think can be observed in this group. The following significant developmental shifts took place in the group:

- a) The break between sessions 4 and 5: The result was that the group operated on a totally new level in session 5.
- b) Session 6: a rebellion against the group and its work.
- c) Session 7: the working out of the tension between working or not.

Accordingly, what we are observing in the group is not merely an oscillation between two group states, but an oscillation that continuously takes place on a higher level of group development. From session 6 onwards we are able to see a progression with regard to the group taking ownership of its own development and security, as well as an increased ability to differentiate that is, seeing similarities in the apparently different and difference in the apparently similar. This, according to Agazarian (2000), is one of the key characteristics of living human systems that have an inherent drive towards maturation (moving from simple to complex organisation).

In addition, the movements observed here link up with Nitsun's formulation of his theory of the anti-group (Nitsun, 1996), in which he sees the group as containing two opposing drives: one towards survival, growth and development and another towards selfdestruction, or antigrowth. According to Nitsun, when the anti-group forces in the group are acknowledged and contained, the danger of possible destruction makes

space for potential creativity, restoration and growth. The link with the psychoanalytic notions of the life and death instincts is clear as are the links with Bennis and Shepard's (1956) notion of the barometric event in the group's development and Beck's notion of the boundary between the second and third phases of group development (Beck *et al.*, 2000). It would appear that these second and third phases of group development were between sessions 6, 7 and 8 in this group.

If this is the case, it seems that we are dealing with forces that are working either towards or away from the group's own development and that these forces are in opposition to each other. But how does this relate to the present schema of belonging, individuality and task? It would appear that both the pro-group and the anti-group forces are arranged as either towards or away from belonging, individuality and task. In other words, a force that is directed towards belonging can be either a pro-group or an anti-group force, depending on the impact which the force has on the group's overall movement either in the direction of development, or in the direction away from development. For example, the 'towards belonging' behaviours in sessions 1, 2 and 6 had, on the whole, a significantly different quality as compared with the 'towards belonging' behaviours in sessions 7 and 8. In sessions 1, 2 and 6 the 'towards belonging' behaviour predominantly served the purpose of creating an undifferentiated mass behind which to hide, whereas in sessions 7 and 8 the 'towards belonging' behaviour was mostly aimed towards creating a supportive environment in which to carry out work. The following table presents a breakdown of the 'towards belonging' behaviours for sessions 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8, as well as the number of speech quotations that each code was allocated to. Of course, it is possible to see a mix of these behaviours in all the other sessions and, of course, the behaviours in sessions 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8 are not exclusively either pro-group or anti-group. Nevertheless, this is still a pattern that emerged in general and which cannot be ignored:

**Table 6.5: A breakdown of 'towards belonging' behaviours in sessions 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8**

**Session 1**

<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>446</b>
Towards Belonging: Accept me and respect me	3
Towards Belonging: Accept me! Say I'm good enough!	18
Towards Belonging: Active listening behaviour	22
Towards Belonging: Activating Erna's initiating role	1
Towards Belonging: Agreeing	2
Towards Belonging: Approaching the group as a pair	29
Towards Belonging: Asking fellow member to elaborate	11

Towards Belonging: Asking for safe self-disclosure	1
Towards Belonging: Asking permission to ask	1
Towards Belonging: Attempt to include Erna on a different level	1
Towards Belonging: Checking on other member's attendance	2
Towards Belonging: Clarifying contents of current discussion	3
Towards Belonging: Confirming the existence of a subgroup as a protection against feeling exposed	2
Towards Belonging: Creating expectation for other's contribution	1
Towards Belonging: Drawing the group into her story with more detail	4
Towards Belonging: Emphasising her presence in order to belong	1
Towards Belonging: Emphasising similarities	4
Towards Belonging: Encouraging others to join her subgroup outside	1
Towards Belonging: Encouraging others to join in the current discussion	2
Towards Belonging: Erna's audience	17
Towards Belonging: Explaining herself	4
Towards Belonging: Relating a story in support of fellow member	3
Towards Belonging: Giving advice	4
Towards Belonging: Including member in current discussion	3
Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion	7
Towards Belonging: Joining a new discussion	5
Towards Belonging: Joining the subgroup in fleeing from the group task	9
Towards Belonging: Joking	7
Towards Belonging: Making it easier for new group member to join the group	5
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	244
Towards Belonging: Positive feedback with regard to other member's contribution	4
Towards Belonging: Reaching out to Afrikaans subgroup	2
Towards Belonging: Responding to direct question	1
Towards Belonging: Responding to Linda's attempt to console her	1
Towards Belonging: Seeking common ground	1
Towards Belonging: Setting up initiation ritual for Joshua	1
Towards Belonging: Sharing personal history in order to explain	1
Towards Belonging: Showing empathy and interest in other group member	7
Towards Belonging: Soothing behaviour in order not to deal with task	1
Towards Belonging: Supporting other member	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to make amends again after competitive behaviour with Debbie	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to shift attention to Debbie	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to understand other member better	1
Towards Belonging: Wanting to become part of the group	6

## **Session 2**

<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>391</b>
Towards Belonging: Accept me! Say I'm good enough!	7
Towards Belonging: Accepts help from Debbie	1
Towards Belonging: Agreeing	1
Towards Belonging: An inclusive and non-judgemental approach to group norms discussion	1
Towards Belonging: Approaching the group as a pair	33
Towards Belonging: Being apologetic	2
Towards Belonging: Belonging by participation	7
Towards Belonging: Building the bridge to resolve the conflict	3
Towards Belonging: Collective nervous grappling for something to do	20

Towards Belonging: Creating subgroup to which to belong	11
Towards Belonging: Erna's audience	3
Towards Belonging: Explaining herself	2
Towards Belonging: Frivolous participation	1
Towards Belonging: Giving Erna an opportunity to enter the conversation again	1
Towards Belonging: Giving new direction to current discussion to include more members	1
Towards Belonging: Including member in current discussion	1
Towards Belonging: Inclusion by translating	2
Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion	4
Towards Belonging: Joking	15
Towards Belonging: Let us agree to disagree	1
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	262
Towards Belonging: Positive feedback with regard to other member's contribution	1
Towards Belonging: Reaching out to Afrikaans subgroup	1
Towards Belonging: Sub-grouping with Maggie around not judging	1
Towards Belonging: Suggesting activity to alleviate anxiety	1
Towards Belonging: Supporting other member	2
Towards Belonging: Trying to get new discussion going/Who's who in the zoo	4
Towards Belonging: Trying to resolve conflict between Christian subgroup and group	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to understand other member better	1

### **Session 6**

<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>702</b>
Towards Belonging: Challenging leaders by creating solidarity by sitting on the floor	172
Towards Belonging: Group participation in open reflection	135
Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion	1
Towards Belonging: Joking	2
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	392

### **Session 7**

<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>23</b>
Towards Belonging: Affirming fellow member	2
Towards Belonging: Asking fellow member to elaborate	28
Towards Belonging: Asking permission to ask	2
Towards Belonging: Asking permission to ask	1
Towards Belonging: Being apologetic	2
Towards Belonging: Building on other member's contribution	26
Towards Belonging: Checking in – reporting on last night	11
Towards Belonging: Direct question regarding other member's feelings	2
Towards Belonging: Feelings of togetherness placed above feelings of conflict	7
Towards Belonging: Joking	1
Towards Belonging: Opening up and making vulnerable	8
Towards Belonging: Pairing between Debbie and Francis	6
Towards Belonging: Safe self-disclosure of personal information	58
Towards Belonging: Showing empathy and interest in other group member	38
Towards Belonging: Supporting other member	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to get a new discussion going	33
Towards Belonging: Trying to give other group members a chance to participate and not hide behind Erna	2

Towards Belonging: Trying to include member in the discussion	1
Towards Belonging: We like this group	5

### **Session 8**

<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>49</b>
Towards Belonging: Affirming fellow member	3
Towards Belonging: Are you OK?	1
Towards Belonging: Asking fellow member to elaborate	4
Towards Belonging: Being apologetic	1
Towards Belonging: Building on other member's contribution	6
Towards Belonging: Giving advice	4
Towards Belonging: Invitation to come and join the group on its level	3
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	4
Towards Belonging: Rescuing the group from the awkward silence	8
Towards Belonging: Responding to invitation to join group on its level	3
Towards Belonging: Safe self-disclosure of personal information	9
Towards Belonging: Showing gratitude	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to persuade member to participate	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to understand other member better	1

In these tables it is clear that the overall quality of the towards belonging behaviours differed quite dramatically between sessions 1, 2 and 6 on the one hand and sessions 7 and 8 on the other. Again this reinforces the sense that, although seeds of the other were always present, the sessions were dominated by either pro-group or anti-group towards belonging behaviours.

In the following analysis, which will focus specifically on session 7, we are able to conduct a fine-grained and contextualised analysis to enable us to make inferences regarding the forces within the group.

#### 6.3.5 Conclusion: Analysis 2

To summarise: from observing the movement of the group over the ten sessions, we are able to see how the group follows a to and fro pattern between what I, in alignment with Nitsun (1996), call pro-group and anti-group behaviours. This is also in accordance with Bion's (1961) conceptualisation except that the pro-group and anti-group conceptualisation of Nitsun also allows for group development as the group progressively contains and works through the anti-group tendencies. This is also in

agreement with Von Bertalanffy (1968) and Agazarian's (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) work on systems as well as the work of Beck (Beck *et al.*, 2000) and Bennis and Shepard(1956) on group development. The most interesting point which emerged from the discussion above was the fact that these pro- and anti-group movements can be discerned in the 'towards and away from individuality, belonging and task' categories with which we have worked here. This seems to indicate that the group member finds him/herself in a field of forces that operate either towards or against the development of the group and that it is possible to observe all these forces, whether pro-group or anti-group, as following patterns towards and away from individuality, belonging and task. We can, of course, through our in-depth analysis of session 7, be able to explore this further in order to ascertain whether the same pattern emerged there.

## 6.4 Analysis 3: Interpretation of the interplay of forces in session 7

### 6.4.1 Introduction: Analysis 3

For the purpose of conducting the in-depth analysis of session 7, the session has been subdivided into smaller sections. In accordance with Beck et al (Beck *et al.*, 2000), it was decided not to demarcate sections based on either the number of lines or the number of pages, but on meaningful units within the text. Each unit constitutes a section in the group's life that appeared to carry its own meaning. The result of this process was, thus, a subdivision of the session into seven different sections. In the following table the seven sections are listed, each with a concise heading referring to what the section mainly consisted of. The table also presents a list of the behaviour codes that were allocated to each section. The codes are listed as they appeared in the text in chronological order. This means that one code may occur more than once in the table.

**Table 6.6: Codes allocated per section in session 7**

<b>Section 1</b> Main theme: Checking in	TB: Checking in – reporting on last night
<b>Section 2</b> Main theme: Norms and boundaries	TT: Reflecting on group boundaries and norms in terms of depth AB: Silence from members who are not willing either to participate or to contribute AT: Grappling for alternative group task TB: Trying to get a new discussion going TT: Trying to get the group to participate in a common theme



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<b>Section 3</b> Main theme: Erna's role	AB: Silence from members who are not willing either to participate or to contribute AT: Grappling for alternative group task TB: Trying to get a new discussion going TT: Trying to get the group to participate in a common theme TB: Trying to involve members and not hide behind Erna TB: Trying to include member in the discussion AB: Resisting participation in the group
<b>Section 4</b> Main theme: Pam's role	TB: Safe self-disclosure of personal information TI: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical information TI: Self-disclosure of feelings connected to personal/private material TB: Asking fellow member to elaborate TB: Safe self-disclosure of personal information TI: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical information TI: Self-disclosure of feelings connected to personal/private material TT: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group TB: Joking
<b>Section 5</b> Main theme: Being judged	TT: Reflecting on judgementalness in group AT: Shying away from conflict TB: Feelings of togetherness placed above feelings of conflict TT: Reflecting on judgementalness in group AT: Shying away from conflict TB: Feelings of togetherness placed above feelings of conflict TT: Reflecting on judgementalness in group
<b>Section 6</b> Main theme: Maggie feeling responsible	TB: Affirming fellow member TB: Building on other member's contribution TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion TT: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group AT: Directing conversation to there and then TT: Self-reflective/ disclosure behaviour TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion TT: Reflecting on here and now emotion regarding interpersonal TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion TB: Opening up and making vulnerable TT: Checking perceptions with other members AB: Not meeting the level of vulnerability displayed AT: Christa shying away from level of honesty manifested in the question TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion TT: Open and honest reflection TB: Supporting other member TB: We like this group TB: Opening up and making vulnerable TI: Taking a personal stand/risk TT: Open and honest reflection TT: Self-reflective/opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable) TB: Direct question regarding other member's feelings TT: Direct question about interpersonal relationship in the group AB: Not meeting the level of vulnerability and directness in the question

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**Section 7**

Main theme: Judgement

AI: Not taking a stand/risk out there  
 AT: Shying away from deep level honesty  
 TB: Being apologetic  
 TB: Opening up and making vulnerable  
 TI: Taking a personal stand/risk  
 TT: Open and honest reflection  
 AB: Not meeting the level of vulnerability displayed  
 AI: Not taking a stand/risk out there  
 AT: Shying away from deep level honesty  
 TB: Being apologetic  
 TB: Opening up and making vulnerable  
 TI: Taking a personal stand/risk  
 TT: Open and honest reflection  
 TB: Affirming fellow member  
 TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion  
 TT: Self-reflective/opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)  
 TB: Affirming fellow member  
 TB: Feelings of togetherness placed above feelings of conflict  
 AT: Shelly refusing to be honest  
 TT: Group moving towards honesty  
 TB: Direct question regarding other member's feelings  
 TT: Direct question about interpersonal relationship in the group  
 TI: Not willing to relinquish the initial position taken  
 AB: Pairing between Debbie and Francis, thus withholding from the group  
 TB: Pairing between Debbie and Francis  
 TT: Reflecting on judgementalness in group  
 TB: We like this group

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Table key: AB = Away from Belonging  
 AI = Away from Individuality  
 AT = Away from Task  
 TB = Towards Belonging  
 TI = Towards Individuality  
 TT = Towards Task

Each of these sections will now be analysed and interpreted in detail. For each section, the following pattern will be followed:

- a) First, the transcript of the section will be given so that the reader is able to grasp the exact context in terms of which the interpretation will be done;
- b) Following the transcript, a tabular representation of the codes that were allocated to that section will be presented. For each section, the table presenting the codes allocated will show the codes in the exact same order that they were allocated to the original transcript. Where codes were allocated twice, both occurrences will be shown in the table. The reason for this is to enable us to see movement in the group. The purpose here is not to cluster,

but to interpret behaviour as movement (or, in Lewin's terms, locomotion (Lewin, 1951)) so as to bring us to a position where we will be able to infer forces;

- c) Next, a discussion of the section will take place. This discussion will be based on the transcript, the codes that were allocated and the literature. During this discussion the context of the group - both its external and dynamic internal context - will be borne in mind. The purpose of this discussion is to 'comb through the data' in such a way that it will become possible to identify the forces at work;
- d) Following this discussion, another discussion of the section will take place, this time focusing only on the forces at play;
- e) Finally, a summary of the forces in each section will be presented in tabular format.

#### 6.4.2 Section 1

##### 6.4.2.1 *Transcript*

###### **Session 1: Checking in**

JOEL            Good morning, everybody.  
 ALL            Good morning  
 JOEL            Okay. This is the start of our – how many?  
 STEPHAN        Seventh.  
 JOEL            Seventh session. Okay.  
 STEPHAN        Anyone want to go?  
 JOEL            Your thoughts? Maybe your thoughts?  
 LINDA           Well, I was really tired last night and I am not going to say much.  
 MAGGIE          Do you feel better today?  
 JOEL            Better than yesterday?  
 LINDA           I feel better, ja, but I was still very tired last night. Yesterday was quite draining.  
 JOEL            Draining? Is there anybody else that also felt entirely drained?  
 SHELLY          Very. I hardly spoke (indistinct 03.36).  
 JOEL            Is it?  
 SHELLY          I didn't want to speak.  
 JOEL            Okay. (indistinct 03.46)  
 ERNA            Ja, I also ... well, I find it essential to be a bit tired, you know, because we were all tired at the end, but I told myself that I'm going to have fun, so I did. I went out.  
 FRANCIS        You went out?  
 JOEL            Really?  
 ERNA            Yes. I took a bath and ... ja, I took the (indistinct 04.08) and we went out ... had fun, so I'm tired now.  
 JOEL            But we would like you to be here today.  
 ERNA            I would be.  
 JOEL            Are you starting with ... would you say what you want to say?

- MAGGIE Uhm ... I think I was feeling like Shelly last night as well. I just didn't want to talk. I think sometimes you just need to be alone with your thoughts, so that you can work through them and I feel like I did that last night and I just feel that its (indistinct 04.56).
- DEBBIE Say more. (laugh)

#### 6.4.2.2 Codes allocated to section 1

**Table 6.7: Codes allocated to section 1**

<b>Section 1</b>	TB: Checking in – reporting on last night
Main theme: Checking in	

#### 6.4.2.3 Discussion of transcript and coding

As can be seen in the text, section 1 had both a clear pattern and a goal, namely, checking in. Members took turns to talk about what they had done the previous evening, how they felt and what they expected from the day. The only code that was allocated to this section was TB: Checking in – reporting on last night. At this point it is important to remember that, on the previous day, the group had ended with session 6, in which they had first 'revolted' against the work done and the momentum created during session 5, and then, towards the end of session 6, they had started to grapple with the norms and boundaries of the group as well as the group's task: that is, what is expected of them, do they have a goal, and so on. Now, after the long and exhausting previous day, plus a night in which to deal with the emotions which had been stirred up during the previous day, the group decided first to check in and report on what they had done the previous night. This reportback seems to fulfil various functions: it provided a starting point for the group to create some common ground from which to proceed; it provided a relatively safe platform for the members to 'join' the group for the day in that the members were able to decide what, how much and in which tone to share their 'checking in' contributions and it also provided a 'bridge' between being outside the group and being inside the group – crossing this bridge could perhaps help the members to be present, here and now, in the group. Accordingly, it seems safe to infer that the underlying force to this checking-in behaviour may have been the group's need to establish its external boundary in order to proceed with the day's work. The effect of this force was that six of the nine members seized the opportunity either to

state openly something about where they stood in relation to the group, or to support the contributions from other members. One member, Erna, stated that she had gone out the previous night, after a very exhausting day, and that she had had very little sleep. The group responded that they would still like her to be present. The three members who did not participate in this check-in section were those two members who, early on in the group, had formed the 'Portuguese pair', namely, Pam and Christa, and Joshua, the only male member in the group. However, both Pam and Joshua joined in the discussion quite naturally during sections 2 and 3 of this session, thus giving the impression that, even although they had not verbally checked in during section 1, they were still very much present in what was happening. Christa, on the other hand, represented something different in the group. She remained quiet and detached until the end of section 3, at which point she was asked about her silence. However, she promptly resisted the request for her to join in the conversation:

DEBBIE            Okay. Christa, you haven't said a word.  
CHRISTA          I thought we were supposed to offer what one wants to say, not pinpoint who wants to say ... all of this.

In her personal reflection, Linda also made a reference to Christa's behaviour:

An example here is, of course, Christa repeatedly stating that there was no need to "psychoanalyse" us as this was just an unstructured conversation. She perhaps was just voicing what the group as a whole felt ... . As this is a personal reflection I must note that Christa made it hard for me to join, but also be in the group, at one stage. Her fidgeting made it look as if she had no interest in what was happening and, thus, I felt as though I'd rather keep quiet if she was so unamused by the conversations.

The reason for focusing here on the behaviour of one member who had been silent during the check-in section, is to make the point that, although there may have been a force operating towards belonging or towards establishing and monitoring the group boundary and making sure that everyone was on board, there seems to have also been a force present that was operating in the opposite direction, namely, away from belonging to and participation in the group's activities. Of course, this inference draws on the notions of Bion (group-as-a-whole) and Agazarian (invisible group and systemic levels) to the effect that the behaviour of individuals as subsystems of a group can reveal something about what is happening in the group and, indeed, also that

members of the group can take up roles on behalf of the group. Individual behaviour is, thus, viewed not only from the individual perspective, but also from the group perspective.

#### 6.4.2.4 *The interplay of forces*

We are able to discern two opposing forces at work here:

- a) Firstly, the force directed at facilitating the crossing of the boundary (between the group and its external environment) into the group and which manifested through the bridging conversation of checking-in. On the group-as-a-whole level, the point of application of this force is the membership-as-a-whole. In terms of 'being members of the small group' this force affected behaviour towards belonging in that it emphasised both the external group boundary and towards individuality as it resulted in the individuals becoming more visible in the group. On the member-level of systemic observation, this force can be seen as having, as its point of application, the individual members and as affecting their behaviour towards belonging as a result of the fact that each member showed his/her interest in belonging to the group and towards individuality by revealing something of him/herself in the group. In terms of the group's overall development, this force can be classified as a pro-group force – a force towards the group's overall growth and goal achievement.
- b) The second force that we are able to observe in this interaction is the force directed at resisting the crossing of this external group boundary when seen on the member-level (systemically) and also creating ambiguity about the external boundary (i.e. who is in and who is out) on the group-as-a-whole level. This force is manifested in Erna's declaration of tiredness and Christa's nonparticipation. On the group-level this force sets behaviour in motion both away from belonging as it undermines the general sense of cohesion within the group as well as away from individuality as the nonparticipation, or limited participation, potentially makes it more difficult for other members to show themselves freely in the group. On the member-level, the resultant behaviour can be seen as 'away from belonging' as members shun the invitation to join in the group activity and 'towards individuality' as the specific members choose to protect themselves and their interests rather than open up and show something of themselves for the benefit of the group. On the whole, this force can be seen as working against the overall growth and goal achievement of the group and, thus, it can be classified as an anti-group force.

### 6.4.3 Summary of the forces in section 1

**Table 6.8: Summary of the forces in section 1**

Force nr	Description of apparent force goal	Point of application	Manifested through	Direction of push/pull on membership	Pro- or anti-group
1a (Group-level)	To reaffirm the external group boundary	Membership -as-a-whole	Taking turns to check in	Towards belonging (Emphasising external boundary) Towards individuality (Individuals becoming visible)	Pro-group
1b (Member-level)	To facilitate the crossing of the boundary into the group	Individual members	Taking turns to check in	Towards belonging (Showing interest in belonging) Towards individuality (Showing the self within the group)	Pro-group
2a (Group-level)	To create ambiguity about the external group boundary (i.e. who is in and who is not)	Membership -as-a-whole	Erna's declaration of tiredness and Christa's nonparticipation	Away from belonging (Undermining a sense of cohesion) Away from individuality (Making it more difficult for others to become visible)	Anti-group
2b (Member-level)	To resist the crossing of the boundary into the group	Erna and Christa	Erna's declaration of tiredness and Christa's nonparticipation	Away from belonging (Resisting the invitation to join) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group

#### 6.4.4 Section 2

##### 6.4.4.1 *Transcript*

##### **Section 2: Norms and boundaries**

- MAGGIE Okay. I might as well begin. So, I was telling Anon this morning that I realised that yesterday when I think we are starting to get interpreted and we did earlier work on (indistinct 05.31), but, at a certain stage, I was practically pleading with you not to go to the specific place that we weren't ready for. This was probably going to a specific place that I wasn't ready for and then later I rebottled it and I thought okay, you know, I'm not used to being (indistinct 05.48) and I do actually want to cry, and I think maybe what it says is that sometimes you aren't always ready to talk about things at a specific time - you just need, at the time, to process things, to understand what is going on and then come back to it. So, maybe we should allow ourselves that we might be able to touch on topics that make us uncomfortable, but you don't have to completely let go. We can say, listen guys, I need a moment or we can say I don't (indistinct 08.16); we'll talk about something else. We don't need to put pressure on ourselves. We don't have to, you know ... we are in a sense imposing the rules, but if it gets uncomfortable, then absolutely nothing happens. We can just take it as it comes.
- STEPHAN What says the rest? Joshua, you shook your head?
- ALL Laugh
- STEPHAN Did you decide?
- ERNA We have. I have.
- JOEL With?
- ERNA No, I was saying ... let me not say we.
- JOEL I and me. And that I'm asking with those of you who agree?
- FRANCIS With what do you agree?
- ERNA With the fact that we must just let ourselves loose - don't take ourselves seriously and let's just talk without imposing rules. That's what she said.
- STEPHAN Is that what you said?
- MAGGIE In a sense. I did mean that as well, but I think more than rules; I mean pressure. I think that the mood is maybe something that we address or may ask later, like as it is happening we are not playing it against what is happening. If we are in a pressure situation like now, you know, we came in, we started, we won't exactly (indistinct 08.06), now we can or I don't know, maybe things are starting to turn uncomfortable. Maybe we should acknowledge that it's getting too pressurised and we just take the pressure off ourselves. We don't need to - it does not need to be stressful. It can be meaningful, but it does not have to be, you know. I mean, do you guys feel what I'm feeling as well?
- FRANCIS Ja.
- JOEL Tell me? Help me here? What is it ... what do you ... how much do I completely understand? Let me tell you, I understand the first part that you said earlier that you said you were redirecting the 'cleaning' part not to go there.
- MAGGIE Yes.
- JOEL Yes, that part I understand and that you maybe, you're inhibited or held the group back by doing that?
- MAGGIE Yes.



- JOEL Yes. That part I understand, but there's now another one just to take the stress off what? I am not sure I understand that part.
- FRANCIS I think what she's trying to say is we just push ourselves a little bit further, but not to the point where it is stressful for yourself.
- JOEL Okay, that's how you understand it.
- MAGGIE I think we, you know, in every situation we are going to ... the agreement won't have to be an exact outlay that a person takes someone else – his message. That message is to that person whatever it means to that person for whatever maybe it means, but it does mean that to me as well. I think my most important point about yesterday is that, even though (indistinct 10.02) feelings regarding, I really didn't want to go to a specific topic and afterwards I (indistinct 10.06). I didn't feel comfortable at that stage, you know, I didn't think that maybe we can go back to a specific place that you don't always feel ready at a specific moment and that's okay, you can come back to it, or you can deal with it later, or you can talk to the group and say listen, I'm feeling a bit anxious and I don't want to go forward. Let's just talk about this for a second. It does not, you know, go into a deeper level. It does not mean that you're going to take each other and (indistinct 10.32) ... redefine the ... uhm.
- JOEL Uhm. Okay. Take each other through the grinder.
- MAGGIE Ja.
- JOEL That was not necessary, you say.
- MAGGIE Maybe if (indistinct 10.53).
- PAM Ja. I understand what she's saying. Okay, so, you wanted to open up a bit, but give me an example what to open up to? What do you want to know or ... ?
- MAGGIE I think to whatever you want to open up about. Whatever you want to share and explore in the group, or, if something ... uhm ... check if something; you feel like you want to share something and you want to go, maybe you want to go to a specific place and talk to the group about it, then you should do that, but if you don't want to go or if you feel that you're getting too far in, simply you can say that's all I wanted to say about it and (indistinct 11.33). But that's just my feel, I mean.
- DEBBIE So, let's talk about the Pick 'n Pay scenario.
- MAGGIE In case (indistinct 11.48).
- DEBBIE Of course I did. (indistinct 11.51)
- MAGGIE Anyone else?
- DEBBIE No.
- INDV.? (indistinct 12.06)
- DEBBIE It's actually completely unrelated to go into the Pick 'n Pay element, but I'm thinking about is there really a right and a wrong? I mean, why should we be scared? There are no rules again. It's unstructured – just say it. Maybe we feel like saying and see where it goes. It's like we're sitting here now and we're resistant or scared – something horrible is going to happen and we're just sitting there in a group, talking.
- MAGGIE Okay.
- STEPHAN Getting back to what is something horrible and what is taken through the grinder of (indistinct 13.05), and what is there to be scared of? Is that what you refer to?
- DEBBIE Uhm. What's the worst possible scenario? Is it really that bad, you know – horrible?
- PAM I've just seen people that we struggle to bring up something, because I don't know what to bring up that's meaningful or, you know what to say and not talk



mom and dad, and I've been to Portugal – I've cried news. So, I don't know what else to give or to speak about. So, if somebody could give me something then maybe ...

#### 6.4.4.2 Codes allocated to section 2

**Table 6.9: Codes allocated to section 2**

<b>Section 2</b>	TT: Reflecting on group boundaries and norms in terms of depth
Main theme: Norms and boundaries	AB: Silence from members who are not willing either to participate or to contribute
	AT: Grappling for alternative group task
	TB: Trying to get a new discussion going
	TT: Trying to get the group to participate in a common theme

#### 6.4.4.3 Discussion

Following the initial checking-in to cross the boundary into the group, the discussion started to centre on boundaries with regards to the depth of conversation, and the way in which to control or manage these boundaries. We see an immediate shift in the group conversation towards task as Maggie, who by this time had started to play a strong, task leadership role in the group, started to reflect on her experience in the group and how she had projected her fear of going too deep onto the group by the comments that she had made the previous day. She started off by acknowledging that her concerns regarding going too deep had to do with her own discomfort but that this was something that she, and, probably, each group member, would be able to control in the future. She advocated self-regulation with regard to the boundary of depth of conversation on the part of each member concerned and stated that each member should take control of what he/she feels comfortable sharing, or not, and also make this known to the group so as to enable the group to respect that.

This first part of the conversation was, thus, coded “Towards task: Reflecting on group boundaries and norms in terms of depth”. It can be argued that Maggie fulfilled a function for the group by touching on this topic. It is then possible to infer that one of the operating forces within the group was the need to ‘test the brakes’ in order for both the group and its members to know how fast and far it could safely go. However, this does create a problem for the group as, until that point Maggie, together with Debbie, had been very active in ‘testing the accelerator’ of the group on behalf of the group, although they had done this in very different ways. Maggie’s towards task role had, in the main, been to open up and demonstrate ‘towards task’ behaviour. This



TI: Distinguishing self by providing 'therapy-like' interpretation	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TI: Distinguishing self by moving to higher level of complex thought	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
TI: Distinguishing self by showing personal, unique approach to the group	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

Table key: TT = Towards Task; TI = Towards Individuality; C = Christa; D = Debbie; E = Erna; F = Francis; J = Joshua; L = Linda; M = Maggie; P = Pam; S = Shelly; T = Total

At this point in the life of the group a pattern was clearly visible to the effect that the responsibility for the group's task involvement was vested in the Debbie/Maggie pair. However, the differing ways in which the two members of this pair were dealing with this responsibility had created a difficult pushing and pulling dynamic within the group: On the one hand, there was the natural ambivalence created by Maggie's opening up behaviour (realising the potential value vs. the inherent fear of 'being in the spotlight') and, on the other, there was the resistance against Debbie's efforts to push or pull the group along whilst retaining her position of superiority within the group. It can be noted here that it was Debbie's reflection on her role in the group that had dominated much of session 5 and that the group had reflected on Debbie's attempts to be 'weird', or 'distancing' in session 5. Then, in session 6, when the group had revolted by sitting on the floor and deliberately discussing topics on which they had agreed during the lunch break, it was Debbie who had not joined the group on the floor and had remained elevated on one of the chairs.

The 'towards task' aspect of the ambivalence created by Maggie's initial reflection in this section is manifested by the fact that the group had allowed her to take the discussion in the direction of reflecting how they, as a group, could take control of the depth of their interaction. However, it is not possible for us to ignore the fact that the opposing force was present: Firstly, in the silence of the majority of the group – a silence that was characterised by a 'heavy' quality - and, secondly, in Erna's obvious misinterpretation of Maggie's contribution through which Erna opens up the possibility of the conversation going way off task again:

FRANCIS        With what do you agree?  
 ERNA            With the fact that we must just let ourselves loose – don't take ourselves seriously and let's just talk without imposing rules. That's what she said.  
 STEPHAN       Is that what you said?

Maggie then goes on to clarify what she said. This, in turn, arouses some interest in Pam, one of the group members who had been silent up to that point in this session, prompting Pam to engage with Maggie with regards to how they can proceed and what to focus on:

PAM               Ja. I understand what she's saying. Okay, so, you wanted to open up a bit, but give me an example what to open up to? What do you want to know or?  
(The tone is one of genuine interest)

It would not be too farfetched to assume (in accordance with Bion, Agazarian and Foulkes) that Pam's behaviour in this instance can be perceived as fulfilling a role on behalf of the group, namely, to become involved and to share in the exploration of the possibilities available to the group, and maybe even to take over some of those responsibilities from the Debbie/Maggie pair. If this is, indeed, the case, then it can be possible to say that a force within the group towards development and taking control of its work may have been starting to emerge. This force, however, is set back temporarily when Debbie, true to the now established pattern in the group, tries to push the group towards working, or so it seems... .

DEBBIE           It's actually completely unrelated to go into the Pick 'n Pay element, but I'm thinking about is there really a right and a wrong? I mean, why should we be scared? There are no rules again. It's unstructured – just say it. Maybe we feel like saying and see where it goes. It's like we're sitting here now and we're resistant or scared - something horrible is going to happen and we're just sitting there in a group, talking.

MAGGIE           Okay.

STEPHAN       Getting back to what is something horrible and what is taken through the grinder of (indistinct 13.05), and what is there to be scared of? Is that what you refer to?

DEBBIE           Uhm. What's the worst possible scenario? Is it really that bad, you know – horrible?

This interaction created a similar resistance to that experienced in the group previously, thus strengthening the resistance to being pushed or pulled along and, therefore, heightening the complexity of the 'accelerator'/'break'dynamic that was vested in the Debbie/Maggie pair. This is illustrated by the fact that Pam immediately vents her frustration about what to speak about at that point:

PAM               I've just seen people that we struggle to bring up something, because I don't know what to bring up that's meaningful or, you know, what to say and not talk, mom and dad, and I've been to Portugal – I've tried news. So, I don't know

what else to give or to speak about. So, if somebody could give me something then maybe ...  
(The tone here is one of irritation.)

This interaction by Pam immediately opens the door for Erna to rescue the group with another attempt to introduce a new topic for a monologue. This leads into the next section, in which the group actually calls a halt and reflects on Erna's role and the usefulness of this role at this stage of the group.

#### *6.4.4.4 The interplay of forces*

The forces that we have tentatively identified at this point include the following:

- a) First, we see a force in the direction of 'testing the brakes' – setting norms and boundaries –to enable the group to know how far and how fast it is able to go. This force is applied to the membership-as-a-whole when seen on the group-level and to Maggie, in particular, when seen on the member-level. It manifests through Maggie's behaviour when she reflects on her own ability to control what she says in the group and the group's ability to respect her wish. On the group-level this force can be seen as impacting on the membership-as-a-whole in the direction of the group's task as the group openly reflects on the norms and boundaries within the group, which is part of the group process. On the member-level we see this force having the 'towards task' effect on Maggie as she reflects on her own impact on the group process. This force can be seen as a pro-group force as it seems necessary for the group's overall development and sustainability that it should clarify issues such as norms and boundaries.
- b) However, the force discussed above is countered by a force in the direction of avoiding the 'testing of brakes' – setting norms in terms of the depth of conversation – in the hope that, if the braking issue remains unclear, then it could be that the group will be able to avoid working altogether and occupy itself with less threatening activities. This force is also applied to the membership-as-a-whole when seen on the group-level and to Erna, in particular, when looked at from a member-level perspective. It manifests through both the heavy silence and Erna's attempt to allow a misinterpretation of Maggie's words to be accepted by the group. This force, in turn, pushes the group-as-a-whole away from its task – through avoiding reflection on complex group issues –, away from individuality as individuals become less visible

within the group and towards belonging as the group assumes the quality of being a 'mass' behind or in which to hide. On the member-level, this force facilitates the avoidance of complex group issues. On the whole this force can be seen as an anti-group force – working towards the overall detriment of the group instead of its growth.

- c) The force towards avoiding boundarychecking is again countered by a force directed at the overall development of the group (pro-group), which manifests through Francis' critical question to Erna and strengthened by the facilitator's testing of Erna's summary of Maggie's initial contribution. On the group-level, this force is observed as being applied to the membership-as-a-whole and as acting as a driving impetus towards the group's task of focusing critically on checking reality. On the member-level, this force can also be seen as driving behaviour towards critical realitychecking, but also towards individuality as one of the members uses her unique critical faculties for the benefit of the group.
- d) Thus, resulting in Debbie's interaction, a now familiar force is set in motion. This force, which seems to be operating in the direction of the group's task and development, actually achieves the exact opposite whenever it is applied in this group: creating resistance both to becoming vulnerable and to engaging in the group's work. It can be that this force is actually (albeit unconsciously) set in motion as a defence against opening up, and is disguised as a prompting towards the group's work. This makes sense if we take into account that this force constantly manifested itself through Debbie, who also appeared to have a vested interest in siding with the facilitators and avoiding being seen as 'on the same level' as the group members. This could represent an outstanding example of Bion's(1961) notion of valence for a role. It would seem that there exists in Debbie a fear of being judged (refer to her opening statement about her expectations of the group) and, therefore, a fear of opening up. We see, thus, in Debbie, an unconscious wish either to play the psychologist and allow others to open up, or to push the group towards working in such a way that the group's natural resistance to being pushed will be activated and result in a move away from the group's work. This force is, thus, disguised as working towards the development of the group whilst, in actual fact, it is working towards activating the group's natural defence against being pushed by one of its members. It manifests through Debbie's behaviour and creates an away-from-task thrust as the group-as-a-whole avoids reflecting on complex group issues; an away-from-individuality drive as members become less visible and a pull towards belonging as the group becomes a safe place in which members

can hide in the 'safety of numbers'. On the member-level this force can be seen as being applied to Debbie, in particular, leading to a drive to lessen the risk of being asked to indulge in personal sharing herself (thus, away from task and away from individuality), but also to protect herself (towards individuality) and to distance herself from the group (away from belonging). The abovementioned force towards the group reflex immediately gives rise to a counter force which is, in turn, met with the actual reflex-force mentioned above. The countering force manifests in Pam's critical comment on the hidden double messages regarding 'acceleration' and 'breaking' while the reflex-force manifests through the reflex-reaction of both Erna and the group to activate the now familiar defence against work in Erna's role as flightleader. The countering force will be discussed under force number 'e' below, while the reflex force will be discussed under force number 'f' below.

- e) This force counters the stealthlike 'force-aimed-at-triggering-the-reflex' that was discussed under number 4 above in that it is directed at countering the double messages being given out by Debbie and Maggie. On the group-level, the force is applied to the membership-as-a-whole with the concomitant effect of pulling the group both towards critical realitychecking (towards task) and towards individuality as one member's becoming visible through critical commentary, without, however, leading to her being put down, potentially assists in establishing an atmosphere in which other members can become more willing to become visible themselves. On the member-level this force is applied to Pam and drives her both towards task, by checking reality, and towards using her unique individual competencies for the benefit of the group. Accordingly, this force can be seen as having an overall positive effect on the group's development and potential for goalachievement.
- f) As mentioned above, the force that was aimed at countering the potential reflexreaction to 'being pushed by one of our peers' was, in fact, met by the reflex force. Aimed at defending against working through difficult group processes, this force manifested in Erna's, by now familiar, flightleadership role. The force had an impact on the group-level in that the group-as-a-whole was pushed away from the group's task of reflecting on its own complex processes and towards becoming a safe mass behind which to hide. The overall quality of this force is that of an anti-group force as it appears that the force is aimed at undermining the group's development and also goalachievement.

#### 6.4.4.5 Summary of the forces in section 2

**Table 6.12: Summary of the forces in section 2**

Force nr	Description of apparent force goal	Point of application	Manifested through	Direction of push/pull on membership	Pro or anti-group
1a (Group-level)	To set norms in terms of managing depth of conversation	Membership -as-a-whole	Maggie's reflection	Towards task (Reflecting on group process)	Pro-group
1b (Member-level)	To set norms in terms of managing depth of conversation	Maggie	Maggie's reflection	Towards task (Reflecting on her own impact on group process)	Pro-group
2a (Group-level)	To avoid the setting of norms in terms of managing depth of conversation	Membership -as-a-whole	Heavy silence, plus Erna's misinterpretation of Maggie's reflection	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible) Towards belonging (Group as a mass behind which to hide)	Anti-group
2b (Member-level)	To avoid the setting of norms in terms of managing depth of conversation	Erna	Heavy silence, plus Erna's misinterpretation of Maggie's reflection	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues)	Anti-group
3a (Group-level)	To ensure reality checking of the contributions made in the group	Membership -as-a-whole	The reflections of both Francis and the facilitator on Erna's contribution	Towards task (Critical reality checking)	Pro-group
3b (Member-level)	To ensure reality checking of the contributions made in the group	Francis	Reflections of both Francis and the facilitator on Erna's contribution	Towards task (Critical reality checking) Towards individuality (Using her cognitive faculties for the benefit of the group)	Pro-group
4a (Group-level)	To trigger the group's defence against opening up in the group	Membership -as-a-whole	The style and result of Debbie's encouragement	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible) Towards belonging (Group as a mass behind which to hide)	Anti-group
4b (Member-level)	To trigger the group's defence against opening up in the group	Debbie	The style and result of Debbie's encouragement	Away from task (Lessening the risk of being asked to indulge in personal sharing) Away from individuality (Lessening the risk of having to show herself) Towards individuality (Self-protection) Away from belonging (Distancing herself from the group)	Anti-group



5a (Group-level)	To counter the double messages being given out by Debbie and Maggie	Membership -as-a-whole	Pam's critical comment	Towards task (Critical reality checking) Towards individuality (Individuals becoming visible)	Pro-group
5b (Member-level)	To counter the double messages being given out by Debbie and Maggie	Pam	Pam's critical comment	Towards task (Critical reality checking) Towards individuality (Using her cognitive faculties for the benefit of the group)	Pro-group
6a (Group-level)	To defend against working through difficulties regarding the group process	Membership -as-a-whole	Erna's flight-leadership	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues) Towards belonging (Groupas a mass behind which to hide)	Anti-group
6b (Member-level)	To defend against working through difficulties regarding the group process	Erna	Erna's flight-leadership	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues)	Anti-group

#### 6.4.5 Section 3

##### 6.4.5.1 *Transcript*

#### **Section 3: Erna's role**

ERNA

Okay. Can ... is it possible that we can talk about work? Can we talk about like, you know, where you are at the moment, the company that you are working for, the activities that you are doing, uhm ... what would you like to do, because sometimes, I mean, you know, they always send me on jobs that we don't like or maybe there is something that you know of that you feel you wouldn't want to do – that you are doing at the moment – your aspirations – whatever that is of interest to you and related to work. Or maybe in your company what you are being exposed to, what you would like to be exposed to, the people that you work with, the department itself, how is it structured, how do you see yourself in that department? Something like that. I guess somewhere, somehow, we can also even help with the things that you are saying may be of interest in those type of things, I can learn from you, I will know, maybe, if for instance, I've got this form of some sort graduate, whether form; I can speak to you because you spoke about it. You told me that you are dealing with it. Maybe I can, you know, refer back to you and say, oh no, Debbie has got stuff like this, you know? We can talk, because I think somewhere, somehow, as a group, we are doing the same thing, we are in the same field, but we are separated in terms of the companies that we work for and, you know, we can assist one another, somewhere, somehow, in terms of the things that we're doing. It's networking. Ja, I think that's ... so, we can talk about that?



JOEL That's a suggestion. Any other suggestions or is that where you want to go?  
MAGGIE (indistinct 15.29) (I don't work)  
LINDA I don't work  
ALL Laugh.  
ERNA Say, listen. Yes, then maybe we'll listen and hear, and, you know, there has been a point at, and you know ...  
LINDA You listen and learn.  
ERNA And when we give you input in terms of, you know, like you're studying obviously, you are with us, in terms of the things that you would want to do once you complete it.  
ALL Silence  
DEBBIE Do we start with me?  
JOEL What's the ... what do you make of the silence ... the two people that are not working said no, they haven't got anything to talk about, but they can listen.  
JOSHUA But they can speak about what they, perhaps, wanted to do.  
ERNA Ja, like I said – what they would want to do. I mean, she has worked before as well. I mean, sometimes she does refer back to ... you know.  
JOEL I heard that part.  
ERNA Yes. So, she can talk about that experience and also talk about the future. And the other guys are quiet, so, basically, we agreed.  
ALL Laugh  
STEPHAN Or not.  
ERNA Or not, but she has agreed because ... and he has and she has, *Shelly* is forced to do it.  
JOSHUA Harass them.  
ERNA Harassed. Coerced into it.  
STEPHAN It's the same thing, but, psychologically, you have two directly opposed meanings - silence can mean, yes, I consent; but silence can also mean, no, I don't want to do it.  
JOSHUA Not really keen on it.  
PAM Well, who would like to speak all of that topic? Would you like to speak about it?  
MAGGIE Would you like to speak about it?  
SHELLY It's fine with me.  
ERNA Debbie?  
DEBBIE I have a reservation.  
ERNA A reservation? Does that mean you will speak to a certain point and as for you?  
DEBBIE Yes.  
ERNA Okay. It's acceptable. Uhm ... Christa?  
MAGGIE I don't know. We can say what we want to say, and, if the conversation takes us to different direction, then we should allow it to. We don't have to, you know, only talk about the ..., but I don't mind talking about that as well.  
ERNA True.  
MAGGIE But I am interested in that as well.  
DEBBIE Me? I don't mind. I have some experience, so ... (indistinct 17.58). Don't look at me.  
ERNA Just start with you?  
DEBBIE No, seriously, you don't want me to start.  
ERNA Why not?  
DEBBIE You just don't.  
ERNA Okay.

ERNA Okay. I'll say something – good point.  
 JOEL Maybe, Erna, can you try not to start? Because I think you always start?  
 PAM Not in a bad way.  
 ERNA Okay.  
 JOSHUA Jy's oraait  
 DEBBIE Okay. Christa, you haven't said a word.  
 CHRISTA I thought we were supposed to offer what one wants to say, not pinpoint who wants to say. All of this.

#### 6.4.5.2 Codes allocated to section 3

**Table 6.13: Codes allocated to section 3**

<b>Section 3</b>	AB: Silence from members who are not willing either to participate or to contribute
Main theme: Erna's role	AT: Grappling for alternative group task
	TB: Trying to get a new discussion going
	TT: Trying to persuade group to participate in a common theme
	TB: Trying to involve members and not hide behind Erna
	TB: Trying to include member in the discussion
	AB: Resisting participation in the group

#### 6.4.5.3 Discussion

This section describes one of a number of occurrences in the life of the group during which the facilitators created a moment for the group to reflect on the pattern that had been created around Erna's role. This session started with a silence which had been induced by Pam's remark about her frustration with the double messages regarding what to share and what not to share and how deeply to share. Then, following the pattern that had emerged right from the first session of the group's life, Erna broke the silence with a speech that was considerably longer than the speeches delivered directly before and after she spoke. In this case, Erna's speech was not, as so often before, an attempt to try to entertain the group with stories from her own life, but rather one in which she suggested and tried to motivate a plan for the group to move forward. In line with her earlier comment of "let's just talk about anything" she proposes an alternative task for the group, namely, to talk about work. This is rather ironic as the goal of her speech was to find alternative work for the group and the topic that she suggested for discussion by the group members was their respective work situations. However, something interesting happens next – her speech is followed by silence on

the part of all the group members, except for two of the members who indicate that they are not currently employed.

Four behaviour codes with opposing directions in terms of the belonging and task goal region complexes were allocated to this exchange: first, the attempt to create a common task or theme in which the group could engage, was seen as a 'towards belonging' behaviour as it is, clearly, an attempt to establish a way in which to include all the group members in the discussion. In terms of the role that Erna had been playing up to that point in the group, this attempt appears to be in line with her usual attempts to rescue the group whenever it seems unsure of how to proceed. However, the strong silence after her speech had the distinct quality of 'disengagement' with nobody indicating that they agreed with her suggestion. In fact, it was recorded in the field notes that the group resisted Erna's suggestion. In reality, the only voices heard were those of two members indicating that they were not employed and, thus, they would not have anything to contribute. It can be that this fact of unemployment made it easier for these members to voice their problems with the suggestion and that this fact was unconsciously 'employed' by the group to air the need of the entire group not to be drawn into another pointless discussion yet again. This silence on the part of the group was coded as 'away from belonging' behaviour and it can very well be the result of a force similar to the one that we encountered in the preceding discussion, namely, the resistance of the group to being dragged along or coerced by one of its members into something that the group members had not all agreed that they would do.

ERNA	Yes. So, she can talk about that experience and also talk about the future. And the other guys are quiet, so, basically, we agreed.
JOSHUA	Or not.
ERNA	Or not, but she has agreed because ... and he has and she has, <i>Shelly</i> is forced to do it.
JOSHUA	Harass them.
ERNA	Harassed. Coerced into it.
STEPHAN	It's the same thing, but, psychologically, you have two dimensionally opposed meanings – silence can mean, yes, I consent; but silence can also mean, no, I don't want to do it.

In order to be fair towards Erna's role here, one must not ignore the fact that she is trying to persuade the group to participate in a common theme, something that the group has found difficult to do. However, this behaviour which is aimed at the group's task actually ends up detracting from the group's task as a result of the fact that the attempt is misguided as it aims at generating discussion around something that is an

alternative to what the group is actually supposed to be busy with. These opposing 'towards task' and 'away from task' behaviours can be seen as resulting from opposing forces within the group with regards to its task. On the one hand, there is the force towards the actual task of the group – a force which, until now, has strongly manifested through the behaviours of Maggie and Debbie:

DEBBIE                    I have a reservation  
...  
MAGGIE                 I don't know. We can say what we want to say and, if the conversation takes us to a different direction, then we should allow it to.

On the other hand, there is the force away from task which, until now, has manifested strongly through Erna's behaviour.

Another incident that must not be overlooked is Joshua's instinctive reaction to Erna's assumption that the silence means that everybody agrees:

ERNA                    Yes. So, she can talk about that experience and also talk about the future.  
                              And the other guys are quiet, so, basically, we agreed.  
JOSHUA                 Or not.

It would appear that this behaviour is the result of an underlying force within the group that is directed at fulfilling the need for being critical about what is being assumed to be the truth in the group. The moment that Joshua responded, Erna responded with making the covert overt:

ERNA                    Or not, but she has agreed because ... and he has and she has, *Shelly* is forced to do it.  
JOSHUA                 Harass them.  
ERNA                    Harassed. Coerced into it.

The facilitator is quick to make use of this opportunity to strengthen the force directed at being critical about assumptions within the group:

STEPHAN              It's the same thing, but, psychologically, you have two directly opposite meanings – silence can mean, yes, I consent; but silence can also mean, no, I don't want to do it.

Suddenly there is a new pattern emerging with Pam taking the lead in checking with the members whether or not they are in agreement with this. Eventually it is also Pam (see discussion in the next section) who comes forward and volunteers to talk about her own work situation. First we see a reluctant agreement to engage in this alternative task and then a strong resistance emerges to being the first one to actually engage in this alternative task.

DEBBIE            No, seriously, you don't want me to start.

ERNA             Why not?

DEBBIE           You just don't.

DEBBIE           Okay. Christa, you haven't said a word.

CHRISTA         I thought we were supposed to offer what one wants to say, not pinpoint who wants to say. All of this.

Of course, the fact that the facilitator had intervened by countering the group force that would simply allow Erna to volunteer herself, forced the group to adhere to its uncomfortable decision to embark on this alternative task whilst not all the members had agreed to do so. Accordingly, with the force towards safety and inclusion strongly present and working together with the force away from the group's anxiety-provoking task, it is the forces towards critical and honest reflection and towards efficient group functioning that are strengthened by the facilitator when he disrupts the old pattern and requests Erna not to start. This intervention by the authority figure in the group was different to any intervention thus far in that it was the first time that the facilitator had made a direct attempt to stop someone from speaking. When seen within the power relations in a university context one can argue that Erna, who is a student in a course, would, of course, immediately submit to such an intervention. However, in this case, it seems more reasonable to argue that the intervention was in line with the current mood within the group and, therefore, there were no objections triggered to the directness of their intervention. Why would the second possible explanation be more reasonable? Possibly because neither of the facilitators had ever been in any relationship to the group members other than being facilitators in this group experience.

In addition, the group had, at that point, had more than six sessions in which they had experienced the freedom to talk and to talk about whatever they chose to talk. Accordingly, it would appear that it was less a function of the external context and more a function of the internal context created by the group that played a role in the facilitator's decision to make the intervention, in Erna's decision to stand back and in

the group's decision not to challenge the facilitator, but to continue to try to find someone else to take a turn to speak. It is almost as if the group had been waiting for something like this to happen and was relieved when it actually did happen as the group itself had felt unable to deal with the situation effectively. It can, therefore, be argued that there was a force within the group that had allowed, or even asked for, such an intervention to take place. This force could be called a force towards the efficient functioning of the group (giving all the members equal opportunities) and, in this case, the result was that a new member, Pam, started to explore issues surrounding her role both at the workplace and within the group.

One more interaction that must not be overlooked is the final resistance on the part of Christa to being included in the group discussion when invited to do so by Debbie. It is essential that we look at this interaction between Debbie and Christa against the backdrop of the group's entire story thus far and, specifically, against the backdrop of one of the roles that Christa had been fulfilling on behalf of the group. There are three patterns that had strongly characterised Christa's involvement in the group up to that point, namely, her pairing up with Pam, her being a voice on the issue of competition between females on behalf of the group and her willingness to challenge the facilitators. However, we are not going to interpret this small interaction at this point as a result of the fact there was a more prominent playing out of these dynamics later in this session and it is at that point that we will take an in-depth look at the forces represented by Christa's roles within the group. Nevertheless, at this point, a prudent conjecture may be that her behaviour signified the force in the group directed at putting a hold on the group's progress because of a feeling of discomfort with the group's process.

#### *6.4.5.4 The interplay of forces*

The forces that emerged during this section of session 7 can be summarised as follows:

- a) The first force at play in this section is the resistance of the group to being dragged along or coerced by one of its members into doing something which they had not all agreed to do. This force seems to correspond with the force identified in the previous section, namely, the group's reflex resistance to being either pushed or pulled by a fellow group member with both referring to a reluctance within the group to move as a result of some form of discomfort with the group process at the time. In the previous section it seemed as if there was

discomfort regarding Debbie's role as pseudofacilitator while, in this section, the discomfort seems to have been with the communication pattern around which Erna's role had been constructed. It must, however, be pointed out that it was not necessarily the proposed movement itself by the peer, first Debbie and now Erna, that had caused the resisting force, but the way in which it was being proposed and the concomitant risk, as perceived by the group, should this way of operating be allowed to continue and perpetuate itself. This is reminiscent of Armstrong's notion of the organisation in the mind (Armstrong, 2005) with the risk here being that a specific system-in-the-mind be allowed to prevail and to continue to influence the way in which things were being done within the group. On the group-level, it is possible to see how this force is being applied to the membership-as-a-whole and manifested through the uniform joining in the silence on the part of the group in response to Erna's request. On the member-level we are able to see the force being applied to 'the silent group member' and creating a pull away from joining Erna on an interpersonal level. On the whole, this force can be seen as working towards the development of the group as it resists being pulled into a pattern that has been proved unsuccessful up to that point.

- b) However, this force is accompanied by a force that works subtly against the overall development and goal attainment of the group by keeping the group from voicing its concern openly about the group process. When applied to the membership-as-a-whole we are able to see the individual members becoming less visible within the group with the drive towards belonging as a way in which to hide behind the group and the drive away from the group's task of open and honest communication. When viewed on the systemic level of the group member, it is possible to see this force as being applied to 'the silent group member' and driving the member away from individuality and task as he/she refrains from taking a 'stand out there' and, in so doing, avoids open communication about the group's process. When seen in this way, it is clear that this force is acting as an anti-group force – driving the group to act out its resistance rather than verbalise it.
- c) On a different, more conscious, content focused level, we then also identified two directly opposing forces with regards to the group's task. On the one hand, there is the force directed at 'keeping things light-hearted and safe', as manifested through Erna's behaviour, which was aimed at helping the group to avoid open communication and ensuring that she feels more comfortable in joining the group in conversation.



- d) The force directed at keeping the conversation focused around the group's task of exploring its own functioning as it plays out, as manifested through Maggie's behaviour when she declares her willingness to talk about 'work' on condition that the group allows the conversation to take its own course and not limit it to frivolous talk about workenvironments. This latter force is directed at not allowing the group to lose sight of its goal. Accordingly, this force moves the group-as-a-whole towards task, individuality and belonging as it helps to keep the possibility for work alive, and allows the members to become visible while still emphasising a sense of togetherness within the group, albeit togetherness around a slightly off-task activity. On the member-level this force also has a towards task, individuality and belonging effect as Maggie keeps the door open for working towardstask, yet states her personal preference in such a way that she also shows her need to belong to the group at that moment.
- e) As described above, Joshua's comment "or not" can again refer to the first force discussed above, namely, the underlying force in the group that is directed at fulfilling the need to be critical about what is being assumed to be the truth within the group. However, where this force first manifested itself covertly as resistance to being dragged along with an untested 'organisation-in-the-mind', it now manifests more overtly with one of the members taking a critical stance towards the assumption that silence means agreement. This overt manifestation of the force then opens the way for the facilitators to use their role to strengthen both this force and its impact on the group's development. Agazarian (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) recommend intervening by weakening the forces that work against the group's growth and development and, thereby, facilitating the inherent drive of the living system towards growth and development. This intervention on the part of the facilitators can be said to have a weakening effect on the force aimed at maintaining the status quo as it supported a critical reflection on the adequacy of certain of the existing roles and patterns within the group. It can, therefore, be seen as a pro-group force with the members, in this case, Joshua, becoming visible for the sake of the group moving towards its task.
- f) This critical reflection aimed at weakening the forces maintaining the ineffective group processes was then followed by a renewed expression of the force towards safety and inclusion, as mentioned under 'b' above, with the members taking turns to agree that they would join in the discussion about work. On a group-level, we see this force as working away from task and away from individuality and, on a member-level, we see the additional move towards

belonging as the members seek to hide behind the safety provided by the group.

- g) However, the forces towards critical and honest reflection and towards efficient group functioning, as strengthened by the facilitators' interventions, manifested yet again, this time with regard to the reluctance on the part of group members to embark on the now implicitly accepted plan to talk about something other than the group's task. This can be seen as an 'away from belonging' force on both the systemic levels of the group-as-a-whole and the group member with the overall quality of working towards the group's development.
- h) In reaction to this force, the opposing forces directed at maintaining the roles and communication patterns that create safety at the expense of group development, manifested through Erna's volunteering to start with a discussion of her own work situation. On the group-level, we are able to see how the group is moved away from task and towards belonging as the group again runs the risk of becoming a hiding place, and away from individuality as the individuals in the group become less visible. On the member-level, we are able to see Erna becoming visible as an individual, but in such a way that it takes the group away from its task
- i) This process was abruptly stopped by the facilitator, probably still being affected by the force towards being critical of the unhelpful patterns and roles within the group and towards the efficient functioning of the group by creating space in which new patterns can develop when someone else is given the opportunity to initiate discussion.
- j) Finally, we see in Christa's reaction the possible force against group progress (in this case, helping the group to progress by deciding to join the group in its work) as a result of unhappiness with some issue relating to the process of the group or, at least, with something relating to the members' experience of the group process. There is an important link here in terms of Nitsun's (1996) conceptualisation of the anti-group. According to Nitsun, anti-group behaviour encompasses important information about the group and its underlying process, behaviour which, when addressed and worked through, holds significant potential for the group's development. In this case, the anti-group behaviour encompasses Christa's refusal to join in. It is, therefore, possible that valuable information about the group and its process can be uncovered in this refusal of Christa's and, thus, one should perhaps ask: Why? Why the refusal to join? We will come back to these questions later on in this session when we explore Christa's behaviour in more detail. It is interesting to

note, however, the way in which this behaviour represents a towards individuality quality on the member-level – as she tries to protect herself – but an ‘away from individuality’ quality on the group-level as she makes it more difficult for others to become ‘visible’ and vulnerable in the group as a result of her refusal to join the group.

#### 6.4.5.5 Summary of forces

**Table 6.14: Summary of the forces in section 3**

Force nr	Description of apparent force goal	Point of application	Manifested through	Direction of push/pull on membership	Pro- or anti-group
1a (Group-level)	To resist being pulled into an unwanted group process	Membership -as-a-whole	Group silence as response to Erna's suggestion	Towards belonging (Together in resistance)	Pro-group
1b (Member-level)	To resist being pulled into an unwanted group process	The 'silent member'	Group silence as response to Erna's suggestion	Away from belonging (Not joining Erna)	Pro-group
2a (Group-level)	To refrain from voicing concerns overtly regarding group process	Membership -as-a-whole	Group silence as response to Erna's suggestion	Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible) Away from task (Avoiding open communication and exploring)	Anti-group
2b (Member-level)	To resist being pulled into something that has not been agreed upon	The 'silent member'	Group silence as response to Erna's suggestion	Away from individuality (Not taking a stand out there) Away from task (Avoiding open communication and exploring)	Anti-group
3a (Group-level)	To keep things light-hearted and safe	Membership -as-a-whole	Erna's suggestion to talk about work	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues)	Anti-group
3b (Member-level)	To keep things light-hearted and safe	Erna	Erna's suggestion to talk about work	Towards belonging (Need to create a theme in terms of which to join the group)	Anti-group
4a (Group-level)	To focus the conversation on the group's task of exploring its own functioning	Membership -as-a-whole	Maggie's comments on allowing the conversation to develop	Towards task (Keeping possibility for work open) Towards individuality (Individuals becoming visible) Towards belonging (Emphasising togetherness)	Pro-group
4b (Member-level)	To focus the conversation on the group's task of exploring its own functioning	Maggie	Maggie's comments on allowing the conversation to develop	Towards task (Keeping possibility for work open) Towards individuality (Showing the self in the group) Towards belonging (Showing interest in belonging)	Pro-group

5a (Group-level)	To ensure realitychecking with regard to the contributions made within the group	Membership -as-a-whole	The reactions of both Joshua and the facilitator	Towards task (Critical reality checking) Towards individuality (Individuals becoming visible)	Pro-group
5b (Member-level)	To ensure realitychecking with regard to the contributions made within the group	Joshua	The reactions of both Joshua and the facilitator	Towards task (Critical reality checking)	Pro-group
6a (Group-level)	To keep things light-hearted and safe	Membership -as-a-whole	Group not suggesting alternative task	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible)	Anti-group
6b (Member-level)	To keep things light-hearted and safe	Various members	Members agreeing to talk about work	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues) Towards belonging (Groupasmass behind which to hide)	Anti-group
7a (Group-level)	To resist being pulled into something that has not been agreed upon	Membership -as-a-whole	Nobody volunteering to proceed with workdiscussion	Away from belonging (Resisting being pulled along)	Pro-group
7b (Member-level)	To resist being pulled into something that has not been agreed upon	Various members	Nobody volunteering to proceed with workdiscussion	Away from belonging (Resisting being pulled along)	Pro-group
8a (Group-level)	To maintain ineffective roles and patterns	Membership -as-a-whole	Erna's readiness to start the conversation	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues) Towards belonging (Groupasmass behind which to hide) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible)	Anti-group
8b (Member-level)	To maintain ineffective roles and patterns	Erna	Erna's readiness to start the conversation	Away from task (Avoiding reflection on complex group issues) Towards individuality (Individual becoming visible)	Anti-group
9a (Group-level)	To change ineffective communication patterns	Membership -as-a-whole	Facilitator asking Erna not to start	Towards task (Changing communication pattern)	Pro-group
9b (Member-level)	To change ineffective communication patterns	Facilitator	Facilitator asking Erna not to start	Towards task (Changing communication pattern) Away from belonging (Erna can feel reprimanded)	Pro-group
10a (Group-level)	To resist the crossing of the boundary into the group	Membership -as-a-whole	Christa's refusal to interact	Away from belonging (Undermining a sense of cohesion) Away from individuality (Making it even more difficult for others to become visible))	Anti-group

10b (Member-level)	To resist the crossing of the boundary into the group	Christa	Christa's refusal to interact	Away from belonging (Resisting the invitation to join) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group
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## 6.4.6 Section 4

### 6.4.6.1 Transcript

#### Section 4: Pam and Maggie's roles

PAM (indistinct 18.38). I first worked in a company that was a very bad experience – a very new company. They started off, but treated very badly. I was treated like a tea lady. I had to make food for the bosses. I couldn't actually do recruitment because I was placed in different positions. I first went to Anon; they moved to Anon and then they asked me to do labour broking and I didn't get any training – nothing. And, ja, so the boss and I, we had a bit tip with one another. I actually was the first girl to tell him that I was not his maid and that he can do his own food and his own coffees. Uhm ... from that I was treated very badly; went to meetings and then said I am going to get a first warning for no apparent reason. So, in a big way, I decided to resign. So, it was a different start for me because we had finished Honours and I didn't get into Masters. Apparently I didn't get accepted and then again: no job, no studies and I was taking that very hard, which is okay. So, I went away for a month, but you know, in your mind, you always think okay, I want to come back, I want a job, no studies, what am I going to do? So, then I came back and I decided to look for a job, but now looking for a job is quite difficult, so? And I thought to myself, okay, well, I've got no inspiration and no motivation, because I've got no job here and I mean with my family you've got to have a job or you've got to do something – you couldn't just stay at home. And then there's pressure at home. So, you've got pressure at home and then pressure with yourself to find something. And I also thought to myself, my goodness, my first career was terrible. I mean, what's going to make me do, wow, in another career? Am I going to do better or am I going to be just as pathetic as my first one? Then, luckily I phoned my boss. We had five bosses, which was very weird. The third one was very nice. So, I asked him please, help me, I want to do the internship of psychometrics because I couldn't get into Masters, so I thought, let me do my psychometrics for the Board exam and then ... ja, and Christa and Anon went to their Master's group and then, very nice of them, they spoke to Prof. Anon and, luckily, there was a space opening and Prof. Anon phoned me because of them. They motivated me because I'm a good worker – hell, I thought I ... I didn't know if I was or ready for work, but ja, that was good news. And I went into Masters. I drove like a maniac towards the first class, so (**group laughing**), and then phoning my dad, my mom and then ... and I phoned my boyfriend, shame, but I was crying. And he's like, are you okay? Are you okay? Something happened to me. No, don't talk, it's Master, but it's (indistinct 21.15) ... So, I'm trying to get into Masters, which is quite nice, so, but I think I wasn't ready for it, because my mind was completely shut down, because I didn't know if I was ready for Masters or not, but I'm managing. It's just slow a little bit, because I don't think I'm in it yet, but I think I'm okay. And



then in May ... no, in March, I have definitely got a job in Anon to do assessments. So, ja. It's very interesting. I meet a lot of people. Actually during 1 week I did 155 people. We do different tests. So, I test them and also I used to be a very introvert, a very light person and the worst person to speak to people. I always prefer people say how are you and then. I'm like - okay, and yourself? So, actually, I was speaking to people, giving instructions, I actually build the self-confidence and then working since Anon ever until now and, ja, so, a lot of people – meeting lots of people there. We don't have a boss, because she has now moved to another department, so I consider myself my own boss, so I still do all the work and all that, and what else now ... oh, and I'm trying to apply for internship for Industrial Psychology in Anon. So, it's challenging. You meet a lot of people and what else? That's about it. So, it's getting there. Well, I don't get paid a lot though, but you know, I thought to myself, I'd rather grow into where I am now and then I get into the (**indistinct 22.39**) are we having ... am I becoming something that I want to become. For me, money was a big issue – like in my first company I made sure that they had to pay me my salary. I had to begin with R9,000 or R10,000, but now it's a bit of a drop, but I thought to myself, I actually feel much happier because I love what I do and I interact with people. So, ja, it's a learning process. So, money now for me, it is not a big issue. So, although I can't now spend on nice clothes and nice shoes, but I'll try to stay on as long as I can.

ERNA If I may ask, your HR Department, how does it work? You are doing assessments? Is it part of the training?

PAM Uhm-uhm. Anon actually has 10 HR Departments, because we've got different departments. You have your retail, you have your sales, you've got your med schemes and each department has their own HR person in it. I'm just doing my industrial psychology or my psychometrics for now. So, I thought to myself, let me first ... I don't want to be in a job where I can't get into my internship where, for now, I'm now bound by a contract – a permanent contract – (**indistinct 23.47**) 10. So, when my contract ended in February, hopefully, I can get an Industrial Psychology internship at Anon. We actually have quite a big division. We've actually got three: it's sales, retail and MMSA – they're very big. So, if I can get into one of those departments, then it would be quite cool. So, ja. Anything else?

DEBBIE Can I ask you something?

PAM Yes.

DEBBIE What do you want to do with your Masters? Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

PAM I want to open my own business. I want to ... my friend and I have been speaking a lot because she's doing clinical psychology. So, I would like to grow and get as much experience as possible within industrial psychology. I want to do industrial, especially OD and change and strategic, ja, and open my own business and have companies come to us and we consult for them. So, I would love to be my own boss. I don't want to work for a boss. There you are. I'm also hoping to get married and ...

DEBBIE And have your 2.4 children.

PAM Yes.

JOEL Who of you have seen that side – where she can say stuff you?

DEBBIE Never. Never.

PAM Really?

DEBBIE Really.

PAM I'm glad.

STEPHAN Glad? Glad that they haven't seen it all?  
PAM Ja, or something ... they see something new  
STEPHAN No, I think the question was ... sorry, maybe I can just check with you as well, but he asked how many of you have seen the side where you can say stuff you to the boss? Is that what you have asked?

JOEL Yes. That was my question.  
PAM Uhm. I don't know. I think people think I'm a bit of a ... I don't know ... what did you think?

DEBBIE Not a pushover, but you are just so nice and content, and, you know.  
PAM No, ag, ja, no. Because we actually we had a gentleman actually cheat on the assessment centre. He was doing a technical and I actually asked him to leave.

DEBBIE I mean, when we were doing Honours, I never ever got the sense that you were that unhappy at work – at all.  
PAM Ja, or actually more at the end. In the beginning, it was okay, but then we had a new boss coming, and then I was like, no, I'm finished. And I gave my letter and look, I'm finished with you and I'm finished with the company and don't expect me to put a good word for your company and just left. Ja.

JOEL And when does that happen?  
PAM What do you mean?  
JOEL That kind of a thing where you say?  
DEBBIE When is enough, enough?  
JOEL Ja.  
PAM Oh, I don't know. I think it was like again, I kept it all inside and then, that day, when he just did something, I'm like, that's enough. Because he had about six girls and only me – please, Pam, and make me coffee, please, Pam, make me food and I'm like no, ask someone else, just not me. Ja. I guess you have to stand up for yourself. I mean, I used to be a person that let people walk all over me, but I thought to myself no, what's this? Why do that? People might not like me, but so what. I can't choose people to not be my friend. If they don't want to speak to me, that's fine, but I'm not going to be this mean person. If you're nice to me I'm nice to you. So, don't piss me off.

ALL Laugh.  
JOSHUA Why are you touching me?  
ALL Laugh  
PAM So, ja.  
MAGGIE Can I ask you something?  
PAM Uhm.  
MAGGIE Don't you feel like, even though you knew that resigning was the right decision for you, it was still a really hard thing to do?  
PAM Oh, ja, definitely. Because I'm actually at the point ... I actually spoke to him and I said, let me think about it, but, maybe, I'll also come back and he's like really? And I'm thinking to myself, actually not. Do I really want to? Do I actually want them to treat me like nothing?

MAGGIE Then how long was your notice period?  
PAM Uhm ... it was a month. A month, ja.  
MAGGIE Because I went back and forth a lot during my notice month. He went at it and I thought again, actually, is he doing the right thing and I had to leave and there were times that I was thinking, you know, maybe I overreacted ...

PAM Uhm  
MAGGIE ... maybe ... this is a, you know, it's a good job, it's a good company – maybe I need to stay here. And then on my last day I cried - the entire day at work. I



think ... they, you know, I wasn't expecting that and they weren't expecting it, and maybe I was in a rush to react because I've stopped their Saturdays meeting, and you don't realise, you know, with other people, you are concentrating on the bad parts, but you don't realise the relationships that you build ...

- PAM Oh, ja
- MAGGIE ... and the people that you are to leave behind and the routines that you have to leave behind.
- PAM But now, for me, I thought to myself, yes, I made good friends, but they're not going to help me get where I want to get. If I see them, I'm going to say hi, I remember you, how's it going, but, for myself, I have to determine where my route goes, but luckily, actually, I wasn't there for a month. I actually asked if I could actually be at home for that month and he said yes.
- MAGGIE Okay.
- PAM So, there wasn't, like, yes, fine, bye and then I just left. So, I wasn't there to see things happening and I wasn't there on my own, so I could leave them.
- MAGGIE You know I found out through that period that me and my boss would talk about things that were still coming out, because there was a lot coming out before I left him and I felt terribly guilty – like I'm a debtor in this place now and I had to get used to ... in the beginning, I still kept on saying we still have to do this and we're going to do this, and you know, as in real life, and then afterwards, you know, I said you want, and it was sort of as it all go wrong, but do you have to say anything, you know, (**indistinct 30.04**) or are you just going to be turned inside yourself. And then after that, I felt like I needed to say you're going to be doing this just to get myself prepared to be able to leave.
- DEBBIE I noticed that struggle when you went through it.
- MAGGIE Ja.
- DEBBIE And I remember we're talking outside – we were talking about, you know, you were like in two minds – am I doing the right thing, you know, should I be doing this, is this right – *jay* or *nay*?
- MAGGIE Constantly. It's actually quite an exhausting thing.
- JOEL And one of the struggles was that you still felt a little bit responsible and do you still have that, you know?
- MAGGIE Ja, I was getting a lot out of it. I was getting a lot out of it. Some stuff I didn't want to, but I don't know. I think, you have this pressure, like am I going to find a job and am I going to have, you know, as much responsibility and when I got to Anon they introduced competency management there and it wasn't a day case, my boss would do that, so my boss was going to be in charge of that as part of her portfolio. And as time passed I became more and more responsible for that and, when I left, she told me she actually does not know as much about competency management at Anon as I do and I need to train her before I leave, you know and (**indistinct 31.35**). And I think when you have a dedicated function and people recognise you as responsible for something and you get so much of ... I know it sounds like a very short time, but you get so much of proficiency in one specific area, it's hard to let go of that. I'm actually a bit worried about how they deal with that now. I know small things that other people won't know because of my experience, like if someone is struggling to complete an assessment, then I must pick up why. It's a whole thing.
- MAGGIE Ja, resigning is a hard thing to do.
- ERNA If I may ask but then why did you resign? What were your reasons to do so?
- MAGGIE It was just too much.
- ERNA With the Masters and your work?



- MAGGIE You know with the Masters I felt like, because my job demanded so much out of me, that there wasn't a me anymore. I mean, there were times where, you know, I wouldn't do stuff for myself. I just didn't have time to do anything for myself. I couldn't fall asleep at night because I just had so much, you know, going on in my mind. So, I switch off the news and I switch off my lights and I go and sleep and (**indistinct 33.00**) – that's the only way that I could sleep. And my friends stay like two or three streets away from me – I wouldn't see them in months. I didn't get a chance to talk to anyone and I didn't want to spend time with my family. It was just too, too, too much and then, like Pam said, you get to a point where that obviously breaking point where you know, okay, you know, now I have to go.
- ERNA And once you completed the Masters will you go back to the same situation or are you aspiring to do something else different maybe?
- MAGGIE I don't know. You see, because I had such a good relationship with my boss and it looks like she's headed toward being the boss of, you know, of the (**indistinct 33.51**) of the department that I was in, she did tell me and I've heard other people telling me that if I want to come back and I met her and say okay, I'm ready to come back, all I need to do is contact them, but, you know, when things are different in retrospect, now I see things that, maybe, I wasn't satisfied with all along. I don't know. I think I have to resolve this one issue in my life and then make a decision.
- ERNA Okay.
- SHELLY So, how long were you at Anon?
- MAGGIE Uhm ... for nine months in total. It felt like nine years.
- JOEL But I'm wondering now, so it's almost like you took on/you couldn't/you took the work home?
- MAGGIE Ja.
- JOEL Yes? And then you couldn't get ...
- MAGGIE I couldn't let it go.
- JOEL You couldn't let it go?
- MAGGIE Ja. I'm just saying like, if you had to ask me who am I, I'll tell you I work for Anon. That's who ...
- JOEL That's who you were?
- MAGGIE Ja.
- JOEL Okay. Is that something that you do/that you struggle with that?
- MAGGIE I can throw myself into something completely, ja. I don't know. I don't feel like it is something that I have to work on and I don't know, maybe that's a bad thing. I like that part of myself where I can fully and wholeheartedly commit to something. Maybe it's a bad thing in certain circumstances, but, you know, when I'm in it, it feels right. I think, maybe, I didn't realise how much it was until I couldn't not realise it anymore. Like you're swimming and the tank just keeps on ... like you're swimming in a tank and one can see you in that tank and the tank just keeps on filling with water; you can still swim, but you know, after a while you sort of try not to ...
- ALL Laugh
- JOEL Run out of oxygen.
- MAGGIE I don't know what the psychologists are thinking now, (**indistinct 36.05**).
- ALL Laugh
- JOEL No, I'm actually wondering about something different, if that relates in any way, a little bit, to what is happening here.
- MAGGIE You mean that I get myself into something and then I'm not so sure whether I want to be in it or not?

- JOEL Just to say that you're not so sure?
- MAGGIE Whether I want to be in it or not.
- JOEL Uhm ... ja.
- MAGGIE I don't know.
- JOEL The thing where you almost take responsibility now with Anon – it's months after you've left and then ...
- MAGGIE I left at the end of July.
- JOEL Oh, only end of July. Okay. So, it's actually quite recently.
- MAGGIE Ja. I feel like I'm still adjusting to it.
- JOEL You're still adjusting. So, there is still part of you that still feels little bit responsible for what happens there, but it's a job; you've left it. And they're not paying you ... you're paying ... you don't feel like it.
- MAGGIE It's like that's something that I have to teach myself almost. I didn't just feel like, you know, this is a job and, when I go home, I'm at home. Maybe that's one of the biggest (**indistinct 37.23**). Maybe, you know, I (**indistinct 37.24**), that's a problem that I'm going to need to look at in the future that I could have just said this is my job and when I'm at home, then I'm just here, I'm no just (**indistinct 37.36**). I couldn't do that.
- JOEL But what you came back with this morning is that in any way/can we see a ...?
- MAGGIE By feeling responsible?
- JOEL Uhm.
- MAGGIE I do feel responsible.
- JOEL For who do you feel responsible in this group?
- MAGGIE I felt responsible for myself, I felt responsible for Debbie and then, ultimately, I started feeling responsible for everyone.
- STEPHAN And what does it do to you – that feeling of responsibility?
- MAGGIE It's like an extremely heavy thing to carry, you know. I only tell myself that, anytime, I've actually talked about this, that if someone else have been put in this fairly pressurised situation, I would have been judging them, and I would have probably, like the rest of the group, came to the decision that, that is heavy for everyone. Maybe everyone needs to sit and relax. You know, that I don't need to take it up on myself and say, I may, if you want me, you know, talk about puppies in the second session, because we all made that decision. I can't help it though. I feel like, maybe, you know, maybe we were going okay and then I intervened and I steered the whole time now. But I do work on that, I do.
- JOEL Well, you worked on it this morning, didn't you?
- MAGGIE Ja. I suppose.
- JOEL You suppose?
- MAGGIE That is the way I see ... I think that if there are people in this group that, at the end of today, still feel like their expectations haven't been met, then I'm probably going to feel responsible for that. You see, that's the thing, I think you don't realise how much you're about to reveal until you, you know ... it's almost like ... I don't know if you guys feel this also and then, maybe, you can tell me, but it's like you're talking and you're not entirely in control of what you're saying; you're hearing yourself speak. I'm hearing myself speak.
- DEBBIE That's good. We seldom do hear ourselves.
- MAGGIE I don't know. How do you cope with that?
- STEPHAN Good question. She takes responsibility for you or she feels responsible for you and it leaves her with a burden, it sounds like, but she don't want to get by 5 o'clock this afternoon and feel we'll, you've messed up everything. That's how you feel?

- MAGGIE Ja, but I don't want everyone else to feel like now they have to do something meaningful so that I don't feel guilty, because then I would be responsible (**indistinct 40.30**) ....
- STEPHAN But that's a bit of a double bind to be in.
- MAGGIE Ja. Maybe it's a (**indistinct 40.46**) sort of thing, you know, this is you and there's certain things that I agree with and there's certain things that I need to work on, and maybe, and I think about this a lot, maybe there is certain things about myself that I don't need to work on, I just need to accept, but that's a hard thing to do, so I mean ...
- STEPHAN Things like?
- MAGGIE Like? I don't know, but ... but I ... as difficult as it can be sometimes, I like sharing, you know, I like putting things out there. Maybe, sometimes, I can say that's okay, you know, even in a conversation with my friends and when I help them; things are how they need to be and how it is interpreted, I don't need to go back and think about it and say, oh, this is what I said and I wonder what everyone thought about what I said and how did I actually say it, and how did you make the other person see it. Maybe you can just ... it can be out there. It's okay.
- STEPHAN Would you want to try it here? Just to say some things and not prepare the way, and make sure that afterwards they have to think about it - just put it out there and see what happens to it?
- MAGGIE Maybe, if everyone wants to. Now I feel like I'm taking over the meeting.
- ALL Laugh.
- MAGGIE I actually now really understand what you're feeling here today, not about the awkwardness, but about the fact that, and, I suppose, we all feel like this is a group thing and the whole group should get something out of it, not just, you know, one person should, because (**indistinct 42.27**)
- DEBBIE Okay, I'll tell you. I was really, really okay with it yesterday, thinking about it yesterday, because I felt I didn't get to know myself, the me and the us kind of thing, you know, thinking about the construction of things.
- JOEL So, can you ... how does that (in between)
- DEBBIE Meaning, I want to kind of tell her it's perfectly fine to share them and throw things out there because, in the end, all ... well, I think and what Christa might think and anyone else, it's just their opinions. In the end you have to go with me; you have to go with Maggie.

#### 6.4.6.2 Codes allocated to section 4

**Table 6.15: Codes allocated to section 4**

<b>Section 4</b>	TB: Safe self-disclosure of personal information
Main theme: Pam and Maggie's roles	TI: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical information
	TI: Self-disclosure of feelings connected to personal/private material
	TB: Asking fellow member to elaborate
	TB: Safe self-disclosure of personal information
	TI: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical information
	TI: Self-disclosure of feelings connected to personal/private material
	TT: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group
	TB: Joking

### 6.4.6.3 Discussion

With regard to this section it is interesting to note, that by looking at the pattern of the conversation, it is possible to break it down into two parts that, broadly speaking, followed similar movements:

**Table 6.16: Pattern of the group's conversation around Pam's and Maggie's contributions**

Part A: Pam	Part B: Maggie
1. Pam sharing about her job from which she had resigned	1. Maggie sharing about her job from which she had resigned
2. The group, mainly through Erna, asking for more details about the job itself	2. The group, mainly through Erna, asking for more details about the job itself
3. The group, mainly through Debbie, asking for more details about her personal experience	3. The group, mainly through Debbie, asking more details regarding her personal experience
4. The facilitators linking the story to experiences within the group	4. The facilitators linking the story to experiences within the group
5. The protagonist, namely, Pam, interacting with the facilitators and the group about this link with her role experience within the group.	5. The protagonist, namely, Maggie, interacting with the facilitators and the group about this link with her role experience within the group.

Firstly, Pam responded to the group's expectation that someone take the lead and start sharing about his/her job, as per their decision that was discussed above. Pam, who, earlier in the session, had expressed her frustration with the double messages in the group regarding moving forward and holding back and what was to be shared or not, provided some clear direction to the group by initiating this discussion. This appears to be in line with a role that Pam seemingly played within the group, namely, to be critical about the group's inability to choose a direction or a plan and then follow through on it. On a content level this underlying dynamic is also played out as Pam goes on to relay a story about her telling her boss that enough is enough and then taking further action by resigning from her position. The way in which Pam responded to the group's need for someone to start talking about his/her work experience, is also significant in that she does so in a way that is not totally removed from the personal. Thus, although sharing stories about workplaces is not part of the group's task, an implicit component of the group's task is that the members become visible to each other, not only on a cognitive, academic level, but also on a personal level.

Yalom (1985) discusses the interplay between the disclosing of personal information by individual members, the feedback that members give each other based on this sharing and the level of cohesion within the group. Based on all the previous references about whether the group is a safe place in which to share or not, it can easily be argued that, in this group at that moment, there was a need for greater cohesion which could help facilitate the process of managing the boundary between deep and meaningful contributions towards the task of the group, and the need for a mechanism to protect the members from going where they were not prepared or ready to go. Yalom (1985) also alerts us to the importance of group cohesion if therapeutic work is to be carried out within the group. Although the purpose in this case was not therapy, it was still necessary that members become vulnerable in order to learn about themselves within the group. The decision then taken by the group to start sharing more personal information can, thus, be seen as being in line with the group's need to develop to a level on which they would be able to engage in the task of 'exploring their functioning as a group in the here and now'. The 'towards belonging' and 'towards individuality' behaviours that were coded here could, therefore, refer to the underlying force in the group to develop cohesion that would support the group in accomplishing its task.

When we examine the way in which, as indicated in the table above, the movements in this section repeated themselves we are able to make further inferences with regards to the forces that may have been present in the group. Firstly, as discussed above, we see a force towards developing group cohesion through the sharing of personal information and providing feedback. However, the fact that this happened covertly, that is, it was not a conscious decision on the part of the group to share personal work experiences and relate these back to the group's task in order to foster the development of cohesiveness within the group, opened the way for the forces opposing the group's development and task achievement to impact on the group's functioning in the following manner: Erna, the initiator of this task of 'let's talk about our jobs' did so in order to provide the group with an alternative task, one that, as discussed in the previous section, would be less threatening than their stated task. In both these cases of Pam and Maggie's sharing, it is, thus, Erna who initiates the follow-up questioning by focusing on work-related details of the stories rather than the personal, and this is, in each case, first taken up by Debbie, also in line with her pseudofacilitator role. From this it is possible to infer that two members with role valences, as per Bion's (1961) theory, that had, at that point, become very clear within

the group, were responding to the underlying forces in the group by behaving in ways that are both in accordance with their hitherto roles within the group as well as with the immediate forces at work. In Erna's case, her 'towards belonging: asking fellow member to elaborate' behaviour can be interpreted as a response to the now familiar underlying force in this group towards driving conversation 'outside' of the group boundary as well as towards topics that are lighter, easier and, possibly, safer to explore. In Debbie's case, it would appear that the underlying forces at work were working both towards and away from the group's development and task achievement. Firstly, a force towards taking the group conversation to emotions experienced outside of the group instead of within the group and, secondly, an opposing force that can be labelled 'need for creating cohesion' as she focuses, specifically, on interacting on the personal level. Accordingly, it seems as if the pro-group drive of the system incorporated the anti-group directed behaviour of discussing matters outside of the group into its own agenda by utilising this anti-group behaviour for the important maintenance function of creating group cohesion.

Next, in the case of both Pam and Maggie, it is the facilitating team that intervenes to direct the communication to the 'inside' of the group by creating the link for the members to ponder on the way in which their behaviour, as related through the stories, were also playing out in the group. This is a well-known group technique that is used primarily in Yalom's interpersonal approach to group training and group therapy. In terms of this technique the group is plunged into the here and now by creating a specific focus within the group on how behaviour that manifests outside of the group, also plays out inside the group (Yalom, 1985). In so doing, the facilitators weaken the forces towards the external, safe topics by moving the group's attention to matters inside the group. In addition, the facilitators also strengthen the force towards group cohesion through personal disclosure and feedback by creating the space for such conversations to take place within the group, rather than in the removed realm of the members' workplaces. By positioning both the discussion and the feedback within the boundaries of the group, the possibility that the group will develop and grow is enhanced. However, although it is clear from both the video material and the quality of the silence of the non-participating members that they were, in fact, involved through absorbed listening, the fact remains that, in both these cases, the final discussion regarding the parallels between Pam and Maggie's outside the group behaviour vs. their inside the group behaviour are, by and large, led as dialogues between the facilitating pair and the member, first Pam and then Maggie. This non-involvement on the part of the group in its task could perhaps be seen either as resistance to or

perceived incompetence with the type of interaction that is closer to the group's task. Both of these could then be labelled as 'away from task' forces.

There was, thus, a progression in the intimacy of the conversation from dealing with facts to personal sharing to personal reflection on behaviour within the group although, as we progress along this continuum, there was less and less active involvement on the part of the group members other than the facilitators themselves. This can lead us to infer that the force towards the outside, safe and light material took a different form that, in turn, led to silence and nonparticipation with regard to the active reflection on the group process. Accordingly, although the group had developed to an extent where it was willing to allow the facilitators to model the type of interaction behaviour that would be helpful in this type of group, it had not developed sufficiently for the members to be able to take full responsibility for their own work and progress.

Finally, this section ends with Maggie expressing the feeling that she may have taken over the conversation and she expresses the hope that the other members will also receive the same type of value from the group that she has received. Debbie immediately supports this statement of Maggie by adding that she has gained some value from the opening up and that the others should not be afraid to do the same. This again reminds us of the role-duo of Maggie and Debbie with Maggie feeling responsible for the group members' ability to meet their needs and Debbie pushing and encouraging the other group members to 'let go' and not to be afraid. This encouragement from Debbie to the group is received in silence from the group members, again reminding us of both the unwillingness to be dragged into something and also maybe the need within the group to be left alone and to be allowed to progress at its own pace without feeling pressurised by one or two of the members. Of course, it is essential to see the behaviour of the member not only as an individual dynamic but also as a dynamic of the group-as-a-whole. When perceived in this way, it then seems like a dialogue that the group is having with itself regarding wanting to move forward and take risks – and voicing this need through the medium of Debbie and Maggie – but, on the other hand, there is also the awareness that there are issues within the group that make it difficult to take those risks. Once again, we see the forces towards risk-taking and the forces towards self-protection.

#### 6.4.6.4 *The interplay of forces*

- a) In this section, we first seem to encounter an underlying force in the group that is directed towards developing the cohesion that would support the group in accomplishing its task. It appears that this force has been activated by the group's realisation that it is not possible for the group to go back to occupying itself with frivolous talk, but that it also struggles to move forward as a result of feeling that there is a lack of safety and security within the group. Accordingly, an increased sense of group cohesion appears to be a valid goal for the group to be seeking at this stage of its life. In this case, even though it is not possible to code the behaviour as being definitively directed towards the group's task, the behaviour does still seem to spring forth from an underlying force thrusting towards the ultimate growth and development of the group. We are, thus, able to see the force playing out as a drive towards belonging (cohesion) and greater individual freedom to become visible in the group on the group-level and also towards belonging and individuality (showing of the self in order to become part of the group) on the member-level. Of course, if this 'opening up' and making vulnerable behaviour is not channelled back towards the group's explicit task at some point in the future, the group would run the risk that this potentially positive force may lead the group astray from its task and that the group would become either a 'career support group' or a therapy group. Accordingly, if this force is not monitored by the facilitators, the inherent sense of meaning it may have for the participants can become a distraction from the group's task, while the behavioural patterns emanating from this force can prove difficult to break if they should become entrenched in the group's behavioural norms as well as its sense of identity<sup>44</sup>.
- b) Together with the force thrusting towards group cohesion through open sharing and feedback, the, by now familiar, underlying force in this group that is directed at ensuring safety through avoidance is activated. This force, which has manifested itself several times before in flight behaviour, is again manifested through attempts within the group to steer the conversation to the small, impersonal details in the personal stories and, thus, ensure that the

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<sup>44</sup> I remember this happening in an intergroup event at the Leicester Conference, where the group of which I was a member derived great fulfilment from reflecting on itself as a group, but, in effect, in that way, defended against fulfilling its task, which was to explore the dynamics between itself and other groups.



conversation stays 'outside' the group and, possibly, rather in the domain of career advice and academic thinking than personal vulnerability, feedback and cohesion. This defence against cohesion does, however, not seem to constitute what Hopper (2003b) termed the basic assumption state of aggregation/massification. As described in chapter 3, Hopper draws our attention to the group's resistance towards cohesion through either pretending that it is not a group, or pretending to be so closely enmeshed and uber-cohesive that it is not possible ever to achieve real cohesion. However, it does appear that neither of these two states are present here. Firstly, the group is clearly not trying to act as if it were not a group, as the group does seem to be trying various ways in which to initiate group interaction. Secondly, the group is also not pretending that the group members are all the same and that they are in agreement all the time as we have witnessed several differences in opinion within the group with regards where to go and how to get there. In light of what has been discussed thus far this, of course, makes perfect sense as this force, that is resisting the move towards greater cohesion, is definitely not either the only nor the most prominent force at work at that point. On the contrary, it is only one of a number of forces that are directed both towards and away from the group's growth and development. In addition, this seems to be a fairly natural and normal force in the group as it develops towards greater cohesion.

- c) Another force that also works in the direction of focusing on the 'outside' of the group, rather than on the here and now, is the force towards discussing personal feelings related to the external world as opposed to personal feelings in the here and now. However, in this case, this force appears to be employed in the favour of the group's overall development as it is closer to the essential task of the group than the previous force that was discussed above. Even though the force is not aimed at the here and now, it is aimed at sharing feelings (towards individuality) and this, in turn, strengthens the move towards greater cohesion (towards belonging).
- d) At this point, the intervention by the facilitators is aimed at channelling the forces towards the task of the group. This has the effect that the forces towards the exploration of emotions are channelled into the group's immediate existence (towards task) and away from exploring emotions that are located outside of the group. On the member-level this intervention also helps the individual members to become more vulnerable within the group in order to be better understood by and accepted in the group by the rest of the group members.

- e) The facilitators' directing of the forces towards the here and now resulted in conversations pertaining to the outside and the past or future of the group no longer being pursued. However, this does not mean that this force towards the outside had disappeared. On the contrary, it seemed to reappear through the silence of the majority of the group members as an anti-group force. Furthermore, as we have seen previously, this thrust towards avoiding the group's work (away from task) can contain elements of fear in it: fear of opening up, fear of losing control over one's individual integrity and fear of being judged. These fears all have the quality of being directed 'towards individuality', as opposed to the pro-cohesion forces that are more 'towards belonging' in nature.
- f) This interplay between the forces towards greater cohesion and the forces against opening up can also reveal something about the level of group development. It would appear that, to a certain degree, the group had developed to a level where it was able to allow work on exploring personal roles within the group by some of its individual members, namely Maggie, Debbie and Pam at that point, to take place, but only to a limited degree and then also mainly within the 'safe' hands of the facilitators. This seems to be in accordance with the way in which the group had started out this session with Maggie leading the conversation about how to further the exploration within the limits of what would still feel comfortable for the group.
- g) Finally, this interplay between the forces mentioned above was again played out between, on the one hand, the pair of Maggie and Debbie, representing the thrust towards the group's task and the group, on the other hand, representing both the resistance to being pushed to move and the fear of moving forward. In terms of the resistance to being pushed to move, we are able to see this force working on the group-level away from task (avoiding open communication), towards belonging (hiding behind the group) and away from individuality as individuals become less visible within the group. On the membership level we are able to see this negative force pertaining to the group's development as a push away from task and away from individuality (not taking a stand/risk out there), but also as towards individuality as the member tries to protect him/herself.
- h) As mentioned above, it is possible to identify another force at this point the goal of which is resistance as a result of fear. This force, which manifested through the silence of the group, drove the group away from task (to avoid working) and away from individuality (becoming less visible) and towards belonging (to hide

in the group) on the group-level. On the member-level, this force also drove the individual members away from taking part in the group's task, although it also had an interesting effect on the individual members in terms of their individuality as it drove them away from taking an individual stand within the group and towards standing back in order to protect themselves. This force can also be seen as working against the group's overall growth and development.

#### 6.4.6.5 Summary of forces in section 4

**Table 6.17: Summary of the forces in section 4**

Force nr	Description of apparent force goal	Point of application	Manifested through	Direction of push/pull on membership	Pro- or anti-group
1a (Group-level)	To develop cohesion in order to support the group in fulfilling its task	Membership -as-a-whole	Pam sharing about her career	Towards belonging (Cohesion) Towards individuality (Individual becoming visible)	Pro-group
1b (Member-level)	To become visible within the group and more accessible to other members	Pam	Pam sharing about her career	Towards belonging (Showing interest in belonging) Towards individuality (Showing the self within the group)	Pro-group
2a (Group-level)	To ensure safety through avoidance	Membership -as-a-whole	Steering away from the personal by Erna	Away from task (Avoiding the personal)	Anti-group
2b (Member-level)	To ensure safety through avoidance	Erna	Erna steering the conversation away from the personal	Away from task (Avoiding the personal)	Anti-group
3a (Group-level)	To discuss personal feelings related to the outside of the group	Membership -as-a-whole	Debbie exploring the personal feelings of Pam, and then Maggie	Away from task (Steering away from the here and now) Towards individuality (Individuals becoming visible) Towards belonging (Cohesion)	Pro-group
3b (Member-level)	To discuss personal feelings related to the outside of the group	Debbie	Debbie exploring the personal feelings of Pam, and then Maggie	Away from task (Avoiding the personal) Towards belonging (Cohesion) Towards individuality (Making it easier for member to become visible)	Pro-group



4a (Group-level)	To channel the exploration of emotions to the here and now	Membership -as-a-whole	Facilitator's questions to Pam and then to Maggie	Towards task (Changing communication pattern) Towards belonging (Cohesion)	Pro-group
4b (Member-level)	To channel the exploration of emotions to the here and now	Facilitator	Facilitator's questions to Pam and then to Maggie	Towards task (Changing communication pattern) Towards belonging (Being accepted within the group) Towards individuality (Showing him/herself as a person)	Pro-group
5a (Group-level)	To resist the exploration of feelings in the here and now	Membership -as-a-whole	Silence from group	Away from task (Avoiding a deeper exploration) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible) Towards belonging (Group as a mass behind which to hide)	Anti-group
5b (Member-level)	To resist the exploration of feelings in the here and now	Individual members	Silence from group	Away from task (Avoiding a deeper exploration) Away from belonging (Resisting cohesion on a deeper level) Away from individuality (Not taking the stand out there) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group
6a (Group-level)	To openly discuss interpersonal and group processes	Membership -as-a-whole	Attempts by both Debbie and Maggie	Towards task (Open and honest reflection on group process)	Pro-group
6b (Member-level)	To openly discuss interpersonal and group processes	Debbie and Maggie	Attempts by both Debbie and Maggie	Towards task (Open and honest reflection on group process)	Pro-group
7a (Group-level)	To resist being pushed to move	Membership -as-a-whole	Silence from group	Away from task (Avoiding open communication and exploring) Towards belonging (Together in resistance) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible)	Anti-group
7b (Member-level)	To resist being pushed to move	Individual members	Silence from group	Away from task (Avoiding open communication and exploring) Away from individuality (Not taking a stand out there) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group
8a (Group-level)	To resist moving as a result of fear	Membership -as-a-whole	Silence from group	Away from task (Avoiding a deeper exploration of negative feelings) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible) Towards belonging (Group as a mass behind which to hide)	Anti-group

8b (Member-level)	To resist moving as a result of fear	Individual members	Silence from group	Away from task (Avoiding a deeper exploration of negative feelings) Towards individuality (Self-protection) Away from individuality (Not taking a stand out there)	Anti-group
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#### 6.4.7 Section 5

##### 6.4.7.1 Transcript

##### **Section 5: Being judged**

STEPHAN But the worst that can happen is you can be judged?  
DEBBIE Basically.  
STEPHAN What else can we get out?What worse can there be than to be judged?  
ALL **(Silence)**  
DEBBIE I think the most horrible thing that can happen is you can die.  
ALL Laugh.  
JOSHUA You'll probably die anyway.  
DEBBIE Ja, you're not going ... ja, but not as a result of this, I mean ...  
STEPHAN Or you can be judged.That's as bad.  
DEBBIE For some people, ja.  
STEPHAN Just think how terrible it's going to be if you're going to be judged.So, we better be very sure that we're not going to be judged.  
DEBBIE Why?  
STEPHAN Because that's something that's the worst that can happen.  
FRANCIS And how can you make sure you won't be judged?  
DEBBIE You can't, because everyone has their own opinions.  
STEPHAN That's so.And, in the end, you're going to be judged anyway.  
DEBBIE In the end that is exactly what it means.  
LINDA I don't agree.  
DEBBIE What do you think?  
LINDA No, I don't think anyone in here is sitting with the mind and will to pick on you, if you say something wrong, you know.But I don't experience anyone in here as being judgemental.  
DEBBIE There is a difference, I think, between making an evaluation, you know, processing things for yourself and being critical and pulling something apart.I don't see any of us doing that, but I think to myself when she talks with me, when Pam talks, and you know?  
JOSHUA That's more evaluative.  
DEBBIE Ja.You make evaluation judgements.  
JOSHUA Not judgement in a negative sense?  
DEBBIE Ja.Because ... ja.*Nou kan ons woord ook praat – 'judgemental' has its roots in Latin,*  
JOSHUA Judge Mental?  
ALL Laugh  
DEBBIE Ja, so. Ja, I understand what you're saying as well.  
LINDA I think I experience it more as people trying to relate to each other and trying to understand because of your situation.I can't possibly imagine what it would feel like starting your first job and being treated as a tea lady.I don't think it would be (**indistinct 45.59**).I don't experience it as being that I'm judging because of

- that.It's more that I'm trying to feel or understand/construct.I don't know if anyone else is experiencing judgement from anybody.From my experience – no.
- STEPHAN So, it must be something else.If it's not judgement, it must be this evaluative or perceptions or whatever we want to call it, but it is not as harsh as judgement.It's something or learning/experiencing something about others and something about me.That's why I think that that's the worst that can happen, is you can feel that you can be judged or you can feel that your perceptions that other people have about you will be influenced, but they have that anyway.
- DEBBIE **(indistinct 47.00)**
- JOEL Did you want to respond to that?
- LINDA No, I'm just thinking it's true because I think everyone already has sort of an idea of everyone else and the worst that can happen is that you have to explain yourself so we can better understand you.So, I don't know, I have not once felt threatened or scared, or even resistant.I don't know ... it's just a question of something.I suppose you would feel in the spotlight, but I feel fine.Maybe it's just me, but ...
- STEPHAN And if we take that into account, what we've said before that it could be same thing that can be experienced differently, it could be that people have a completely different perception about who you are, what you do and what you think you are. You also could be in a position where you think well, but I thought I experienced/what I relate to people this way or that way, that that could be different than what some people feel on the other end of it.
- FRANCIS Which is actually a good thing, because ... ja.
- STEPHAN Why?Explain why you say it is good?
- FRANCIS No, because in the beginning when we walked in here everyone had a thought of everyone else and the more people talked the more you get to know them, the more you understand them for who they are.
- DEBBIE The less you're going to judge ...
- FRANCIS Ja, the lesser ... ja.
- DEBBIE ... in any case.
- FRANCIS Ja, the judgements that you have would be judgements or if you had, anyway.
- STEPHAN To illustrate it, Maggie, we can say, I judge you because you take responsibility for me, or I can say you know what I would, maybe, just want to change that perception because you don't have to take responsibility for me.And that's just a completely different ballgame in terms of what we relate to one another.**(silence)**.So what do you make of that?
- JOEL Yes?

#### 6.4.7.2 Codes allocated to section 5

**Table 6.18: Codes allocated to section 5**

<b>Section 5</b>	TT: Reflecting on judgementalness within group
Main theme: Being judged	AT: Shying away from conflict
	TB: Feelings of togetherness placed above feelings of conflict
	TT: Reflecting on judgementalness within group
	AT: Shying away from conflict
	TB: Feelings of togetherness placed above feelings of conflict

#### 6.4.7.3 Discussion

This section flowed from the previous section where the conversation had, again, started to hover over the issue of opening up and gaining value from the group. The facilitator verbalised the underlying fear within the group, which had been a recurring theme throughout the life of the group, of being judged. However, immediately after the facilitator had mentioned the possibility of being judged, an uncomfortable silence ensued within the group, and this was followed by a sombre consideration of how bad it was to be judged, whether it was just as bad as dying as well as the notion that you will, in any case, die, and be judged. Linda, who disagreed that there was any judgement present in the group, broke this trend in the conversation. The movement here had, thus, first been towards approaching and acknowledging the reality of being judged in the group, followed by a movement away from acknowledging this reality and, in fact, denying its existence altogether:

LINDA            I don't agree.  
DEBBIE           What do you think?  
LINDA            No, I don't think anyone in here is sitting with the mind and will to pick on you, if you say something wrong, you know. But I don't experience anyone in here as being judgemental.  
...  
LINDA            ... I don't know if anyone else is experiencing judgement from anybody. From my experience – no.

The codes that were allocated to this first section were, firstly, the 'towards task' code of reflecting on the judgementalness in the group, followed by the 'away from task' and 'towards belonging' codes of shying away from conflict and giving preference to feelings of belonging over feelings of conflict within the group. If we see these behaviours as emanating from underlying forces within the group, then we have to consider what the underlying forces could have been that resulted in these behaviours. Firstly, it seems plausible that the facilitator wished to activate/strengthen the potential underlying forces within the group towards its task and development by making the implicit explicit. The stunned, and even morbid, silence which ensued in the group when this was mentioned appears to support the possibility that this underlying fear of

judgement was, indeed, present in the group but that the group was not yet ready to explore it. Debbie, who, until that point, had been a reliable source of support for anything that seemed to be towards persuading the 'other' group members to open up and become vulnerable, especially when stemming from the facilitators, made an effort to interact on this topic but, even with Francis's help, it appeared to be extremely difficult for the group to move forward in exploring this issue. It is at this point that we become much more aware of the resistance within the group towards exploring judgementalness than we are of its willingness to do so. Was it perhaps only the facilitators who wanted to explore the issue? This possibility seems even stronger when Linda tries to rescue the group from this uncomfortable situation by denying the possibility that there was any judgement of each other present within the group. Accordingly, the force against exploring judgement and the fear of judgement within the group clearly manifests in the form of the solemn silence within the group, followed by Linda's denial of any possibility of the group being judgemental.

Interestingly Linda's behaviour, throughout the group experience, was much more oriented towards maintaining the peace within the group than towards exploring difficulties and differences. So, in this case, we are again able to see the way in which a member's well-established behaviour pattern within the group is employed by the group to fulfil a specific role on the group's behalf.

However, the presence of this force away from exploring difficult issues within the group and, thus, away from task, does not mean that the opposing force towards exploring difficult issues such as being judged, was not also present. This can be seen in the responses by Debbie and Joshua who both tried to find a way for the group to define what was meant by the word 'judgement'. One of the facilitators – Stephan – takes this exploration of the meaning of the word 'judgement' further by reframing it in such a way that it loses its perceived 'sting'. This weakening of the negative force immediately allows the positive force towards the group's development and growth to gain temporary ascendancy as the group, through some of its members, reconstructs judgements and the exploration of judgements within the group in positive language:

FRANCIS            Which is actually a good thing, because ... ja.

STEPHAN          Why? Explain why you say it is good?

FRANCIS            No, because in the beginning, when we walked in here, everyone had a thought of everyone else and the more people talked, the more you get to know them, the more you understand them for who they are.

DEBBIE             The less you're going to judge ...

FRANCIS            Ja, the lesser ... ja.



#### 6.4.7.4 *The interplay of forces*

The forces that were at play during this section of session 7 can be summarised as follows:

- a) The facilitator makes the implicit explicit by referring to the group's underlying fear of being judged. This underlying fear of being judged, in turn, acts as a force away from open and honest participation within the group as it appears safer to remain silent than to open up and be judged. This is manifested in the group's talking in circles, and avoiding the real issue of the fear of being judged. When seen from the perspective of the group-level, this has the effect on the group of pushing the group away from task (avoiding open communication), away from belonging (not opening up in order to connect with each other) and away from individuality (members becoming less visible.) On the member-level, this fear of being judged also drives members away from task and towards individuality in order to protect themselves.
- b) On the other hand, by making this fear explicit, the facilitator appears to be trying to tap into the possible underlying forces within the group towards exploring and reflecting on this fear of being judged. Accordingly, the goal, on the one hand, appears to be to try to weaken this fear and, on the other, to try to open up space for the positive, pro-group forces to be released.
- c) The force towards opening up and exploring the group's fears pertaining to judgement is, however, met with resistance. This resistance seems to spring from a force against exploring judgement and fear of judgement within the group and is manifested by the solemn silence, followed by Linda's denial of the possibility that any judgement at all exists within the group. This attempt by the group, through Linda, to deny the existence of judgement within the group is interesting when viewed against the recent attempts by the group to increase its cohesion through personal sharing and feedback. In addition, it shows that, in terms of its maturity, the group is still finding it difficult to acknowledge and contain conflict and disagreement. This denial of judgement within the group that follows closely on the personal sharing that had occurred in the previous section is starting to display a quality of the ba massification group to which

Hopper referred (Hopper, 2003b). Accordingly, if the forces towards togetherness and sameness continue to be emphasised at the expense of the forces towards apartness and difference, then the group will run the real risk of regressing in its development to a state in which it will need to pretend that it is a cohesive unit in order to protect its sense of identity as a group.

- d) However, it does seem as if the attempt to provide space for the release of the group's inherent drive towards development was successful. The forces towards the exploration of judgement within the group were released and were manifested by the group's attempts at reconstructing the meaning they had attached to being judged within the group. By reframing judgement as something normal and which is a part of everyday life, the group starts to see the possibilities inherent in exploring the judgements and evaluations they have of each other. This, in turn, is reminiscent of Agazarian's insistence on depathologising behaviour within the group and perceiving specific behaviour as part of the group's natural existence. In other words, there is no need to fear such behaviour but, rather, to seize the opportunity to explore it (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000). On the group-level, this pro-group force can be seen as driving the group towards its task, as it opens up a sensitive topic for exploration, towards belonging, as members join together to create a common understanding of the way in which the group wants to frame judgement, and towards individuality as individual members become more visible in the group.

#### 6.4.7.5 Summary of forces in section 5

**Table 6.19: Summary of the forces in section 5**

Force nr	Description of apparent force goal	Point of application	Manifested through	Direction of push/pull on membership	Pro- or anti-group
1a (Group-level)	To avoid open communication as a result of the fear of being judged	Membership -as-a-whole	Group talking in circles about the worst that can happen	Away from task (Avoiding open communication) Away from belonging (Not opening up) Away from individuality (Avoiding being visible in the group)	Anti-group
1b (Member-level)	To avoid open communication as a result of the fear of being judged	Individual members	Intellectualising the issue of either participating or not participating	Away from task (Avoiding open communication) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group
2a (Group-level)	To open up and explore the underlying fear	Membership -as-a-whole	Intervention on the part of the facilitator with	Towards task (Opening up the sensitive topic for reflection)	Pro-group

			regard to the group		
2b (Member-level)	To open up and explore the underlying fear	Individual members	Intervention on the part of the facilitator with regard to the group	Towards task (Setting reflexivity around judgement in each member in motion)	Pro-group
3a (Group-level)	To resist the exploration of judgement within the group	Membership -as-a-whole	Silence from group and denial through Linda	Away from task (Avoiding open communication and exploring) Towards belonging (Group as mass is emphasised) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible)	Anti-group
3b (Member-level)	To resist the exploration of judgement within the group	Individual members	Silence from group and denial through Linda	Away from task (Avoiding open communication and exploring) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group
4a (Group-level)	To explore the issue of judgement within the group	Membership -as-a-whole	Discussion about reframing the meaning of the word judgement	Towards task (Opening up the sensitive topic for reflection) Towards belonging (In search of a common understanding) Towards individuality (Individual members becoming visible)	Pro-group
4b (Member-level)	To explore the issue of judgement within the group	Individual members	Discussion about reframing the meaning of the word judgement	Towards task (Taking part in discussion)	Pro-group

#### 6.4.8 Section 6

##### 6.4.8.1 Transcript

#### **Section 6: Maggie feeling responsible**

MAGGIE You look like you want to ask me something?

JOEL Yes.Okay.

ALL Laugh.

JOEL Do you still feel that you have to take responsibility for Debbie?

MAGGIE Little bit.Uhm ... I think, even though I have asked you if you're okay, and I can see that you're okay and stuff, I was just, like you know, when you speak about energies; I think I was caught up in your energy somehow yesterday.I think it is typically my process that if you and I didn't just speak to and come to some sort of result then we both left the conversation, however, no longer feel to be where I felt like we will eventually be okay with what happened, then I won't be able to let go myself then.But then you're not responsible for that.I'm responsible for that, I know.

JOEL About letting go?

MAGGIE Ja, of feeling responsible for her because I know, that on a mental sort of level, in a way, that (**indistinct 50.32**) like ourselves that, you know, that she can

take care of herself. I'm not judging her in that situation where I don't think that you can't take care of yourself. I just felt really bad that you would be put into a situation where you didn't know how you were ... that maybe you were experiencing the situation differently and I didn't ... I felt sort of protective towards her, you know.

JOEL  
STEPHAN  
SHELLY  
MAGGIE  
SHELLY

You did protect her yesterday  
Everybody. Not only her in particular.  
Can I ask you a question?

Hm **(yes)**.

So, listening to what you said and you said that in this group you have ... well, thus far, there was a time you felt that you have a certain level of responsibility towards the group.

MAGGIE  
SHELLY

Yes.

In your life, in general, are there other situations where you take responsibility for other people or feel the need to take responsibility, whether it be friends or family?

MAGGIE  
SHELLY  
MAGGIE

I do.

Okay. Have you always been like that?

No, but when I think about it, I don't know maybe this is possibly an issue that you guys can relate to, that a lot of people don't entirely understand all the distinctions and all the different scopes of application of industrial psychology and clinical psychology, and so it happens to me a lot that, whenever I told a person, you know, I'm studying to be an industrial psychologist, they just start telling me stuff – things that I don't think they would otherwise, say if I didn't tell them that because they feel like I can help them or I can explain things better, and, in a lot of cases, I do, but then when it's like they're giving this expectation to me that they want this from me and then I feel like I have to provide that for them. I have to make them feel better or I have to explain things to them or I have to help them solve their problem or whatever. And I think with a lot of my close relationships that that is becoming a habit – that I can feel with certain friends of mine that we're not friends on just an easy level and we can go out together and we go shopping and watch movies. We are, specifically, friends when they're having a problem and they need someone to turn to, then I become that person that has conversation until they **(indistinct 52.53)**.

STEPHAN  
MAGGIE

So, they take you to a place where you don't want to go?

I'm not so certain that I don't want to go there. I mean, I do feel responsible, but, at the same time, I do enjoy that as well. I enjoy exploring that with another person. I think maybe why the other business for yesterday became a bit difficult for me is because I'm not used to being the one in the spotlight. I'm used to being the one assisting the other person and, you know, the other person is going to be analysed, or whatever, and I'm there for that person. And yesterday I didn't entirely, you know, it was so weird when I was talking, because also I couldn't trust that space, so I guess someone else had to tell me and say okay, maybe this is what you're feeling and you know, I could be in control, I just wasn't in control. But I enjoy it. I do enjoy it **(indistinct 53.51)** ... Now I'm feeling like, I just, I sound just confused. But, if you guys are thinking that like, you know, shoe, I thought Master's was doing a number on me, then **(indistinct 54.10)**. I don't mind that.

JOEL  
MAGGIE  
DEBBIE  
JOEL

Master's is doing what?

Doing a number on me, you know?

A number on me.

Oh, okay.



- DEBBIE Master's was doing a number on all of us.(**indistinct 54.26**)?  
MAGGIE Ja  
DEBBIE Definitely.  
STEPHAN Okay, so what do you make of what Maggie said about taking responsibility, being forever in a position where she does not want to be in, being out of control, enjoying it still, taking responsibility for you here, as what she does in other spaces?Anything else?
- DEBBIE I'm wondering what in us prompts her to feel that way, because she does not feel that way for no reason at all, then I'm wondering what's/where's my part in this.Ja.That's what I think.
- MAGGIE I don't know.Honestly  
DEBBIE Not necessarily just me, you know.Because ja, now and again, I'm feeling you and I are ... ja, but I mean (in between)  
MAGGIE You know, I think the most honest thing that I can say, and I really hope you guys believe me, is that if I am thinking for whatever reason that I need to take responsibility for you I'm not doing it on a conscious level where I'm making a judgement and you're saying, oh, you look like you need help, so now I need to help you.I'm just feeling.
- JOEL (**indistinct 55.47**)?  
MAGGIE Ja.  
FRANCIS That's how you are in general in your life as well, so then you put it in the group as well.If you weren't like that with your friends and you wouldn't have felt the responsibility as well.
- STEPHAN And it's not a problem for anybody that hasn't heard, but the problem is that it can become a burden on you, because you feel now you have to protect everybody and where can I just help and protect even more, and then it becomes something that you now have to go process somewhere, but that time coming back to it maybe the moment has passed and you sit with a burden.
- MAGGIE Ja.That is something that I'm doing; that I did go home thinking (**indistinct 56.29**) ... and I think a lot about that afterwards.
- STEPHAN A part of that would be the fact that you have to prepare the way and make so sure that you help and that you don't make it worse and that you say things in the right way; that what you actually wanted to say gets lost in the process and, afterwards, you realise hey, I should have said that.
- MAGGIE Ja.  
STEPHAN Does that happen sometime?  
MAGGIE Ja.  
STEPHAN Like even yesterday and today?  
MAGGIE Ja.Can I just say something?I really feel like I'm hogging the conversation, but can I just say ... (in between)
- STEPHAN Say again?  
MAGGIE I really feel like I'm hogging the conversation, but can I say (in between).  
STEPHAN Okay, but can I just stop you for a moment.You said that just now – what's going to be so worse if you go hog the conversation?Why is it not an opportunity, because sometimes you have to take that and to be there, and to have the opportunity for other people to assist you guys hogging the conversation ... (in between)
- DEBBIE I just sense that there are people that are annoyed with me and ...  
STEPHAN Okay.  
DEBBIE ... and I sensed it yesterday, and I sense it today again.So, ... ja.  
STEPHAN Okay.Can we stop just ... or ...

MAGGIE Ja.  
STEPHAN Do you want to check that first maybe?Are you annoyed?Did they take the fall for (**indistinct 57.47**)?  
ALL **uncomfortable laughing and joking**  
DEBBIE Christa, are you annoyed with me?  
CHRISTA No, Debbie.  
ALL Laugh  
DEBBIE Ja.Yesterday I felt distinctly that you were very annoyed with me at a stage.  
CHRISTA No.  
DEBBIE Even Pam as well.Ja.  
PAM Laugh  
STEPHAN Same thing – different experiences.  
DEBBIE Uhm.  
STEPHAN She felt that, at least where ... they sit there and are irritated with me, but actually something different than what you thought.  
DEBBIE Okay.  
STEPHAN And you?What's so bad about (in between)  
DEBBIE Hogging the conversation?  
STEPHAN Hogging.Ja.  
MAGGIE I don't know if I feel like (**indistinct 58.35**). I feel like, maybe, as I'm talking that people are having their own thought and they have their own experiences that maybe they would like to share and they're not getting that opportunity to share, because I'm taking up that space.  
LINDA No, I think people would say if they wanted to add something.  
DEBBIE I think in the sense that we are so open and being ourselves out there, we create a safe space for anyone to jump in and comment.  
JOSHUA There is enough time in this 2 ½ days that if you really wanted to say something to say it.  
FRANCIS If you want us to come back tomorrow, it's okay.  
ALL Laugh (in between)

#### 6.4.8.2 Codes allocated to section 6

**Table 6.20: Codes allocated to section 6**

<b>Section 6</b>	TB: Affirming fellow member
Maggie	TB: Building on other member's contribution
feeling	TI: Selfdisclosure of here and now emotion
responsible	TT: Reflecting on member's behaviour within the group
	AT: Directing conversation to there-and-then
	TT: Self-reflective/disclosure behaviour
	TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion
	TT: Reflecting on here and now emotion regarding interpersonal
	TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion
	TB: Opening up and becoming vulnerable
	TT: Checking perceptions with other members
	AB: Not meeting the level of vulnerability displayed
	AT: Christa shying away from level of honesty displayed in the question

TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion

TT: Open and honest reflection

TB: Supporting other member

TB: We like this group

#### *6.4.8.3 Discussion*

This section starts with a short silence following the end of the previous section where the group reflected on whether it is really so bad to be judged. Maggie then picks up on Joe, the facilitator's, intention to ask her something. He does this by checking whether the matter discussed previously, of her feeling responsible for others in the group, has been addressed sufficiently. This immediately results in the matter being explored in greater depth by Maggie and also by other members of the group, first in the domain of a discussion of personal feelings in the here and now, before it is taken outside of the group by Shelly. The forces towards opening up and sharing personal information with the group regarding its here and now functioning are, thus, followed by forces aimed at exploring the personal material outside of the group boundaries of space and time.

However, even although the conversation is taken to the outside of the group by Shelly, it still serves the purpose of creating an increased awareness of whom Maggie is and this, in turn, facilitates the sharing, feedback and cohesion loop (Yalom, 1985) that was referred to earlier. However, once again it appears as if, even though the forces towards task (reflecting on role here and now), towards individuality (becoming visible in the group) and towards belonging (Maggie's sincere assurance that she does not underestimate the group's abilities) are 'countered' by forces directed slightly off task as the conversation moves to the there and then instead of the here and now, the group was not prepared to leave the space of both reflecting on its process and increasing the cohesion amongst its members. This is seen, firstly, in Maggie's sincere and personal response which, in turn, leads the conversation back to the group and, secondly, by the facilitator who emphasises the relevance to the group itself and invites participation in that regard. In addition, there seems to be special significance in the fact that it is Shelly, of all people, who poses the question about Maggie's behaviour outside the group. It is important to bear in mind that, at the very start of the group, when the issues around being judged first emerged, it was between Maggie and Shelly that the drama unfolded and between whom it can be reasonably expected that there would still be, at least, some form of a rift. It therefore seems as if the forces towards greater group cohesion, especially on the systemic level of the interpersonal

relations between members, are operative as it is Shelly who is participating in the sharing, feedback and cohesion loop with Maggie.

If we consider the codes that were allocated to this first interaction between Maggie, the group and Shelly, these codes support the assertion that the forces operating within the group at this point were pro-group forces, organised as towards belonging, towards individuality, towards task and away from task behaviours:

TB: Affirming fellow member

TB: Building on other member's contribution

TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion

TT: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group

AT: Directing conversation to there and then

TT: Self-reflective/disclosure behaviour

Following closely on these actions of opening up, sharing and cohesion we see a very interesting turn of events. Maggie, true to her role of 'taking responsibility for others', tries to stand back to allow other members the opportunity to interact. This, in turn, leads to an exploration of why both Debbie and Maggie had been referring to themselves as 'hogging the conversation', albeit for very different reasons:

MAGGIE	Ja. Can I just say something? I really feel like I'm hogging the conversation, but, can I just say ... (in between)
STEPHAN	Say again?
MAGGIE	I really feel like I'm hogging the conversation, but can I say (in between).
DEBBIE	I just sense that there are people that are annoyed with me and ...
STEPHAN	Okay.
DEBBIE	... and I sensed it yesterday, and I sense it today again. So, ... ja.
STEPHAN	Okay. Can we stop just ... or ...
MAGGIE	Ja.
STEPHAN	Do you want to check that first, maybe? Are you annoyed? Did they take the fall for (indistinct 57.47)?
ALL	Uncomfortable laughing and joking
DEBBIE	Christa, are you annoyed with me?
CHRISTA	No, Debbie.
ALL	Laugh
DEBBIE	Ja. Yesterday I felt distinctly that you were very annoyed with me at a stage.
CHRISTA	No.
DEBBIE	Even Pam as well. Ja.
PAM	Laugh
STEPHAN	Same thing – different experiences.



The sense that I picked up from this while watching the group was that Maggie had suddenly become aware that she may have been taking possible value away from others within the group by taking value from the conversation herself and that there was, perhaps, also a tinge of guilt associated with this realisation. Debbie, on the other hand, clearly felt that it was incumbent on her to stand back, not because of a sense of responsibility for the others, but because she felt that the others were annoyed with her. Her statement to this effect is similar to numerous other statements which Debbie had made throughout the life of the group. However, it is interesting to note that, at some point during the field notes that I had made of the following session – session 8 – I had written down:

“I wish Debbie would be quiet now - Debbie, the psychologist”

I also drew a little picture in my field notes illustrating how I was experiencing the way in which she saw herself in the group as elevated above the rest:



**Figure 6.11: Picture from field notes depicting Debbie's position**

The aim of this interlude is not to digress to a discussion of session 8, but merely to show that even I, from the observation room, had also felt annoyed with Debbie. In addition, I am aware that this annoyance of mine had not been limited to session 8 only, but that it was something that I had experienced at various stages throughout the group's life.<sup>45</sup> The group, mainly through Christa, had also launched covert attacks on the position Debbie had taken within the group throughout the life of the group. In fact, her position had been the focus of the group's work in session 5 and she had been the only person not to be included in the group's plan of 'let's discuss puppies', a plan that they had made before entering the room and sitting on the floor during session 6 – the session during which the group had revolted against the facilitators and, maybe against Debbie, as they had transferred some of their feelings regarding the facilitators onto

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<sup>45</sup> I am aware that there is a part of me that also likes to be elevated above others. I do not like this aspect of myself. So the possibility exists that it is only my own projection that I was annoyed with. But the possibility also exists that there may have been a bit of both – my projection as well as a real feeling of annoyance within the group towards Debbie.

her. Accordingly, there is evidence for the assertion that the group had, in fact, been annoyed with Debbie and that Christa, perhaps as a result of the valence she had for competing with other females (as had manifested throughout the life of the group) may have been the person who had embodied this annoyance on behalf of the group. In addition, seen against the background of the strong pairing relationship that existed between Christa and Pam, Debbie voices her feeling that some people, especially Christa and Pam, are annoyed with her. However, what is the relevance of this long discussion regarding our current project of deciphering the forces involved in the membership experience during session 7?

The relevance is as follows: Until this point, the group had been making a strong move towards opening up, exploring relationships and creating cohesion – maybe to a point where Debbie had felt safe enough to voice the concern that she had been experiencing, perhaps for some time, about the group feeling annoyed with her. Again we see the underlying theme of judgement within the group. Accordingly, it seems as if the level of cohesion at this point was such that Debbie felt safe to point out that there were, perhaps, still other underlying forces present that should be addressed – named, explored, owned, and contained – if the group were to develop further. It may be that this opening up and honesty of Debbie was emanating from both a force driving towards the full acceptance of Debbie by the group, on a member-level, and also a force towards candour and increased cohesion on the group-level. The facilitator then attempts to elicit a further exploration of Debbie's sense that people were annoyed with her, but both Christa and Pam promptly deny any annoyance.

Accordingly, in reaction to the force towards opening up, honest feedback and increased cohesion, there is also an opposing force at work. This opposing force seems to be a fear of absolute honesty, which may lead to conflict and hurt feelings and, at least in the world of fantasy, the ultimate destruction of the group. Thus, the force that is activated by the force towards greater candour is aimed at protecting the homeostasis of the group. This force appears to be extremely strong, to the extent that everyone, even the facilitators, play along with it – by openly accepting the denial of annoyance and by allowing this to happen – by letting it slide. However, it may be that a moment of homeostasis was exactly what the group had needed at that point and that that was the reason why the forces towards homeostasis had successfully neutralised the forces towards honesty and candour. Nevertheless, it is evident from the group's continuous struggle with issues around judgement, that this choice of homeostasis above growth came at a price.

Directly after Debbie's concerns regarding causing people annoyance had been silenced, the conversation reverted to Maggie's concerns about 'hogging' the conversation at the expense of the other members' value. However, the group supported and affirmed Maggie and assured her that they had not been experiencing her as taking away value from them and that the value that they took from the group was the responsibility of the group and that it was a responsibility that the group was willing to assume. This turning away from Debbie's concerns towards dealing with Maggie's concerns, on a group-level, seems to indicate a turning away from conversations in which negative feelings towards the protagonist could be explored and towards conversations in which positive feelings towards the protagonist, as well as negative feelings from the protagonist towards herself could be explored. At this point it appears as if the forces towards the further growth and deepening of the group had been successfully neutralised by the forces towards 'keeping things safe and comfortable' and that, in fact, a ceiling with regards to the group's development had been reached which would have to be broken down by either weakening the restraining forces or strengthening the driving forces. In theory, Agazarian (in Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) would argue that weakening the resisting forces would be the best way in which to address this problem. However, as the group progresses from this point, we will explore how this played out.

#### *6.4.8.4 The interplay of forces*

The forces that played out in this section can be summarised as follows:

- a) Firstly, we see forces at work towards opening up and sharing personal information with the group regarding its here and now functioning as Maggie explores her feelings of responsibility for the group. These forces, which work towards group growth and development, are manifested through the various members taking part in this discussion, and can be seen as driving towards individuality (Maggie showing herself and, in effect, acting as a model of the learning behaviour that is the most effective in this group – Beck's emotional leader (Beck *et al.*, 2000)), towards belonging (caring for the group members and increasing a feeling of togetherness through open sharing and feedback) and towards task (reflecting on the group process in terms of roles within the group).
- b) Then, as a possible reaction to the here and now nature of the discussion, forces away from the here and now discussion are activated. However, these

forces appear to contribute to the sense of cohesion within the group in that they help the group to come to a deeper knowledge and understanding of one of the group members. Accordingly, these forces can be seen as being directed towards the group's development and driving towards belonging (as the group shows interest in one of its members) and towards individuality (as the member agrees to become visible within the group as a unique individual). The behaviour of exploring Maggie's behaviour outside of the group can also be seen as emanating from forces towards both peacemaking and enhanced cohesion within the group. In addition, these forces, which seem to be directed at the development of the group, especially on an interpersonal level, are manifested by Shelly's behaviour and can be seen as 'towards belonging' forces.

- c) An underlying force directed at the group's feeling a sense of togetherness and mutual care for one another is then manifested through Maggie's expression of concern that she is taking up too much space within the group and that she does not want to deprive others of the opportunity to obtain value from the group. This force can be seen as driving memberbehaviour 'towards belonging' and 'away from individuality' on the member-level (for Maggie) and, possibly, on the group-level, directed at blocking a deeper exploration of the personal experience within the group.
- d) Following directly on the heels of the forces mentioned above, other forces pertaining to 'taking up too much space' are activated. This time, however, these forces do not have the quality of a mother feeling more responsible for the needs of her children than for her own needs, but rather have the 'siblingrivalry' quality of a sister wanting to talk about possible negative feelings on the part of her siblings towards her for aligning herself too closely with the parents. Thus, for the first time, we have a force directed towards addressing rivalry in an open and honest way for the benefit of the group and this force, in turn, drives behaviour towards task, towards individuality and towards belonging on both the group and membership levels as a force that, on the whole, seems to support the development and task achievement of the group.
- e) However, there is also another quality to this action of Debbie: it alerts us to the existence of a force to retreat due to the fear of being judged and, thus, opposing the overall growth and development of the group. It is again possible to see how this force is manifested by Debbie on the member-level. In addition, we are also able to see how this force plays out in the direction of individuality

(self-protection) on the member-level and away from individuality on the group-level as members find it more desirable to be invisible.

- f) However, despite the multitude of factors within the group, including the resistance to Debbie's efforts that have, by now, become a habit within the group, forces towards maintaining homeostasis, or a 'sense of safety and security', are able to neutralise the forces mentioned above successfully. These forces may be seen as driving 'towards belonging' (maintaining a feeling of safety as well as other positive feelings), 'away from task' (avoiding a deeper exploration) and 'away from individuality' (individuals becoming less visible) behaviours on the group-level and away from belonging, individuality and task on the member-level as Debbie, by not being honest, refrains from taking a risk within the group by reciprocating the gesture shown towards her.

#### 6.4.8.5 Summary of the forces in section 6

**Table 6.21: Summary of the forces in section 6**

Force nr	Description of apparent force goal	Point of application	Manifested through	Direction of push/pull on membership	Pro- or anti-group
1a (Group-level)	To open up and discuss personal hereandnow experience	Membership -as-a-whole	Maggie's reflection on taking responsibility	Towards task (Reflecting on group process) Towards individuality (Individual becoming visible) Towards belonging (Cohesion)	Pro-group
1b (Member-level)	To open up and discuss personal hereandnow experience	Maggie	Maggie's reflection on taking responsibility	Towards task (Reflecting on personal process within group) Towards individuality (Showing herself as a person) Towards belonging (Reaching out to group members)	Pro-group
2a (Group-level)	To gain a deeper understanding of one of the group members	Membership -as-a-whole	Shelly enquiry about Maggie's life outside of the group	Towards belonging (Cohesion)	Pro-group
2b (Member-level)	To gain a deeper understanding of her fellow group member	Shelly	Shelly enquiry about Maggie's life outside of the group	Away from task (Away from hereandnow reflection) Towards belonging (Reaching out to Maggie)	Pro-group
3a (Group-level)	To avoid deeper exploration	Membership -as-a-whole	Maggie's apology for dominating the conversation	Away from task (Avoiding a deeper exploration)	Anti-group

3b (Member-level)	To increase a sense of togetherness as well as mutual care and respect	Maggie	Maggie's apology for dominating the conversation	Towards belonging (Showing respect for group members) Away from individuality (Avoiding being the spotlight)	Pro-group
4a (Group-level)	To address negative feelings openly	Membership -as-a-whole	Debbie's mentioning that she had sensed annoyance towards her	Towards task (Opening up the sensitive topic for reflection) Towards individuality (Individual becoming visible) Towards belonging (Inviting honest, interpersonal feedback)	Pro-group
4b (Member-level)	To address negative feelings openly	Debbie	Debbie's mentioning that she had sensed annoyance towards her	Towards task (Reflecting on hereandnow emotion) Towards individuality (Showing herself as a person) Towards belonging (Need for acceptance within the group)	Pro-group
5a (Group-level)	To avoid being judged	Membership -as-a-whole	Debbie's statement of dominating the conversation	Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible)	Anti-group
5b (Member-level)	To retract from possibly being judged	Debbie	Debbie's statement of dominating the conversation	Toward individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group
6a (Group-level)	To maintain homeostasis as a result of a fear of impending change	Membership -as-a-whole	Christa, Pam and the group's refusal to explore these feelings honestly	Towards belonging (Maintaining a feeling of safety as well as other positive feelings) Away from task (Avoiding a deeper exploration of negative feelings) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible)	Anti-group
6b (Member-level)	To maintain homeostasis as a result of a fear of impending change	Christa	Christa, Pam and the group's refusal to explore these feelings honestly	Away from task (Avoiding being honest) Away from individuality (Not taking a stance out there) Away from belonging (Not reciprocating the honesty shown)	Anti-group

## 6.4.9 Section 7

### 6.4.9.1 Transcript

#### Section 7: Judgement

DEBBIE Where were we before that?

JOEL You wanted to check something with the group.

MAGGIE I actually wanted to say something. After Friday night I had the conversation



about gay couples adopting children with my family because my family is also very religious and I just thought a lot about it and I just wanted to say to Shelly that I understand entirely your religious beliefs and I didn't want to make you feel that I was making a judgement of you by telling you not to judge them. I just needed to say that.

SHELLY  
MAGGIE  
SHELLY

Okay.

Did you feel like I was judging you?

No, there was a time when you looked at me and you looked at me and you gave me this look and you said, don't judge other people, and I was, like, wow! All I'm saying is the only thing that was my personal beliefs are, I'm not saying that they were incapable of loving a child. I just didn't think it was fair to put a child in that situation where a child has to explain from early on – everybody else has a mother and a father, but I have two mommies or I have two daddies. It is not always easy for ... yes, that's your norm as such, because that's what you know, but I'm just saying once they start interacting with the world and they've seen that there's other stuff out there that that is not the norm, so to speak, in society, so now they have to explain and justify. And, just like we said yesterday, sometimes other children can be mean. So, I'm just saying, why put that added pressure on a child. I'm saying if you want to be gay and that's how you want to live your life, fine, but I don't think it is fair to put that on a child. I was not inside ... if that's how you choose to live your life, okay. I have my beliefs. I'm not going to go there and *toi-toi* in the streets and say no gay people should adopt children. I'm not gonna go into stuff like that. I'm just saying that's me – how I feel.

MAGGIE

I'm thinking that maybe we should have a conversation where we didn't lead conversation that I understand entirely what you're saying, but, like you have your beliefs, I have my beliefs as well. Maybe, sometimes, you just have to agree to disagree and do so respectfully. Maybe, if I didn't do it respectfully, then I apologise. I understand your perspective, at the end of the day, I'm still going to feel about the situation the way that I feel, and you're still going to feel your way.

SHELLY  
STEPHAN

Well, I think we've parted with 'agree to disagree'.

You felt so, but she didn't, because it lingered with her still. She wasn't, if I understand you correctly, you still weren't finished with it. Now, maybe, you want to clear it up again and finish it, or whatever.

MAGGIE

Ja. I feel like you know, we don't need to go into the conversation itself again, I just didn't want Shelly to feel like I was making a personal judgement of her, and I don't know, I think I would like you to understand that I get sort of, you know, like how your emotion got involved, my emotion got involved as well, but my emotions weren't involved because I was, you know, against you, it was just because I was for what I was saying. So, like arguments can also happen in a space and it can be locked in that space, and it does not have to be, or has one thing to do – maybe take away ...

DEBBIE  
MAGGIE  
DEBBIE

You have such a nice way of saying things.

When I make sense...

You do make sense.

MAGGIE  
STEPHAN

Ja.

Shelly, are you okay?

MAGGIE  
STEPHAN

Uh-huh. **(Yes)**

How did that feel? You just put it right in there.

MAGGIE

It felt like I was taking a lot of the burden off my shoulders and leaving it in the circle and I can, maybe, walk out of the room without it.



STEPHAN You feel a little bit relieved?  
MAGGIE Yes.  
STEPHAN Although it happened two days ago, it's still lingered and lingered as if something unsaid sat here. Now it's a belief that has been there. Maybe it is an opportunity to check how did the other feel when you just put it up there or was it okay to just put things there or should she have said it a little bit nicer or a little bit better, or did she hurt someone while she judged ... maybe just checking how did they experience it?  
DEBBIE Part of reality.  
STEPHAN One of the others? How did you experience her interaction?  
LINDA I'm glad you asked it, because you feel better now and that's good and it's fine.  
MAGGIE I'm glad she feels better, personally...  
LINDA Ja, but I don't think she was like ... not mad – mad, just wondering though.  
LINDA Ja, but I think she felt funny about it, but you didn't know, did you? ...  
MAGGIE Uh-huh.  
LINDA Did you feel funny about Friday night – the conversation afterwards when you were at ... ?  
SHELLY No, I felt the same way it was like I was looked at and she said – don't judge other people. And I was like ... okay ...  
STEPHAN What? Wait. What's that? What's okay?  
SHELLY It was like I was just telling you what I felt and she looked at me with big eyes – she made her eyes big, something like that.  
MAGGIE So you did feel judged?  
SHELLY No, it's not about feeling ... I could sense that, like, you felt strongly about something, I felt strongly about something, and then you were just, like, don't judge other people. And I'm like okay I was just telling you how I feel about it, but it was like okay, it happened, it's over, it's finished, we went through, we went home and yesterday we still spoke. It wasn't like I had this, Maggie must stay away from me, I don't know how I'm going to greet you the next morning. Do you hear what I'm saying? It was like you felt that way and I felt differently, and it was okay. You understand what I'm saying?  
MAGGIE Okay.  
FRANCIS Sorry, did you think about it even after Friday night?  
SHELLY Thursday night?  
FRANCIS Ag, Thursday night?  
SHELLY Ja, I think it's more, like, in sharing my experiences than having ... it's like when I spoke to my husband and I said what are the different things we spoke about then, that those last ... it was like the last minute of that conversation. So, that stuck with me for that day, but, like I said, it was, like, we came back here yesterday, it was over for me.  
JOEL Was it over for the group?  
DEBBIE Uhm-uhm **(No)**  
JOEL Well, at least not for you, but I'm wondering about the others?  
DEBBIE Laugh  
FRANCIS Laugh  
STEPHAN And that was?  
DEBBIE (Laugh) We were just having a moment ... no specific ... it's cool. I'm going to leave it up to you to worry about.  
FRANCIS No, it's not that.  
DEBBIE We went for a drink yesterday afternoon.  
FRANCIS Ja, and then we just ... ja.  
DEBBIE (Laugh) ... just things that we saw, that is something that lingered with us, I



- guess, but for which the group is definitely not ready.Ja.So.
- STEPHAN So, the whole thing about Thursday evening was not complete?At least, for some more than others?
- DEBBIE Ja, but it is now.Ja, it's like ... ja, for us.
- JOEL Why does the judging thing you think come up then so often, or is it just coincidence?
- DEBBIE It comes out because we're all judgemental by nature.We're brought up that way, you know to make judgements and evaluate and be critical and ... (in between)
- STEPHAN But those are two separate things.
- DEBBIE Ja, but we're raised to judge.To judge whether things are safe or not, or right or wrong, or ... ja.
- JOEL But you make the distinction between evaluate and judging?
- JOSHUA Ja.
- ALL Laugh
- JOSHUA I do.Ja, judging is more in a negative sense.
- DEBBIE It's so much like more stronger.It sounds negative.
- JOSHUA And it's more in a critical, like ... in a more in a critical negative sense where evaluate is more like, oh, okay and you place it into your own frame of reference, in your own perceptions and stuff, and how you perceive it and make sense of what you hear and of what you perceive, where judgemental is more, like, for me in a critical sense – in a critical, rejective sense.
- STEPHAN And is that where the problem comes when it becomes critical, negative or what did you/how would you call it?
- JOSHUA Ja, and I think that is when people started feeling uncomfortable when they feel as if, okay, you do not necessarily evaluate it and you, perhaps, even if you evaluate you can still disagree, but like ... it is sort of a condemness to judge me –
- JOEL Case closed.
- ALL Silence
- STEPHAN And are we raised like that?But I think that then comes back to your question.Are we raised to be judgemental, critical or evaluative, or accepting or ... and how does it relate to here or what happened here?What of those played out here?Were we more judgemental, were we more critical, were we more evaluative or were we more opening?How did you experience it?
- MAGGIE Can I make an observation?I think that it is really, really awesome that ends like the other day that Debbie looks like someone that she could care for and then the guys did go out for a drink, and that is something that came out of the group.I think that's awesome.I think as much as now we're concentrating about judging each other that that is a positive to come out of it, so maybe we don't need to go back to secure ourselves and we don't need to take this as making judgements.Maybe we are just learning and sharing.
- DEBBIE Ja. I think the point is when you tend to a group situation, any group situation, but I mean this ... especially this group or any group for that matter, but, since we are here, you bring with you your entire history, you know, and all your baggage and everything, and you sort of forget that the only thing you have currently is right now – is this moment.
- STEPHAN The issue is, we slap those baggage onto the group.
- DEBBIE Uhm.
- STEPHAN Now, that's the thing that we necessary need to relook in a meeting and where judging comes into play for you all, in particularly, very much so, is this only an opportunity to judge or is there are, maybe, other ways to view the world, as if

the world would be judging and as if people here would be judging you. And that's where the learning comes in to say, well, it just might not be that it wasn't a judging, maybe it was just evaluative or critical, or something, because that's going to happen anyway. Everybody has their own perceptions about who we are, who other people are and what the group is supposed to be, and that is happening everywhere, but what do I make of it, from where I come from. That's the thing to work on.

- JOEL Are we losing some people?  
 INDV.? Huh-uh.  
 JOEL Not yet.  
 MAGGIE I think we want to be in a reflective mood right now.  
 JOEL People?  
 MAGGIE Or I'm in a reflective ...  
 JOEL You're in a reflective ... okay. Have we silenced you, Erna?  
 ERNA No, not at all.  
 MAGGIE I am just really glad that we're doing this thing in our group of 9 or 11 (**indistinct 01.13.22**) and you're not with the whole class, because it's not that I have personal things against other people in the class, I just don't think that I would have opened up and shared as much in a bigger group, and I really have gotten to learn things about certain individuals in the bigger group than we would have (**indistinct 01.13.45**).  
 DEBBIE Maybe it wouldn't have been the same.  
 MAGGIE Ja.  
 STEPHAN So, some of you're nodding and you felt that it's the same – you are also happy that it is in this smaller group than in a larger group? Is it better here than whether it would have been the others?  
 DEBBIE Not necessarily the people *per se*, but the size.  
 JOSHUA Uhm. The size.  
 JOEL Okay. Shall we take a break?  
 DEBBIE Cool.  
 JOEL Good?  
 STEPHAN Good.  
 JOEL It's ten to now – fifteen minutes?  
 STEPHAN Fifteen minutes is fine.  
 JOEL Five past, please.

#### 6.4.9.2 Codes allocated to section 7

**Table 6.22: Codes allocated to section 7**

<b>Section 7</b>	TB: Opening up and becoming vulnerable
Main theme: Judgement	TI: Taking a personal stand/risk
	TT: Open and honest reflection
	TT: Self-reflective/opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)
	TB: Direct question regarding other member's feelings
	TT: Direct question about interpersonal relationship within the group
	AB: Not meeting the level of vulnerability and directness in the question
	AI: Not taking a stand/ risk out there

AT: Shying away from deep level honesty  
 TB: Being apologetic  
 TB: Opening up and becoming vulnerable  
 TI: Taking a personal stand/risk  
 TT: Open and honest reflection  
 AB: Not meeting the level of vulnerability displayed  
 AI: Not taking a stand risk out there  
 AT: Shying away from deep level honesty  
 TB: Being apologetic  
 TB: Opening up and becoming vulnerable  
 TI: Taking a personal stand/risk  
 TT: Open and honest reflection  
 TB: Affirming fellow member  
 TI: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion  
 TT: Self-reflective/opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)  
 TB: Affirming fellow member  
 TB: Feelings of togetherness placed above feelings of conflict  
 AT: Shelly's refusing to be honest  
 TT: Group pulling towards honesty  
 TB: Direct question regarding other member's feelings  
 TT: Direct question about interpersonal relationship within the group  
 TI: Not willing to relinquish the initial position taken  
 AB: Pairing between Debbie and Francis as withholding from the group  
 TB: Pairing between Debbie and Francis  
 TT: Reflecting on judgementalness within group  
 TB: We like this group

#### *6.4.9.3 Discussion*

This section follows upon the previous section where the group decided to occupy itself with work that was 'safe and comforting' rather than work that was 'threatening and potentially risky'. The section starts with Maggie wanting to address the unfinished business in the group pertaining to her, Shelly and the issue of judgement. It is interesting that this is the exact issue of judgement that had been avoided in the previous section when the group had decided not to explore the feelings of annoyance prevailing within the group. It is, thus, possible to infer that the force towards the open and honest exploration of the possible difficult feelings within the group was still at work, this time manifesting through Maggie, who was, perhaps, as a result of the two different roles that she and Debbie had been playing within the group until that point, a more suitable candidate for tackling a difficult issue within the group than was Debbie. In fact, Maggie, with her now firmly established role of emotional leader in the group also tapped into the underlying force within the group towards a sense of togetherness and

respect for each other. This became visible in the way in which she addressed the residue of any conflicting feelings that may still have been at play within the group. She does this by first acknowledging the possible part that she may have played in the 'don't judge other people' interaction which had taken place on the Thursday night (session 2). The irony here is that, in the actual incident, the judgement had come from Shelly and those who had supported her in her arguments against homosexual people adopting children. Nevertheless, the fact that Maggie starts by apologising to Shelly for 'judging her for judging', opens the door wide for Shelly both to reciprocate and apologise for her contribution to the conflict and also to admit to the fact that she had also judged. However, this does not happen. Instead, Shelly seizes this as an opportunity to hide behind Maggie's version of the story as retold here and in which she, Maggie, is made out to be the one who owes the apology.

Regarding the codes that were allocated to this section, it seems safe to assert that the forces towards and against the group's development and growth – the pro-group and anti-group forces – were pitched against each other through the two group members involved (Maggie and Shelly) with Maggie acting upon the pro-group forces and Shelly upon the anti-group forces. When interpreted in this way, this section can, then, be read as a tug-of-war between the forces towards open and honest sharing, becoming vulnerable and taking risks and the forces towards self-protection, shying away from honest feedback and refusing to take responsibility. In the table below the pro-group forces are depicted in green while the anti-group forces are in red in order to render visible the almost rhythmic pattern in which these forces played out. Despite the fact that, towards the end of this interaction, more group members started to pull in the direction of honesty, vulnerability and risk-taking, the forces resisting these efforts managed to hold out, as can be seen in Shelly's refusal to be honest and to relinquish the position that she had taken at the outset of this interaction. When we look back at the previous section, and see the interest that Shelly had shown in finding out more about Maggie, it makes sense that, on the interpersonal level, Maggie had taken that as an opportunity to make amends, although on the group-level, the fear associated with honesty and vulnerability had proven to be greater than the possible forces towards moving closer on an interpersonal level.

Following this interaction, an interesting interaction takes place between two of the group members, namely, Debbie and Francis. The facilitator's probing into whether the issues around judgement were still alive for the group caused these two members to start giggling and they admitted that they had shared ideas about the conversations on

homosexuality that took place in the second session “for which the group is definitely not ready”. There appears to be a force at work here which is operating away from belonging to the group-as-a-whole and towards belonging to the pair that is bound together by a special secret. This force away from the group may also have had an impact on the group’s sense of cohesion as the members of the pair, in effect, informs the group that they had judged the group from the vantage point of a special, outside meeting and had found the group lacking in terms of its capacity to contain whatever was now safely contained within the pair. Thus, instead of becoming vulnerable and taking a risk for the benefit of the group, the pair, just like Shelly a few minutes before, decides rather to protect its own interests even although this may be at a cost to the group. Again we see the forces against the group’s development being played out by members with a vested interest in protecting themselves.

Following this secret interaction, the facilitator sets in motion another reflection on the part of the group as to the reason why the issue of judgement keeps on coming up. This intervention can be seen as resulting from the underlying force within the group towards openly and honestly reflecting on its own process. The members then follow this train of thought and reflection to a limited, mostly academic, degree as it felt unsafe to refer to personal, interpersonal or group-level manifestations of the issue of judgement. The discomfort with regard to the possibility of addressing these issues openly is of such a nature that Maggie comes forward to rescue the group from this discussion by directing the group’s attention to something positive that had come out of the group, namely, the friendship between Francis and Debbie. This may be seen as emanating from a force away from open and honest sharing and towards a sense of togetherness and optimism about what the group had, indeed, achieved thus far. In a sense, what Maggie is doing on behalf of the group, is to remind the group that, although there were still unresolved issues, which were probably going to remain unresolved, there were still other reasons for being optimistic about the group, membership of the group and the possible value that may still be derived from participating in the group’s task.

This force towards reasserting to the group the value of membership is further manifested by the facilitator’s reaching out to those members who had recently remained very quiet. Two of the members, Christa and Erna, had shown evidence of the considerable difficulty they experienced in staying present in the group during the latter half of this session (session 7): Carol had drawn the hood of her sweater over her head in such a way that her face was barely visible, she had hidden her hands in

her sleeves and had sat slouched back in her chair with her arms tightly crossed while Christa's constant fidgeting and shuffling in her chair had given the impression that she was having great difficulty staying in the group. It was clearly not possible to ignore these behaviours, although it was difficult to pinpoint exactly what had motivated these withdrawals. At the very least, it could be that these behaviours were evidence of discomfort with the group, either on a personal, interpersonal or group-level, and that they had probably originated from underlying forces directed at escaping from the group, for whatever reason. In the case of Carol, it seems plausible to assume that the conversational turn towards deeper, more emotionally laden discussions had made her uncomfortable as she had stated in her personal reflection that these types of conversations made it difficult for her to be in the group. In a similar vein, Christa used a moment in session 9 to come forward and voice her discomfort with being 'psychoanalysed'. Accordingly, it seems that, although the group had turned towards exploring interpersonal and group-level processes in the here and now, the forces resisting these types of behaviours were, nevertheless, present in the group and were manifesting specifically through Christa and Erna.

#### *6.4.9.4 The interplay of forces*

The forces that were identified can be summarised as follows:

- a) In this section, we first see a force directed towards an open and honest exploration of the possible difficult feelings within the group, this time manifesting itself through Maggie. The manifestation of this force follows directly on the refusal of the group to work through the issue of group members' being annoyed with Debbie. Accordingly, where the group's behaviour had, just a minute previously, been primarily directed by forces against becoming vulnerable in the face of potential risk, the group's behaviour was, at that point, again directed at pursuing vulnerability and risk-taking for the benefit of the group's overall development, not only on an interpersonal, but also on a group-as-a-whole level. It is interesting to note here that the way in which this action on the part of Maggie, in which she, in fact, invites the group to interact around the issue of judgement, is incongruent with the role of emotional leader that she had assumed thus far. Beck (Beck *et al.*, 2000) describes the emotional leader in this phase of the group's development – where the group must cross the boundary between establishing roles and embarking on cooperative work – as someone who is highly motivated with regard to the task of the group and who models task behaviour by making

him/herself vulnerable through opening up and carrying out significant personal work within the group. The fact that the group, in the language of Tavistock, had unconsciously recruited Maggie, as a result of her personal valences (Bion, 1961) for taking responsibility for group tasks and the emotional wellbeing of others, to take up the task of exploring the theme of judgement, makes sense: not only has Maggie proven herself to be willing to explore issues on a personal level, but she has also, on several occasions, shown that she cares and, in fact, unconsciously takes responsibility for, the emotional wellbeing of her fellow group members. Maggie assumes this role in the only way that is open to her, namely, exploring the issue of judgement on a personal level. However, for Maggie, exploring the issue of judgement on a personal level was always going to be problematic as she would have to refer back to the incident that had taken place on the Thursday night (session 2). The difficulty with referring back to that incident was, of course, the fact that it had been during that incident that her role of leader, or, at least, of significant group member, had been established. After she had been obliged by Shelly to explain her open attitude towards homosexual partners adopting children, especially in view of the fact that she is Muslim – this after a large subgroup had spent considerable time affirming and voicing their somewhat conservative Christian beliefs - she had given such an honest account of her belief in forgiveness, that the group had sat for a moment in pleasantly stunned silence. The important point here is the fact that Maggie was not judgemental during session 2 - in fact, she was the exact opposite and this had immediately earned her some form of respect from the group. The problem in the present situation was, thus, that she wanted to reach out to the person who had, initially, personified 'judgement', without making her feel judged because she had judged on behalf of the group. Maggie did this by apologising for her possible part in causing Shelly to feel judged. By doing this, the force towards opening up and taking risks for the sake of the group's development was manifested so gently and invitingly that a palpable sense of expectation rose in the group that Shelly would reciprocate.

- b) In addition, it seems as if the force we are discussing here comprised two distinct aspects, namely, the drive towards addressing the difficult issues within the group and, thus, organised towards the task of the group, and the drive directed towards taking risks and becoming vulnerable through opening up and becoming truly visible within the group. This latter drive can be seen as organised towards individuality and it is reminiscent of the individuation-

separation process in terms of which the individual becomes secure enough in him/herself to be able to stand up as a separate individual and take risks in the outside world. This type of membership behaviour is also what Bion (1961) is describing when he refers to the 'work group' – members are visible as individual entities who are able to bring their unique competencies to the group – as opposed to the 'basic assumption group' – where members are not easily distinguishable and hide in the group. In Foulkesian terms we speak of members who developed to become 'effective communicators' within the group, as discussed in chapter 3, and, in Agazarian's terms, we would talk of members between whom and the group an interdependent communication relationship has developed.

- c) It can also be possible to identify another force working together with the one just mentioned, namely, an underlying force towards a sense of togetherness and respect for each other. It can then be said that this force, operating in conjunction with the force towards openness, candour and risktaking, ensured that the attempt to address the underlying force of judgement within the group was conducted with an olive leaf, and not a sword, in hand. It is, thus, easy now to understand both these forces as working towards the development and growth of the group – one towards task and individuality and the other towards belonging.
- d) One force that has not been discussed specifically thus far is, of course, the force towards 'judgement', as it had become known in this group. This force carries with it a dark quality and all the potential energy required to destroy the group. Klein may have termed this force 'envy' or 'paranoia', – as described in the way in which she explains the paranoid-schizoid position, (Klein, 1962) and this is possibly what Bion (1961) perceived as operating in the ba fight-flight state of basic assumption functioning. It is also easy to understand that this dark force of 'shooting down others' in the group forms part of Nitsun's (1996) anti-group construct, and that it needs to be contained and worked through lest it becomes rampantly destructive within the group. This force has manifested itself throughout the life of the group in various forms and was often referred to when members reflected on their level of (dis)comfort in the group. On the group-as-a-whole level, we see how the group was split into fragments of different pairs and subgroups according to stereotypes (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000) and, on the sub-group- and member-levels, we see how the pairs and subgroups served as alliances from which to gain a sense of security and protection. This all-pervasive force is directed towards the destruction of the



group and driving towards belonging (on the sub-group or alliance level), away from belonging (on the group-level), away from task (on all levels), towards individuality (on the member-level of protecting self-interest above group-interest), away from individuality (on the pair/alliance level) and away from individuality on the group-level (where it contributed to the overall reluctance to become visible within the group).

- e) Of course, it is difficult for any group to acknowledge and work through these powerful and potentially destructive forces (Nitsun, 1996) and, thus, in defending against having to deal with these forces, groups, in general, (Armstrong, 2005; Hirschhorn, 1988) and this group, in particular, experience forces towards self-protection, shying away from honest feedback and refusing to take responsibility. These forces manifest in different ways in different groups as social defences. In this group we see the force towards self-protection and shying away from honesty manifest in Shelly's refusal to reciprocate the risk that Maggie has taken. On a group-level we can, thus, infer that the group, through Shelly, defends against addressing the difficult issue in order to protect itself from entering a level of personal depth for which it does not yet feel ready. Accordingly, this force plays out on the level of the group-as-a-whole, is manifested through Shelly and pushes away from the group's task. On an interpersonal member-to-member-level, it would appear that this force has a different quality in that it is not only organised away from the group's task, but also away from belonging on the interpersonal level. The effect of this force operating here is that it maintains the distance between the group members involved as it prevents Shelly from reciprocating Maggie's gesture. On a group level, this force away from deeper contact also hinders the development of cohesion on a new, more intimate level as one member, in effect, pushes the group away from her as she chooses to protect her self-interest rather than the interests of the group. It can also be inferred that, on the individual member-level, a force towards self-protection (organised towards individuality) was at work, possibly springing from a need within the member to defend the initial position that she had taken and also to protect herself from the judgemental tendencies within the group. It seems both plausible and natural for this force to be present within this group as the group has been aware of potentially dangerous forces at work since its inception and, clearly, these have not all been resolved. Accordingly, the perceived risk here for the individual is that an acknowledgement of his/her contribution to the judgement within the group may attract all the judgement energy to him/herself and the

individual can become the scapegoat for the group. This force towards self-protection, on the level of the group, can again be seen as organised away from individuality as the member does not take the risk of being both openly visible and vulnerable within the group for the benefit of the group.

- f) With the judgement issue still unaddressed, we can see the forces involved in pairing playing out as it may again be safer to approach the group as a pair and not as an individual. Accordingly, we see the force operating away from belonging to the group-as-a-whole as the Debbie/Francis pair isolates itself from the group through the secret which they admit to having but refuse to share. We also, on the member-level, see the force directed at safety and security creating a drive towards belonging to the pair. It is, thus, interesting to note the regression in terms of the group's development – a short while before one member had felt safe enough to take a risk by making herself vulnerable in terms of personal experiences with judgement within the group but, now, after the constellation of forces towards open and honest sharing and risk-taking had been neutralised by the constellation of forces against greater openness and intimacy within the group, it appears as if the forces of judgement are again rampant and the pair openly declares that the group is definitely not ready to hear what they had shared between the two of them.
- g) At this stage, the underlying force in the group to reflect openly and honestly on its own process appears to have been neutralised to such an extent that reflection on the group process and, specifically, with regards to judgement, is relegated to the level of academic/cognitive reflection instead of an exploration of personal experience. This force to avoid a deeper exploration is manifested in the behaviour of both Joshua and Debbie and has the overall effect of working towards the group's overall growth, albeit on a lower level of group maturity.
- h) Next we see an interesting new force being activated and manifested through Maggie – a force towards a sense of togetherness and optimism about that what the group has, indeed, achieved thus far. It is as if Maggie realised that the group's identity as a good group, to which it is worth belonging, is under threat as the group had just experienced its inability both to hold and to contain emotions that were being experienced as potentially destructive. This force, which appears to drive towards belonging on both the group- and member-level as it tries to increase the attractiveness of the group to its members, can, thus, also be classified as a pro-group force.

- i) This force towards reasserting the value of membership to this group is then further manifested by the facilitator's reaching out to those members who had remained quiet. This role of the facilitator can be seen as trying to facilitate the sense of being part of something worthwhile by initiating the process of making sure that everyone still feels part of the group. On the group-level, this force can be seen as driving towards belonging as the external boundary of the group is emphasised and, on the member-level, the force can also be seen as driving towards belonging as the group indicates to Erna that it wants her to be a part of the group again.
- j) The behaviour of Christa and Erna enables us to infer the existence of underlying forces directed at escaping from the group. These forces are working away from belonging (undermining cohesion) on the group-level and away from belonging (escaping), task (avoiding the group's task) and individuality (not willing to become visible), but also towards individuality (self-protection), on the member-level.

#### 6.4.9.5 Summary of forces in section 7

**Table 6.23: Summary of the forces in section 7**

Force nr	Description of apparent force goal	Point of application	Manifested through	Direction of push/pull on membership	Pro- or anti-group
1a (Group-level)	To address difficult issues openly	Membership -as-a-whole	Maggie's contribution and the group's feeling of expectation	Towards task (Open and honest reflection on group process) Towards individuality (Individual becoming visible) Towards belonging (Cohesion on deeper level)	Pro-group
1b (Member-level)	To address difficult issues openly	Maggie	Maggie's contribution and the group's feeling of expectation	Towards task (Open and honest reflection on group process) Towards individuality (Taking a risk by becoming vulnerable) Towards belonging (Inviting honest interpersonal feedback)	Pro-group
2a (Group-level)	To increase sense of togetherness and mutual care and respect	Membership -as-a-whole	The way in which Maggie approached the issue	Towards belonging (Creating a sense of mutual respect and tenderness)	Pro-group
2b (Member-level)	To increase sense of togetherness and mutual care and respect	Maggie	The way in which Maggie approached the issue	Towards belonging (A soft and inviting approach to fellow member)	Pro-group



3a (Group-level)	Judgement (To kill off fellow group members)	Membership -as-a-whole	Various manifestations such as stereotype sub-grouping	Away from belonging (Fragmenting the group) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible) Away from task (Avoiding being honest)	Anti-group
3b (Member-level)	Judgement (To kill off fellow group members)	Various members	Various manifestations such as stereotype subgrouping Individual isolation	Towards belonging (Stereotype subgrouping) Away from task (Avoiding being honest) Away from individuality (Not taking a stand out there) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group
4a (Group-level)	To shy away from deep level honesty	Membership -as-a-whole	Shelly's refusal to be honest	Away from task (Avoiding a deeper exploration) Away from belonging (Resisting cohesion on a deeper level) Away from individuality (Making it even more difficult for others to become visible))	Anti-group
4b (Member-level)	To shy away from deep level honesty	Shelly	Shelly's refusal to be honest	Away from task (Avoiding being honest) Away from belonging (Not reciprocating the honesty shown) Away from individuality (Not taking a stand out there) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group
5a (Group-level)	To avoid being a part of this group (Destroy the group)	Membership -as-a-whole	Debbie and Francis subgroup	Away from belonging (Fragmenting the group) Away from individuality (Individuals becoming invisible) Away from task (Avoiding being honest)	Anti-group
5b (Member-level)	To avoid being part of this group (Destroy the group)	Debbie and Francis	Debbie and Francis subgroup	Towards belonging (Self-protection) Away from task (Avoiding being honest) Away from individuality (Not standing a stand out there as a separate individual)	Anti-group
6a (Group-level)	To avoid deep exploration of difficult issues	Membership -as-a-whole	Joshua and Debbie's academic reflection on judgement	Away from task (Avoiding exploring on the personal/affective level) Towards task (Trying to understand judgement)	Pro-group
6b (Member-level)	To avoid deep exploration of difficult issues	Joshua and Debbie	Joshua and Debbie's academic reflection on judgement	Away from task (Avoiding exploring on the personal/affective level) Towards task (Trying to understand judgement)	Pro-group
7a (Group-level)	To create a sense of togetherness and optimism	Membership -as-a-whole	Maggie's comment about something outside of the group	Towards belonging (Increase attractiveness of group)	Pro-group

7b (Member-level)	To create a sense of togetherness and optimism	Maggie	Maggie's comment about something outside of the group	Towards belonging (Increase attractiveness of group)	Pro-group
8a (Group-level)	To create a sense of togetherness	Membership -as-a-whole	Facilitators checking with Erna if she is still part of the group	Towards belonging (Emphasising external group boundary)	Pro-group
8b (Member-level)	To create a sense of togetherness	Facilitator	Facilitators checking with Erna if she is still part of the group	Towards belonging (Showing that the group needs Erna)	Pro-group
9a (Group-level)	To resist being part of the group	Membership -as-a-whole	Erna and Christa's nonparticipation	Away from belonging (Undermining a sense of cohesion)	Anti-group
9b (Member-level)	To resist being part of the group	Erna and Christa	Erna and Christa's nonparticipation	Away from task (Avoiding taking part in group's work) Away from belonging (Escaping from group) Away from individuality (Avoiding becoming visible) Towards individuality (Self-protection)	Anti-group

#### 6.4.10 Conclusion: Analysis 3

When examining the interplay of forces that were discussed above, it is interesting to note the way in which forces with a pro-group quality and forces with an anti-group quality alternated. This, in turn, corresponds with the broad pattern that was observed in Analysis 2. In the analysis above, pro-group and anti-group forces were defined very broadly and not necessarily strictly according to Nitsun's (1996) formulation. Nevertheless, the alternating pattern seemed to persist consistently throughout session 7. With regard to the pro- and anti-group qualities of the forces it was also interesting how these movements were not limited by the group's development, but played out regardless of whether the group had moved to a higher level of maturity or regressed back to a more immature level. Thus, on any level of development, the interplay between pro- and anti-group forces continued as an alternating pattern and, according to the way in which the specific interplay of two opposing forces worked out or were contained, the group either stayed on its developmental level, progressed or regressed, for the alternation to continue and affect the next movements in the group.

With regards to the different systemic levels on which this analysis focused Agazarian (2000) points out the fact that behaviour within the group carries different meaning when observed from different systemic levels. In the analysis above, where the focus

was on two systemic levels only, namely, the group-as-a-whole and that of the group member, we were definitely able to see this happening. Also, the systemic observation of the behaviours here forced me to interpret the dynamics on a different systemic level to the one that I had first observed. Thus, at times, the different systemic meanings emerged clearly from the way in which I had understood the data but, at other times, it was the theory of different systemic levels that made me take another look in order to discover what a specific behaviour might mean on a different level to that of my initial observation.

Finally, with regards to the theoretical lens – towards and away from belonging, individuality and task: The first observation was that, similar to the process described above pertaining to Agazarian's (2000) systems theory, this theoretical lens also made it possible to find a logical framework within which to observe the data, but it also prompted me to look at the data from various angles in order to test whether there are not meanings in the behaviours that I had overlooked. Indeed, it was possible to see how all the behaviours, and their underlying forces, could be logically and plausibly explained in terms of the theoretical framework. It is interesting to note that we did not take the initial codes that had been allocated as the starting point of Analysis 3 as we had done in Analyses 1 and 2. Instead, we took the raw data, transcript and the video itself, as the departure points and added to this the data from the field notes as well as the personal reflections. The codes that had initially been allocated served only as one of the inputs (together with existing theory) into the discussion and identification of the forces.

After the forces had been identified, we again arrived at an understanding of the triangular interaction of the forces between belonging, individuality and task. However, there was no effort made here to ensure that the inductive code descriptors were exactly the same as the initial codes, as this was not essential for our purposes here. On the contrary, the purpose here was to explore the forces at work only and any urge to give them exact names can be seen as an urge emanating from our positivist selves and, thus, not in line with our understanding at this point that these forces were complex, fluid, not easily identifiable, everchanging and context-specific. Accordingly, the descriptors behind each 'towards and away from' category above should only be seen as descriptors to convey the line of reasoning that had been followed.

## 6.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to analyse and interpret the results from this study in a way that was both in line with the overarching research philosophy and also feasible. In an effort to do this, a funnel-like process was followed in terms of which emphasis was first placed on the group-as-a-whole at the end of its lifetime, then on the group as it moved through the ten sessions, and then on both the group and its members as they moved through one specific session. This way of structuring the analysis made it possible to look at both broad, overall movements within the group as well as specific movements richly situated within context. Most importantly, this analysis and interpretation facilitated the process of exploring the forces within the group as they impacted on the group member, both as an individual member and as a member of the collective.

In the next chapter, the study-as-a-whole will be considered in terms of the various outcomes it achieved and recommendations will be made with regards to the application of the research results as well as areas for future research.

## Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a concise overview of the research and to integrate the various outcomes. In order to do this, the main outcomes of the research will be highlighted in such a way that they provide a foundation for indicating the theoretical and practical implications of the research, as well as suggesting possible areas for furthering this work in future research projects.

### 7.2 The main research outcomes

The purpose of the research was to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group. This overall research purpose required first the development of an appropriate research method and then the application of this method in order to conduct the actual exploration.

#### 7.2.1 A method for exploring the forces involved in being a member of a small group

In terms of developing a research method that would be appropriate for this research, the main outcomes are as follows:

##### *7.2.1.1 Positioning the research in the postfoundational philosophical tradition*

To my knowledge, this is the first study into the psychological processes of small groups that has adopted an overt postfoundational stance. Taking this stance made it possible for the research to embrace both the need to search for that which is common to all groups and the need to take the specific context and nuances of the specific group that we investigated seriously. This resulted in a very valuable intellectual space for the development of the research.



### *7.2.1.2 Adopting (and adapting) a constructivist grounded theory research design*

The fact that a constructivist grounded theory design was followed (as it had been described in the literature) until the point of data analysis where we realised that it would not work, was an important outcome of the research. Through this process of trial and error we not only learnt much about what can and cannot be achieved through an open-ended constructivist grounded theory analysis, but it also caused us to embark on developing the theoretical lens that turned out to be one of the major contributions of the research.

### *7.2.1.3 The theoretical lens*

The theoretical lens (as presented in chapter 4) that was constructed from the existing theory was one of the highlights of the research. This lens postulates the group member within a field of forces operating between the goal region complexes of individuality, belonging and task and helped us to create a coding system for analysing the data. However, as will be discussed later, this theoretical lens has the potential to be applied in various ways.

## 7.2.2 The forces involved in being a member of a small group

Through this research there was much learnt about the forces involved in being a member of a small group.

### *7.2.2.1 The forces can be observed on different systemic levels*

Agazarian's (2000) notion that it is possible for the group and its dynamic components to be observed on different systemic levels was also found to be the case in this research. In particular this emerged from Analysis 1 in the previous chapter where all the codes over all ten sessions were clustered together according to the inherent meanings they carried. One of the interesting outcomes emerging from that clustering process was how the behaviourcodes could clearly be grouped according to the systemic levels to which they belonged.

### *7.2.2.2 A force has different meanings on different systemic levels*

Not only was it possible to observe a specific behaviour and, by inference, also its underlying forces, as playing out on different systemic levels, but it was also possible to see how that behaviour, and its corresponding set of underlying forces, had different meanings on the different systemic levels. For instance, with regard to the pairing dynamic that was discussed in Analysis 3: on the group-as-a-whole level, the act of pairing up and forming an alliance with a fellow member, amidst a sense of anxiety within the group, may be seen as an act away from belonging as it fragmented the group-as-a-whole into different pairs and subgroups but, on the member-level, it could be seen as an act towards belonging as it signified the need of the individual member to stay connected with someone, albeit with a partner or a subgroup and not with the group-as-a-whole. There were other similar examples and this, of course, also corresponds with Agazarian's theory of the group as a hierarchy of systems in terms of which she uses the example of three-dimensional chess to describe the way in which a move on one board has different meanings on each board (Agazarian & Gantt, 2000).

### *7.2.2.3 The forces can be broadly classified as having either pro-group or anti-group qualities that, in turn, follow an alternating pattern within the group*

The emergence of this pattern came as somewhat of a surprise as there is no theoretical formulation that explicitly describes the group as alternating between acting on forces broadly aimed at either the group's growth or its demise. Of course, there are descriptions in the literature of anti-group forces (Bion, 1961; Nitsun, 1996) and pro-group forces (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000; Bion, 1961; Lewin, 1951) while Bion (1961) also shows a pattern of oscillation between states which may be broadly classified as 'pro-group' or 'anti-group'. Nevertheless, in Analysis 3 of chapter 6 it was surprising that this alternation between anti-group and pro-group forces at work, literally happened in an almost metronomic fashion from one set of speeches to the next. This could, of course, have been a result of the choice of the session, namely, session 7 of 10: had we chosen either session 1 or 2 for the in-depth analysis, we might have found a more one-sided set of forces at work. However, this pattern of alternations did not emerge from Analysis 3 in chapter 6 only. In fact, it first became evident in Analysis 2, where we looked at the group's progression over the ten sessions and observed the group's movements towards and away from development and growth between sessions, also in a more or less alternating fashion.

*7.2.2.4 Apart from having 'pro-group' or anti-group' qualities, the forces within the group impact on the group members in ways that drive their behaviour towards or away from individuality, belonging and task*

This pattern towards and away from belonging, individuality and task was not merely a theoretical formulation into which the observation of the data was 'forced'. As soon as we started with the coding process, we realised that it was, in fact, possible to code all the behaviours within the group according to this pattern without having to force anything. This natural fit between the data and the theoretical framework strengthened the belief that the forces involved in being a group member can, indeed, be seen as operating between the three polarities of individuality, belonging and task. Furthermore, in Analysis 3 of the previous chapter, it again emerged as a very natural way in which to conceptualise the interplay of forces. With regard to Analysis 3 we started with the data first and still found it fitting and useful to augment our inferences of the way in which the forces operate by describing them along the lines of the theoretical lens. When seen in conjunction with the pro-group and anti-group qualities of the forces involved in being a group member, we are able to see how all group forces, whether working towards the group's development or its demise, impact on the group members by driving them either towards or away from belonging, individuality and task.

*7.2.2.5 The quality of the forces in the group change as the group moves from one developmental level to the next*

This outcome seems to be self-evident from the perspective of group development theorists, but it still is interesting to note how a study, that was not focused on studying, proving or disproving theories of group development, came to a conclusion about the forces operating within the group that supports the notion of the group developing from immaturity to maturity, and not simply oscillating between states of work and non-work or, then, basic assumptions. It was also interesting to note how the two patterns of the group forces that had been discussed thus far, firstly, as alternating between pro- and anti-group and, secondly, as towards or away from belonging, individuality and task, did not change in any observable way as the group became more mature in terms of its ability to develop a structure and to carry out meaningful work. While the pattern of the forces did not change, the quality of both the forces and

their associated behaviours, did change in meaningful ways, as can be seen in Analysis 3 in chapter 6.

*7.2.2.6 One impact of the forces on group members is that the members assume roles within the group*

This realisation is in line with Agazarian's work on group roles and forces as well as with Bion's notion of the individual's valence for taking up specific roles in the group. In this study we were able to see how the taking up of roles within the group, for example, Maggie, as discussed in Analysis 3, is both a function of the forces on the group-as-a-whole level and the forces on the individual member-level. If this realisation is understood in conjunction with what has been learnt in terms of the patterns of the forces within the group, then the forces in the group can be seen as 'recruiting' members to act on their behalf, either towards the group's growth or demise and always along the lines of towards or away from belonging, individuality and task. The member with the greatest valence for responding to a specific force will be selected (or volunteer) for enacting the concomitant behaviour and, if this is repeated over time, an expectation can develop in terms of which certain members will be recruited to enact specific behaviours in accordance with the underlying forces - in other words, establishing a role.

### **7.3 Implications for existing theory**

#### **7.3.1 Group theory**

The implications of this research for group theory can be summarised as follows:

*7.3.1.1 An integrative approach – drawing on different theoretical traditions – is demonstrated as opposed to a loyalist approach – adhering to and being loyal to one theoretical tradition only*

This research has shown that much can be gained from looking beyond the safe enclaves of our intellectual traditions. It also has shown, in common with others in the past, including Agazarian (2000), that it is, indeed, possible to integrate the approaches to group theory that were set in motion by pioneers such as Bion (1961), Foulkes (1975), Agazarian (2000) and Lewin (1951) – and to do so in a coherent and logical way. This integrative way of looking at groups acknowledges that the group is

infinitely complex and that it can only be helpful to look at the group from various theoretical perspectives in order to further our understanding.

In addition, an integrative perspective ensures checks and balances in the process of observing and making sense of group phenomena. While interpreting the group's behaviour from one perspective, one is immediately reminded to check one's interpretation against the way in which another perspective may have interpreted the same behaviour. This not only acts as a safeguard against 'group think' when thinking about groups, but it also serves as a constant, critical disruption in one's thinking about groups, thus forcing one to remain critically honest and alert.

#### *7.3.1.2 A coherent framework for understanding the forces involved in being a group member is proposed*

Following on the point made above, another important theoretical contribution is the fact that a theoretical framework was proposed to fill an important gap in the literature. Until now, no theoretical framework has existed which focused specifically on what it means, and takes, to be a member of a group. Accordingly, this research has shifted the focus to the group member and away from the group leader, who is so often favoured when it comes to research attention. Also, as mentioned above, this framework is founded upon a coherent integration of several prominent theoretical traditions in conjunction with a rigorous, empirical study.

#### *7.3.1.3 The theoretical framework mentioned above is, in essence, a 'field theory', which has important implications*

The fact that the theoretical framework describes the relationships and tensions between various elements means that it can be applied to, and tested in, a variety of settings. It also means that it can be used to generate innumerable hypotheses regarding group behaviour that can then be empirically tested.

#### *7.3.1.4 Our understanding of forces within the group is furthered*

The previous section highlighted the main outcomes of the research with regards to what we have learnt about the forces involved in being a group member and the way in which these forces operate. While some of these outcomes confirmed the work of other scholars, others comprise unique contributions.

### 7.3.2 Qualitative research methodology

This research also made important contributions to qualitative research methodology, especially in the field of group process research.

#### *7.3.2.1 Implications for research philosophy*

The fact that this research demonstrated the way in which a postfoundational research philosophy can be applied to the research of group process can, potentially, have great value in the field of group research. The main reason for this is the space that a postfoundational stance opens up between wanting to acquire precise and exact knowledge about group process on the one hand, and wanting to be interpretative and contextual on the other. Much of the research that attempts to study group process gravitates to one of the two extremes, with the result that potential knowledge and meaning may be lost.

#### *7.3.2.2 Implications for research design*

There are two major implications of this research study in terms of research design. Firstly, with regard to constructivist grounded theory research, important lessons were learnt about applying it to group process research. A group is a moving target and it is essential that the research design, especially with regard to data analysis, take this into account. In addition, it is not possible to blindly apply the traditional grounded theory way of gathering data about a specific, static issue or problem and then analysing that data by means of a clustering process to studying group process, as a group changes over time. The way in which this was dealt within this research study was to break up the data into small segments and then analyse the data segment by segment in order to allow for the movements over time to become visible. Also, as a result of the fact that data emanating from the group process, for example, video and transcripts, carry so much meaning on so many different levels, it is impossible or, at least, not feasible, to maintain a fully open-ended grounded theory approach to data analysis. In other words, a theoretical framework is needed to focus the observation and analysis.

The second major implication for research design with regard to group process is, of course, the theoretical framework itself, which can be applied as an instrument for data

analysis in various group process research studies. The fact that, as discussed above, the theoretical framework is a 'field theory' means that it can be applied to a variety of research questions. These research questions will be pointed out below where the possibilities for future research are discussed.

#### **7.4 Suggestions for the application of the research outcomes**

The way in which the forces involved in being a group member have come to be understood in this research study can be applied in a variety of ways.

Firstly, as mentioned above, researchers can use this framework as a tool to explore various aspects of group life.

Secondly, consultants and team leaders can use this framework as a diagnostic or intervention tool in order to gain insights into the underlying processes in their groups. All team members can be asked to list those aspects of being a member of their team that draw or push them either towards or away from a sense of belonging to the group, a sense of being unique and separate individuals, and the group's task. The group can then reflect on this information in order to come to an understanding of its own process and to devise ways in which to improve its functioning. Of course, there can be many variations of this, for example, asking the group members to draw pictures depicting how they perceive their relation to belonging, individuality or task or carrying out a sculpting exercise in terms of which the group members position themselves in the space between the three polarities and discuss the reasons, implications and possible solutions with regards to where they find themselves in the group.

Thirdly, team leaders can use the theoretical framework as a tool for reflection on the behaviours that they observe within the group. By observing group behaviour through this framework, hypotheses can be generated regarding what might be happening in the group and these hypotheses can then be tested, talked through and adapted.

Finally, this theoretical framework can also be applied very effectively as a self-reflection tool with regard to the individual's own membership within a group. This may prove to be a very helpful way for group members to make decisions about their membership and to consider ways in which they can be more effective as members of the groups to which they belong.

## 7.5 Suggestions for future research

There is almost no end to the research possibilities that can flow from this research. These include the following:

- a) The same research process can be repeated for studying other groups in order to ascertain whether the same patterns of forces emerge. This can be done in a number of ways. Firstly, a second group of researchers can analyse the same group and be asked to code one session purely inductively, without having seen the theoretical framework, and then compare the code categories that emerge with the categories created by the theoretical framework. Secondly, the framework can be applied to other training groups and also to other types of groups in order to ascertain which patterns of forces emerge and, in this way, improve our understanding of the forces involved in being group member.
- b) The theoretical framework could also be applied to study specific questions with regard to the forces that impact on group members. For example: What are the forces involved in taking risks in small groups? In order to answer this research question, the same data which was used for this study can be used, and specific instances in which members had to take action in the face of risk can be identified. These instances can then be analysed in terms of the forces involved, as per the theoretical framework, in order to find out whether there are distinguishable patterns that emerge in terms of pro- and anti-group forces towards and/or away from belonging, individuality and task on different systemic levels. Another research example may involve exploring the impact of facilitator interventions on the underlying forces in the group. Again the same, or different, data can be used and each instance of facilitator intervention analysed in terms of the theoretical framework in order to discover which patterns, with regard to the interplay of forces, emerge.
- c) Specific hypotheses regarding the theoretical framework can also be formulated and tested. For example, according to the framework a member should move 'towards task' if the forces away from task are weakened and all other forces stay the same. In an experimental design this situation could be established and the hypothesis tested. Despite the fact that it would not be easy to set up experiments such as these, it is theoretically possible to set and test hypotheses for every possible movement in the field of forces.
- d) Case study research can be conducted within an organisational setting where specific interventions aimed at strengthening specific forces, for example,



forces towards belonging, can be launched in order to study the impact of such interventions in a real-life case scenario.

- e) A narrative study in which group members reflect on their own membership – using the framework to highlight specific aspects of their membership on which to reflect – can provide valuable insights with regard to the way in which the forces within the group are experienced and narrated by its members.
- f) Similarly, an action research study can be conducted with a group using this framework to reflect on their own process, devise action steps to take and then to reflect on the impact of the actions taken. Such a study would help us both to understand the way in which a group and its members attempt to take ownership of their dynamic processes, and also to understand the difficulties involved in applying the framework within an organisational setting.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

This research study set out to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group. In order to do this, a research method had to be developed. By creating a theoretical lens through which to conduct the data analysis, a constructivist grounded theory design was adapted for the purposes of the research and was effectively applied to explore the forces involved in being a member of a small group. This research not only provided greater insights into the dynamic forces within the group, but it also helped us to think through important aspects regarding research into group processes. In addition, the theoretical framework that emerged from the research has definite possibilities for further application, both in terms of practice and future research.

## Reflection

It feels surreal, to say the least: typing up this final reflection, watching the snow covering Chicago in her silence. Yet this feeling is also one of completeness – the moment of closing a circle. A circle that started five years ago and which, like all good hand-drawn circles, is not perfect. Still, in these final few pages, I would like to invite you to accompany me on one last task: to take a few steps back in order to reflect on this research.

I must admit that there have been times when I not only doubted my ability to complete this dissertation, but also doubted my topic itself. “So what?”, I would ask. This question circled me like a hungry vulture. *So what* if we understood the forces involved in being a group member? What is the use, in the bigger scheme of things, of all the time and energy that I am putting into this? This worry was definitely worse than worrying about whether I was up to it, or worrying whether or not my method would actually deliver meaningful results. It was a worry that tore away at the very reason for my doing the research. I would listen to the news and to stories about mining rights for new mines in the most pristine parts of South Africa, and wonder: shouldn't I rather try to be involved in things like environmental affairs? Or I would walk down an icy Chicago street and see a homeless man begging for food and wonder: how will all my time and energy help this man? Is it worth it to do all of this?

Whenever I had doubts like these, I reminded myself of the fact that we are all members of groups all of the time. To me this knowledge served as the core of my motivation as I progressed with my research. It helped me keep in mind that if we were better able to reflect on how we are being members of the groups we belong to, then maybe we would also be better able to take responsibility for how we take up our roles as members. I was recently reminded of this at a Listening Post event that was held in Evanston, just North of Chicago. The event was convened by myself and another board member of the Chicago Centre for the Study of Groups and Organisations (CCSGO), an affiliate of the A.K. Rice Institute, as part of a global initiative of OPUS

(Organisation for the Promotion and Understanding of Society) in terms of which groups of ten to fifteen people gathered around the world to reflect on the topic: “The world at the dawn of 2012”. The purpose of each group was to come up with hypotheses regarding the dynamics underlying society at this point in time. Some of the hypotheses from our group were as follows:

- Due to the rapidity of change, communities cannot hold boundaries or roles and so we are struggling to become a “we”, resulting in society becoming increasingly fragmented in spite of our deep need for community and connection;
- Because of the increased occurrences of huge natural disasters, coupled with our knowledge that we have not been able to solve the big problems of our times (for instance, overpopulation), we feel impotent and powerless and we project these feelings onto the leaders and blame them for not being able to rescue us from this situation;
- The overwhelming availability of information and the rapid rate of change contribute to an increasingly complex world where members of society experience a lack of clarity. This leads to a general feeling of being overwhelmed and in turn resorting to strategies of polarization in order to retain some sense of coherence and control.

These threads of thinking about society today underlined the fact that we are usually much quicker to blame the leaders when things go wrong than we are willing to take a critical stance towards ourselves and the way in which we are being members. I also came under the acute impression of the importance for us, today, to each ask ourselves: How am I being a member of this group? Whether ‘this group’ refers to my local school board, my workplace or my community at large doesn’t matter. What does matter is the fact that, until we are able to each take responsibility for our own actions as members, we cannot continue shifting the blame onto the leaders. Of course this line of thinking is not new: it seems to be exactly what Bion (1961) referred to when he distinguished between the basic assumption state of dependency and the work group. What this research emphasized, however, is the importance of asking ourselves: How are we being members? To have this question highlighted at a time like this is, to me, enough confirmation that this research was worth all the time and effort.

Of course the research tried to move beyond this central question by developing a framework according to which we can structure the way in which we reflect upon our membership. It is my firm belief that - given the limitations inherent to any research project that tries to develop theory about something as complex as groups of human

beings – this research managed to put a simple framework on the table that has the ability to facilitate such reflection. What I like about the triangular nature of the framework is that it moves us out of the linear thinking that so often characterises our conceptualisations of belonging vs. individuality, social vs. personal or work vs. non-work. This enables us to look at infinitely complex processes through a lens that intuitively makes sense whilst being grounded both in empirical data and in established group literature. In workshops and lectures to date I have become increasingly convinced of the potential of this framework to be used for purposes of self-reflection regarding one's own membership, as well for groups to assess themselves in terms of the forces experienced by their members either towards or away from belonging, individuality or task. This realisation motivates me to continue this research in order to test, refine and further develop this framework and its application possibilities.

Finally, much credit has to go to Professor Johan Basson, my research supervisor. He encouraged me to make the research my own while others advised me to get it over and done with as soon as possible. I think he understood that at a deeper level this was much more to me than the letters "PhD" behind my name. The containing space that he created for me to present and play with my ideas allowed both the research and myself to grow. I understand now that for me he became a 'container' that could hold my ideas even though he didn't always agree with them. It is my desire to keep the educational torch that he lit in me burning as I continue to fulfil various teaching and research roles into the future. There is something about higher education that gets lost if we only focus on efficiency, research publications, profits and student satisfaction. Sometimes the greatest learning happens when students are pushed to confront the uncomfortable questions that they would rather avoid. Professor Basson showed me the value of taking education and research seriously, even when it doesn't seem to make sense through the lenses of profit or ambitious publication outputs.

In closing, this is my wish: that I can use what I have learned here to continuously reflect on how I am being a member of the various groups within which I stand, and that others can be inspired to do the same.

Thank you for accompanying me on this journey,

Jean Cooper

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## **Appendix A**

### **Study guide and letters to the students**



**MHB 801: I/O Psychology Practice  
(Working with groups)**



## 1. Introduction and welcome

Dear student, welcome to this module. This module (I/O Psychology Practice: Working with groups) focuses on how to identify, understand and work with group phenomena in organisational contexts. It is different to what you have experienced before and the group phenomena you will work with is also on a different level to what you have been exposed to thus far in your academic career.

Please read this study guide carefully. In addition to the study guide, you will also receive three study letters to which I want to draw your attention.

- **Study letter 1** is attached to this study guide and provides important information on the main input for this module, the group experience;
- **Study letter 2** will be given to you after your group experience and will contain the information you will need to complete your first assignment, the personal reflection;
- **Study letter 3** will be given to you after the theory-and-application workshop on 19 September 2009 and will contain the information needed to complete the second and final assignment.

## 2. Significance of this module

This module takes a specific focus on the practical application of the Industrial and Organisational Psychology field. The module's main aim flows from the fact that an understanding of complex group dynamics is imperative for effective consultation and intervention in practice. Such an understanding, however, cannot be taught without a strong focus on first-hand experience, reflection and application. This module thus follows a unique "inside-out" approach that combines the experience of being part of a group with theory on groups as well as application-possibilities.

## 3. Educational approach

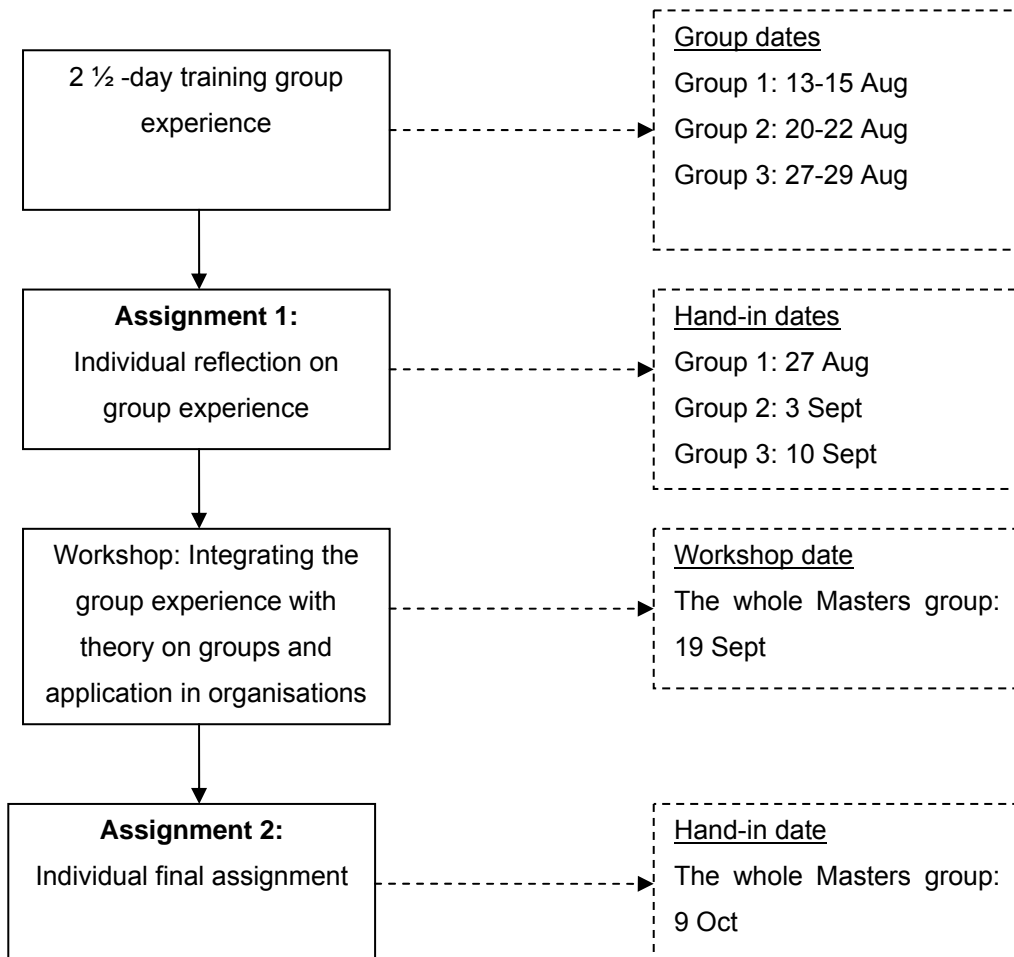
The approach followed for this module is in line with what is expected from students at Masters level. We will only provide broad guidelines and parameters within which it will be the students' responsibility to construct value. This module comprises an experiential, theoretical and application component. It will require of students to take part in a group, reflect on the group, integrate your experience with theory and apply it to organisational practice.



#### 4. Contact information

	Name	Room no.	Contact information
<b>Masters Programme manager</b>	Prof JS Basson	E&B 3-77	Tel : 420 3431 johan.basson@up.ac.za
<b>Lecturer</b>	Mr JH Cooper	E&B 3-81	Tel : 420 3846 jean.cooper@up.ac.za
<b>Secretary</b>	Mrs C Smith	E&B 3-77	Tel: 420 3108 christa.smith@up.ac.za

#### 5. Module map



## 6. Study Units

9

### I/O PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE: STUDY UNIT 1: WORKING WITH GROUPS

#### 6.1. Overall aim

To provide the student with the opportunity to explore and understand the dynamics in groups and organisations in order to be able to make interpretations and intervene as part of organisational consulting practice.

#### 6.2. Learning outcomes

- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on the processes and behavioural dynamics in a training group;
- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on own behaviour and experiences in a training group;
- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to integrate the first-hand experiences of group processes and the experiences of self-in-group with relevant theory;
- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to transfer this integration of group experience with group theory to contemporary organizational contexts.

#### 6.3. Overall description

The focus of this module is to give you a deeper understanding of groups and of yourself in the context of being a group member. It consists of an experiential component which is followed by a theoretical component. It concludes with exploring various application-scenarios and integrating the experience and theory with application possibilities.

#### 6.4. The 2 ½ -day training group experience

This will provide an experience of being a participant in a group. The main focus will be training with an added possibility for learning about your own interactions in a group. This should be a unique training experience that makes this course different from most other courses that you have experienced so far. The group will be facilitated by Mr. Greyling Viljoen (Clin Psych, private practice) and Prof. Drikus Kriek (Clin



Psych, UNISA School for Business Leadership). The facilitators will be assisted by the course leader, Mr. Jean Cooper (Ind Psych) with regards to the observation of and reflection on the group. More information regarding the group experience and logistical arrangements is given in your first study letter (attached to this study guide).

#### **6.5. Assignment 1: Individual reflection on group experience**

You will be required do reflect on your group experience. This reflection needs to be handed in two weeks after your group session, as indicated in the module map (number 5) above. More detail regarding what is required will be given in your second study letter at the end of your group experience. This reflection will be done individually but will not count towards your module mark. However, failure to do the reflection will lead to you being penalized on your final mark.

#### **6.6. Concluding workshop: Integrating the group experience with theory and practice**

This workshop will take place on 19 September 2009 in EB 2-78, from 08:30 - 16:00. The purpose of this workshop is to, as a group, discuss and explore various theoretical conceptualizations of groups, to link this with your first-hand group experience and to understand how this applies to organisations.

#### **6.7. Assignment 2: Individual final assignment**

You will be required to analyze and integrate your group experience with group theory within the context of an organisation. This assignment needs to be handed in on 9 October 2009. More detail regarding what is required will be given in your third study letter to be handed to you after the concluding workshop on 19 September. This assignment will be done individually and will count 100% of the total module mark.

#### **6.8. Prescribed reference work**

Ringer, T.M. 2002, *Group action : the dynamics of groups in therapeutic, educational, and corporate settings*, Jessica Kingsley, London ; Philadelphia.

I encourage you to use this book as primary guideline and to incorporate other relevant works.

**Study letter 1: The group experience**

17 July 2009

Dear Masters' student

These 2 ½ days will provide an experience of being a participant in a group. The purpose of the group is to learn about how groups function by studying your own functioning as a group. The main focus will be training (learning about groups) with an added possibility for learning about your own interactions in a group. This will and should be a unique experience that makes this course different from most other courses that you have experienced so far.

When the group starts, the facilitators will not introduce a topic or content but instead will allow the group to take its own course. After the group has progressed for a while (i.e. a day) we will take a break from the group and reflect on what has happened in the group. We will also do this at the end of the 2 ½ days. The purpose of these reflection times is that we will capture and make sense of the experience and of what is happening in the group. These 2 ½ days usually take a fair amount of energy so expect to be tired at the end of each day.

The group will run over a Thursday evening and a whole Friday and Saturday in room EMS 2-84. Please refer to the group and date allocation below. On the Thursday evening we will arrive and settle in between 17:30 and 17:50 and start at 18:00. On the Friday and Saturday we will arrive and settle in between 08:00 and 08:20 and start at 08:30. As traffic into Pretoria can be very busy, please make sure that you allow yourself enough time so that we can start on time. Depending on how the group progresses, we will finish between 21:00 and 22:00 on Thursday and between 17:00 and 18:00 on Friday and Saturday, so keep your own diaries and travel arrangements flexible.

This 2 ½ day group experience will form the main input into this module. You will, however, only form part of the training group for 2 ½ days, after which it will disband. Although you will still participate in the remaining concluding (theory and practice) workshop as part of this module, this will be in the capacity of the entire Master's class, and not as a continuation of the training groups.

Should any personal or inter-personal discomfort exist after the 2 ½ days, both the facilitators and myself will be available to assist and advise you. You don't need to prepare anything for the group experience, but bring a pen and paper with for personal notes. This way of experiencing and learning about groups is very exciting. We hope that you are looking forward towards it as much as we do.

Best wishes

Jean Cooper

## THE FACILITATION AND REFLECTION TEAM

### Course leader

**Jean Cooper**, MCom (Ind Psych), MPhil

Industrial Psychologist, Registered with HPCSA, Member: ISPSO (International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations), Member: (SIOPSA) Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa, Team and Organisation Development Consultant.

### Group facilitators

**Greyling Viljoen**, MA (Clin.Psych)

Psychologist in private clinical and sport psychology practice, Contracted to the High Performance Centre (hpc) at UP in performance psychology; group facilitator; part-time lecturer in group and team dynamics.

**Drikus Kriek**, DD, MA (Clin Psych), MBA

Clinical Psychologist, Registered with HPCSA, Teambuilding Consultant, Adventure Therapy and Organisation Development Specialist, Member of Board of International Adventure Therapy Conference.

## GROUP ALLOCATION

<b>Group 1 13 - 15 Aug 2009</b>	<b>Group 2 20 - 22 Aug 2009</b>	<b>Group 3: 27 - 29 Aug 2009</b>
Name Surname	Name Surname	Name Surname
Name Surname	Name Surname	Name Surname
Name Surname	Name Surname	Name Surname
Name Surname	Name Surname	Name Surname
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Name Surname	Name Surname	Name Surname
Name Surname	Name Surname	Name Surname
Name Surname	Name Surname	Name Surname

## PROGRAMME

<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
Start: 17:30 for 18:00	Start: 8:00 for 8:30	Start: 8:00 for 8:30
End: Between 21:00 & 22:00	End: Between 17:00 & 18:00	End: Between 17:00 & 18:00

29 August 2009

## **Study letter 2: Guidelines for assignment 1**

### Assignment 1: Personal reflection

This assignment asks of you to write a critical reflection on the group experience. Specifically reflect on the following:

- a) Your own experience of becoming/being a member of the group (especially on a psychological level)
  - o What made it easier for you to join the group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations);
  - o What made it difficult for you to join the group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations);
  - o How did you experience being a member of this group? (reflect on specific incidents or situations).
- b) Significant moments in the group for the group-as-a-whole
  - o Reflect on one or two specific moments in the group that, according to you, were especially significant for the group as it moved through the 2 ½ days.

### What standard of work is required?

It is important to be able to critically reflect on one's experiences in groups. This assignment is there to help you develop this skill before you move on to the final assignment. The better the quality and depth of this reflection, the more you will be able to compose a good quality final assignment for assessment purposes. I will therefore provide feedback on this assignment in order to help you develop your reflexive ability. If your reflection is not up to standard, you will be asked to re-submit before being allowed to move on to the final assignment. A critical reflection of good quality is one that explores the questions for reflection in depth and on various levels; uses evidence, examples and anecdotes from the group to substantiate claims and enrich your descriptions (thus being specific in stead of making general statements) and takes a critical and self-critical stance.

### Structure, format and due date

Between 10 and 15 pages in length. Submit an electronic copy (to [jean.cooper@up.ac.za](mailto:jean.cooper@up.ac.za)) before or on 10 September 2009. Referencing is not required as this is only a personal reflection and you are not required to consult literature at this stage.

I trust that you will make this a meaningful exercise.

Best regards

Jean Cooper

19 September 2009

### **Study letter 3: Guidelines for assignment 2**

#### Assignment 2: Individual final assignment

#### Learning outcomes (as per the study guide)

This assignment requires you to:

- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to integrate the first-hand experiences of group processes and the experiences of self-in-group with relevant theory;
- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to transfer this integration of group experience with group theory to contemporary organizational contexts.

#### Assignment

1. Do an in-depth study of the theoretical material in order to further understand the theoretical concepts discussed in class. Make use of the following material:
  - a. Class notes: Overview of the conceptual structure of small groups by Greyling Viljoen;
  - b. Class notes: Group phenomena in work teams by Jean Cooper;
  - c. Book: Group Action (Ringer 2002);
  - d. Any other material you deem appropriate to the assignment (i.e. furthering your understanding of the concepts discussed in class on 19 September 2009).
2. Use your understanding of the theoretical concepts discussed in class to describe and interpret any organisational scenario / case / dilemma where you are (or have been) involved. This interpretation should display your ability to use your theoretical knowledge to make sense of (interpret) group processes in an organisational context.
3. In your description and analysis of the real-life organisational scenario, you are encouraged to illuminate the theoretical concepts not only from the literature, but also from your training group experience. And then, after illuminating the concepts, apply the concepts to the organisational context.

#### Structure

Between 15 and 20 pages in length. Appropriate referencing is required.

#### Hand-in date

9 October 2009 in electronic format (MS Word attachment via email to Mrs Christa Smit) as well as hard copy. The hard copy must also be handed in at Mrs Smit.

All the best, and please contact me should there be any questions

Jean Cooper

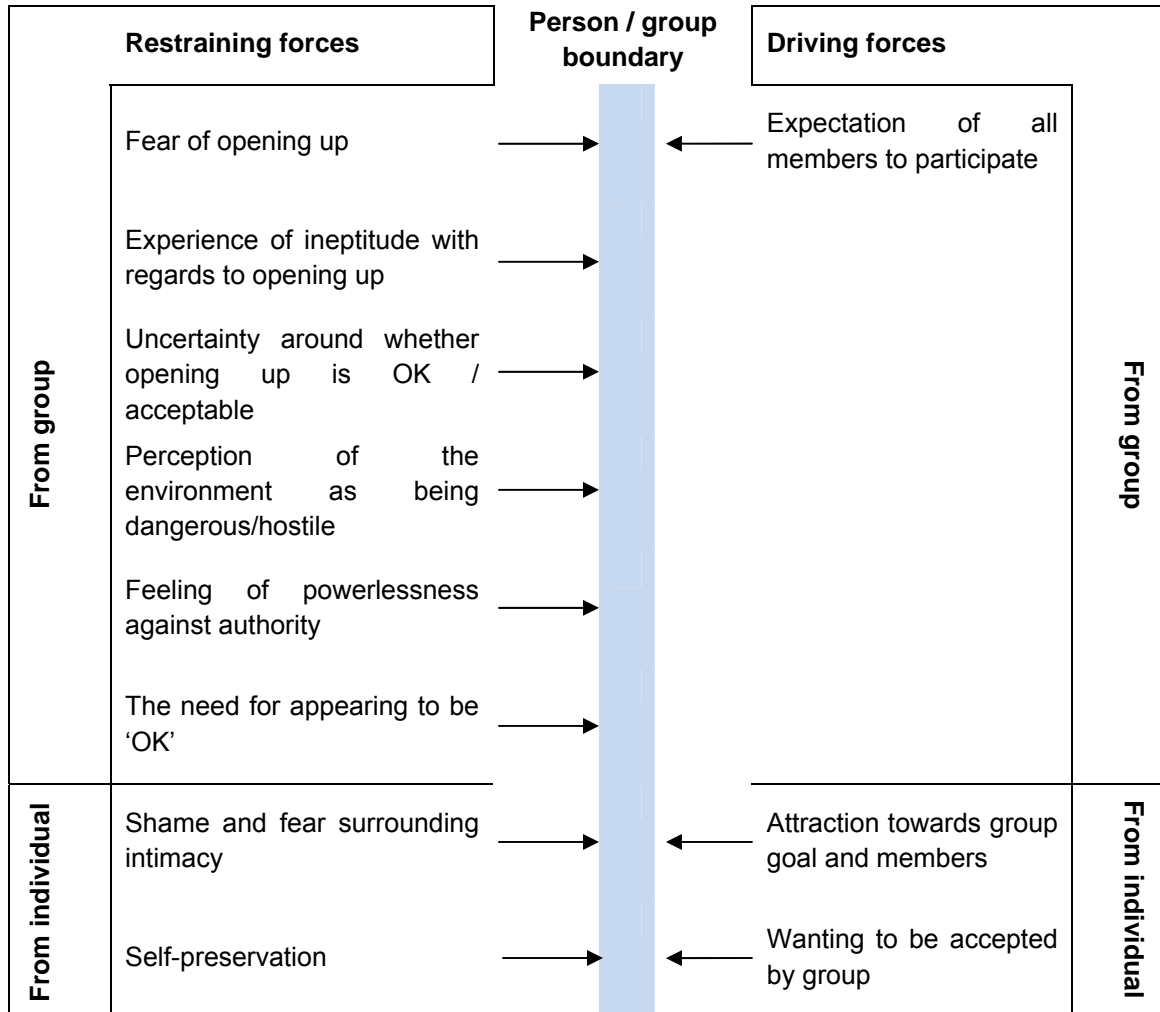
## **Appendix B**

### **Preliminary attempt at data analysis**

## FIRST PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 1. Outcome of the analysis

Figure 1: The driving and restraining forces involved in the process of becoming a member of a small group



### 2. Introduction for Prof Basson:

My analytic process up to now has been as follows: I first looked at the main underlying group-level themes. I did this by coding and creating families. These codes and families all focus on the systemic level of the group-as-a-whole and forms the background for the next step in the analysis. The next step was to focus on specific communication transactions. Here the focus shifts from the group-as-a-whole to the boundary between the person and the group. I have started with MAGGIE. In session 1 there were 4 communication transactions between her and the group. The picture above is the result of analyzing these 4 transactions against the

backdrop of the group-as-a-whole. For each of the transactions I asked the following questions in order to arrive at the forces underlying the transaction:

- Is this a dependent, independent or interdependent communication transaction (see picture below)? In other words, was MAGGIE as well the group's boundaries open for information from the other party and the subsequent possible change?
- If the party (either MAGGIE or the group) changed or showed the potential for change after or during the transaction, the boundary was open. If no change was effected or if change was resisted, chances are the boundary was closed.
- I would then ask: Why? i.e. why was MAGGIE's boundary open? Why was the group's boundary closed? Why did MAGGIE's boundary change from open to closed? Or why the group's boundary changed from closed to open? I would here come up with conjectures that are plausible when viewed against the backdrop of what was happening in the group.
- I would also ask: What made it easier for the boundary to be open? What made it more difficult for the boundary to open? There are always driving and restraining forces at work simultaneously.
- Then I would come up with possible forces (derived both from my interpretation of the transaction dynamics as well as my understanding of what was going on in the group-as-a-whole) which really are hypotheses/conjectures i.e. plausible conclusions based on the data and theory.
- My hope is that, as I progress through the other group members and the other group sessions, I will be able to put these interactional forces and group-level themes next to one another and find congruency between them. If there is no congruency between an identified force and the group themes and/or the other forces identified through the analyses of the other interactions, then I probably have the identified group themes or forces wrong.
- I also resisted the first analyses to be too deep. I would thus, at this stage, rather put the force down as "Shame and fear surrounding intimacy" as it came from the data, than putting it down as "Defence against being destroyed by the mother's love" as in psychoanalytic language. I can always later take the discussion of the results to the deeper level, but at this stage I might miss the finer nuances if I immediately go to the core forces of sex and death...;-)

O yes, my assumption is that a group member is someone who experiences himself, and who is experienced by the group, as being a member of the group. In boundary-language: if the individual's boundary is open for input from the group, and if his/her input is accepted by the group, then the individual can be regarded as a member of the group. There are, however, no fixed and final membership state as membership develops as the group develops. The forces we focus on are forces that either make the person/group boundaries more permeable or more rigid.

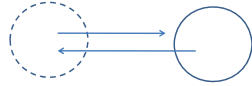
I will now first show schematic representations of the types of cross-boundary transactions as described by Agazarian and then continue my discussion of these specific results:





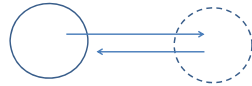
### Dependent transaction

- Individual boundary open for input from group (change is possible)
- Group boundary closed for input from individual (no change possible)



### Independent transaction

- Individual boundary closed for input from group (no change possible)
- Group boundary open for input from individual (change is possible)



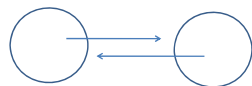
### Interdependent transaction

- Individual boundary open for input from group (change is possible)
- Group boundary open for input from individual (change is possible)



### Mutually exclusive transaction

- Individual boundary closed for input from group (no change is possible)
- Group boundary closed for input from individual (no change is possible)



The following section is the Atlas output of all the code families on the group-as-a-whole level. I am not discussing them now, I will discuss them in the thesis. But for now, see that it shows the family name, the codes, the number of codes as well as the number of quotations. I did not work strictly on the quantity of occurrences. Sometimes I selected 20+ lines of text where the phrase “sexual harassment” occurs 15 times but I only coded it once as “sexual harassment”. The reason is that with the type of agenda-less group discussion, the content is unconsciously chosen from the underlying group process. A specific word at a specific time (as with a

Freudian slip) could mean more than a 100 words in a neatly organized string of speech. I looked at the content, the communication patterns and the mood in the group to come up with the themes (families).

3. Code Families: Group-as-a-whole level (Backdrop against which the analysis is done)

These are themes derived from 1) the content that the group discussed through free association, 2) patterns that started to emerge on the group-as-a-whole level as well as the mood in the group. These themes form the backdrop against which the subsequent analysis of driving and restraining forces is done.

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**a. Code Family: Ambiguity towards the group and its leaders**

Created: 06/08/2010 09:47:04 AM (Super)

Codes (2): [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [Sensing tensions and intentions]

Quotation(s): 7

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**b. Code Family: Competition for selective (sexual) attention by men in positions of authority**

Created: 06/07/2010 01:04:41 PM (Super)

Codes (13): [Content topic: Attractive candidates getting better attention] [Content topic: Being attractive vs not] [Content topic: Jealousy between women] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [Pattern: trying to prevent the ERNA show] [Pattern: ERNA Juggling Show] [Pattern: jealousy between the females] [Pattern: DEBBIE challenging the ERNA show] [Pattern: PAM: trying to take it away from ERNA] [Pattern: LINDA: Try to link to MAGGIE via story of her own] [Pattern: Pairs (PAM and CHRISTA)] [Pattern: trying to prevent the ERNA show] [Sensing tensions and intentions]

Quotation(s): 22

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**c. Code Family: Do not force us!**

Created: 06/08/2010 09:28:15 AM (Super)

Codes (6): [Content topic: Being forced to talk] [Content topic: Cultural integration shouldn't be forced] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older married men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment by older men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older men is experienced by many members of the masters group]

Quotation(s): 14

---

**d. Code Family: Fight**

Created: 06/08/2010 09:57:05 AM (Super)

Codes (6): [Content topic: Being forced to talk] [Content topic: Cultural integration shouldn't be forced] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older married men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment by older men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older men is

experienced by many members of the masters group]

Quotation(s): 14

---

**e. Code Family: Fighting the harassing authority figures**

Created: 06/08/2010 09:16:29 AM (Super)

Codes (4): [Content topic: Fighting the harassers] [Content topic: How do I draw up the boundaries here and for future interaction] [Content topic: It's difficult to stand up against this authority figure] [Content topic: Stand up against the older manager]

Quotation(s): 5

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**f. Code Family: Fleeing: from the group and from authority figures**

Created: 06/08/2010 09:20:25 AM (Super)

Codes (13): [Content topic: Abstinence] [Content topic: Christian fellowship outside] [Content topic: Going to Mauritius] [Content topic: Joke on ?] [Intervention: bringing it back to MAGGIE] [Intervention: Keeping it with MAGGIE] [Intervention: Referring to her not feeling understood] [Intervention: The group isn't listening to each other] [Intervention: trying to bring it here and now] [Intervention: What can be sensed here and now?] [Pattern: JOSHUA: taking it away from what can be sensed here] [Pattern: Fleeing out of the room] [Pattern: Taking it away from MAGGIE]

Quotation(s): 11

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**g. Code Family: Forming alliances (against what?)**

Created: 06/08/2010 09:24:06 AM (Super)

Codes (12): [Content topic: Diversity assignment: HIV Uganda South Africa] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Cultural Diversity] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Generations Diversity] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Homosexuality and the glass ceiling] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Introversion in the workplace] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Religion] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Work Permits] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Xenophobia] [Pattern: PAM: trying to take it away from ERNA] [Pattern: LINDA: Try to link to MAGGIE via story of her own] [Pattern: Pairs (PAM and CHRISTA)] [Pattern: Pairs (pattern)]

Quotation(s): 19

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**h. Code Family: Personal identity**

Created: 06/08/2010 09:30:59 AM (Super)

Codes (8): [Content topic: Being respected for who you are - identity] [Content topic: My name is important to me] [Content topic: Name vs nickname] [Content topic: Nicknames at work] [Content topic: Nicknames that we don't like] [Content topic: Other nicknames] [Content topic: The name my family calls me] [Respect me]

Quotation(s): 15

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**i. Code Family: Similarity vs difference**

Created: 06/08/2010 09:33:57 AM (Super)

Codes (13): [Content topic: Cultural diversity] [Content topic: Cultural integration shouldn't be forced] [Content topic: Cultural stereotyping] [Content topic: Diversity assignment: HIV Uganda South Africa] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Cultural Diversity] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Generations Diversity] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Homosexuality and the glass ceiling] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Introversion in the workplace] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Religion] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Work Permits] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Xenophobia] [Content topic: Residence cultures] [Content topic: We are all the same and we are all different]

Quotation(s): 25

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**j. Code Family: Taking part (in intercourse and in this group) could be exposing, shameful and deadly**

Created: 06/07/2010 02:30:31 PM (Super)

Codes (25): [Content topic: Abstinence] [Content topic: Attraction: OK or not?] [Content topic: Diversity assignment: HIV Uganda South Africa] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Homosexuality and the glass ceiling] [Content topic: If you sleep around you get a bad name] [Content topic: Religion and guidelines for sex] [Content topic: What are the rules of conduct here?] [Here and now comment: Feeling exposed] [Here and now comment: Feeling uncomfortable] [Intervention: bringing it back to MAGGIE] [Intervention: Clarifying for MAGGIE] [Intervention: Clarifying MAGGIE sense of sexual discomfort] [Intervention: Keeping it with MAGGIE] [Intervention: Referring to her not feeling understood] [Intervention: The group isn't listening to each other] [Intervention: trying to bring it here and now] [Intervention: What can be sensed here and now?] [Mood: Anxious] [Mood: Bored] [Mood: Nervousness] [Mood: Uncomfortable] [Pattern: Fleeing out of the room] [MAGGIE: maybe it's my fault] [MAGGIE: maybe it's my fault that I feel exposed] [MAGGIE: Opened my boundary and now exposed cause the group didn't reciprocate]

Quotation(s): 21

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**k. Code Family: Unwelcome / uninvited (sexual) attention from men in positions of authority**

Created: 06/07/2010 02:23:23 PM (Super)

Codes (22): [Content topic: Being disrespected by older men] [Content topic: Being forced to talk] [Content topic: Fighting the harrassors] [Content topic: How do I draw up the boundaries here and for future interaction] [Content topic: It's difficult to stand up against this authority fogure] [Content topic: Religion and guidelines for sex] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older married men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment by older men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older men is experienced by many members of the masters group] [Content topic: Stand up against the older manager] [Content topic: What are the rules of conduct here?] [Here and now comment: Feeling exposed] [Here and now comment: Feeling uncomfortable] [Mood: Anxious] [Mood: Bored] [Mood: Nervousness] [Mood: Uncomfortable] [Motive behind interaction:] [Pattern: Fleeing out of the room] [Sensing tensions and intentions]

Quotation(s): 28

#### 4. Code families: Group member level (Forces on the person/group transaction level)

The focus here is first placed on those communication transactions where the group member doesn't act in complete unison with the group movement at the moment of interaction, but still acts towards the direction of the group goal. The reasoning behind this is as follows: According to Agazarian's use of Lewin's field theory, the forces in the group become visible at the group boundaries and are defined as sets of behavior that work in a specific direction or towards a specific goal. A group member here is defined as someone who engages with the group in interdependent communication transactions aimed at the overall group goal. (The assumption is that there is no final and fixed state of group membership) Interdependent communication transactions are transactions across the person/group boundary where the boundaries of both the person and the group are permeable (open) for input from each other. Thus, the more permeable the person/group boundary, the more information can flow from the group to the person which has the potential of effecting change in the person. The more permeable the group/person boundary, the more information can flow from the person to the group which has the potential of effecting change in the group. The forces that will subsequently be focused on, are those forces that either drive or restrain greater permeability of the boundary between the person and the group (from the individual's point of view) and the boundary between the group and the person (from the group's point of view). There are thus driving and restraining forces from both the person and the group that influence group membership. The reason then for first choosing transactions from individuals that are not in total unison with the group movement is that it makes it easier to see the forces working in on the boundaries. To illustrate: it is like a person swimming with the current or across the current. The effect of the current on the person is easier to recognize if the person is swimming across the current, than if the person is swimming with the current. So here we start with the first group member that tries to move in the direction of the group goal while the group is not moving in the direction of the group goal yet.

MAGGIE is the codename for the individual to protect her anonymity. MAGGIE1 refers to the first transaction by MAGGIE that will be analyzed. MAGGIE2 refers to the second transaction, and so forth. The analysis of the person/group transactions happen against the backdrop of the group-level analysis that was done first. Here the first four transactions by MAGGIE is analyzed. I first give a background sketch of each of the transactions as well as the actual dialogue quotations of all four transactions. I then give the code family outputs as generated by Atlas where it shows the family name, the comment I made regarding the family when it was created, the constituent codes etc.

##### *MAGGIE1 background sketch:*

The group has just started and kept themselves busy with taking turns to share what the focus areas of their respective assignments for diversity management are. After 3 minutes and 20 seconds the discussion comes to a type of standstill with one of the group members remarking that this is quite uncomfortable "sitting here and being forced to talk". It is at this moment that MAGGIE makes her first verbal contribution to the group. What is interesting about this contribution, is that it is the first time that someone shares something on a level that is not only academic, and thus somewhere out there outside of the group, but that is also a bit personal, and thus potentially closer to the group itself.

##### *MAGGIE1 quoted from text:*

MAGGIE            Since everyone is sharing their topics hm J and myself are doing

introversion in the workplace.

PAM Okay.

CHRISTA Ja, but that's so funny because you're not an introvert.

MAGGIE I am

CHRISTA You're very (inbetween)

MAGGIE You know when I first started working for Siemens, I was placed in this big office (indistinct) people and their relationships and I'm with how to (indistinct). It took me literally a few months before I can ... so, I think what's (indistinct) ... out of it.

LINDA (indistinct)

DEBBIE En as jy nou kon praat wat sou jy se?

FRANCIS Uhm ... we're doing ... we first wanted to do this religion and (indistinct) ...

*MAGGIE2 background sketch:*

This communication transaction takes place only about one minute after the first transaction. What is interesting here is how the group again, after having cut her off previously, invites MAGGIE to join in the conversation, but on a non-personal, academic level. MAGGIE abides by the unspoken agreement to interact on this level.

*MAGGIE2 quoted from text*

DEBBIE Are you still doing the leadership

MAGGIE We still go on with it.

ERNA Are you still going to present it? When are you presenting?

MAGGIE Uhm ... on the 12th

CHRISTA Are you ready?

MAGGIE No. Actually, the (indistinct) that somewhere in between certain things I got this idea that, you know, why must I do it for exercises. I can come up with exercises. It's like its going to be like your industrial psychology. And logistically telling it is quite hard and it's really a type of program, so then I came up after last week with a few ideas and ... but now I'm still working on it. I'm still trying to do (indistinct) with of my own ...

CHRISTA Preferably (indistinct) ...

MAGGIE No, I don't have anything in place and (indistinct) ...

CHRISTA It's like we did (indistinct) as well.

*MAGGIE3 background sketch*

After the quoted text a short discussion on this transaction, which is the main movement for MAGGIE's relationship with the group until now and which also sets the tone for her future interactions. A pattern that started to emerge in the group before this transaction (which takes place x minutes after the previous transaction) is that of the "ERNA juggling show", as I have coded it. In order for the group to abdicate its responsibility to do its work, a pattern is adopted by which one group member (ERNA) starts talking and talking and entertaining and entertaining with all the others sitting and watching. Complete as if it was a juggling show in a circus going on. At times, ERNA will drop one of her juggling balls, so to speak, and one of the group members, usually JOSHUA, but sometimes someone else, will metaphorically speaking, pick up the ball and throw it back to ERNA to continue her show. The MAGGIE3 transaction happens just after one of these ERNA Juggling shows, at a point where the group ran into a silence of not knowing what to do next. Right at the time of that silence, MAGGIE steps in and takes the lead yet again in setting the group in motion. See the quoted text and the brief



discussion below:

*MAGGIE3 quoted from text*

ERNA I stay in (indistinct), so I stay far from all this mess  
JOSHUA (laugh) ... all this mess  
ERNA Ja, so ... eish.  
GROUP silence  
MAGGIE I once read a study that good-looking people are more positively perceived than non-good-looking people.  
DEBBIE Uhm ... job interviews, maybe its you that doesn't ... uhm, when I did my Honours in Psychology, or Social Psychologically, basically we did those.  
CHRISTA Don't give away your age.  
DEBBIE Dawid ... (indistinct). Uhm ... it's basically ja, people who are perceived as more attractive get / are evaluated as more intelligent, more sociable, more likeable, more ...  
PAM Like my colleague at work she has the IT Manager after her, some other guys after her and they all come and say hallo, and I'm like oh, please leave.  
JOEL Are there anybody with experience of that?  
DEBBIE Me.  
CHRISTA Now we're not laughing to say that you're ugly.  
DEBBIE No.  
JOEL Because of your attractiveness that you experienced it?  
DEBBIE Yes. Ja.  
JOEL Ja.  
DEBBIE You get treated differently.  
JOSHUA I've been told that by a guy. That's scary. Anyway, moving on ...  
ERNA And? Does that make you feel uncomfortable?  
CHRISTA But Lise don't you pick it up from guys though. If a guy ... let's say a guy is appointing a girl and if she looks pretty and she's intelligent they'll appoint her, but if it's a chick appointing a chick and we pick up, oh she wears so much make-up, she makes herself so big, she obviously has no personality.  
CHRISTA Ja, well I might be very dof when I judge someone, but if I look and someone and they look all dolled up and, I think to myself I wonder if you have friends. You always just think about if you have beauty have you brains. It doesn't (indistinct) very well.  
PAM Sometimes when you ask them talk, they actually (indistinct)  
CHRISTA I mean, we've had it. We've seen some pretty people and they are quite twat and they're very pretty, but they're stunning.  
PAM Or just jealous.  
CHRISTA Well, that's what I'm saying. Maybe it's (indistinct) ... and they think you know, don't have brains (indistinct) you're jealous of them; whereas a guy would look at that. I don't know (indistinct) ...  
PAM Ja, look at me, not her.  
MAGGIE Ja, it's the interview (indistinct).  
MAGGIE Now how do you guys feel about being told directly, I mean, they ... cause I had ... I'm too embarrassed even to talk about it actually. Uhm, because the company I was working for was so big, there was a lot of people that I got to meet and, you know, even nine months in and I'm still meeting people, and ... uhm, I think the last guy I had a meeting with he was so



much older than me and I don't know if I was discriminating I don't need to be (indistinct), but he says, you know, so he had some other meeting and had our meeting rescheduled, and he said 'oh, if had known that you are so pretty I would not rescheduled'. And I was just ... it ... it was unacceptable.

DEBBIE (indistinct) Sort of.

CHRISTA Ja, but that (inbetween) ... he could have portrayed that as a little bit of a joke. Ja ... she's ... her personality is also what ... this ...

PAM (indistinct) ... because you're (indistinct)

CHRISTA I don't ... I would laugh. I'll laugh if it was me.

JOSHUA But it is quite difficult to draw the line in the sense of when it becomes inappropriate and harassing, and aggressive, and (inbetween)

DEBBIE But if you feel uncomfortable it's not normal.

JOSHUA Ja. Because ... ja, but remember that's a subjective ... (inbetween)

DEBBIE Some people can handle it.

LINDA Personal experience ...

JOSHUA I can walk out here and there can be a girl standing and I can tell her you've got nice eyes and she'll think 'stalker' or she can let it go.

ERNA I won't like it when (indistinct) ...

JOSHUA It could differ - the response. Or ... no, or he can go and tell himself well, you've got nice eyes. You can be pleased, or something like that.

ERNA Ja.

JOSHUA But the fact is I'm giving you an honest compliment.

DEBBIE But that's personal boundaries.

JOSHUA So, now you're subjective, now you're feeling subjective - I'm uncomfortable or you can feel no I'm not uncomfortable, it's a compliment. So, you can't really say at the moment I feel I am uncomfortable then it must be harassment.

ERNA Ja. They always say you must go back and (indistinct) ...

DEBBIE I am very in tune with the energy that other people sends off.

SHELLY And that's also (indistinct).

DEBBIE No, I think you're right. Do you know why?

JOEL How did you take it?

MAGGIE I meant ... it's not like I haven't been complimented before, I just found that particular incidence unfitting and I was actually ... it was a meeting but it was more of a training session, so you know, with a training session you go and prepare with certain things to say and then you sense this and I was feeling a bit weird. And then he kept pretending as if he didn't have aaptop. I had to sit ...

I

DEBBIE Next to him?

MAGGIE directly next to him.

PAM Oh, not cool.

MAGGIE Ja.

PAM Ja, because he was saying that (indistinct) ... before we get something else.

MAGGIE And then he says should I close the door and I'm like ... no.

PAM Oh, no.

MAGGIE So, it's ... ja.

DEBBIE Don't you agree that you kind of ... you sense ...

MAGGIE Ja.

DEBBIE ... I don't know how else.

MAGGIE Okay, some people would say oh, you know you're really pretty or whatever and it's just a compliment, and it ends there.



DEBBIE Ja.  
MAGGIE You know. There's nothing further. They're not looking for something out of it and some people will say this and then it's like the whole (indistinct) and, you know, you can feel like ... but you're right, you sense it.

STEPHAN Other people that had that same awkward feeling?  
CHRISTA Not at work, no.  
ERNA Has anybody has had a sexual harassment?  
LINDA Hey?  
CHRISTA Why do I not find that surprising?  
ERNA Are you saying I'm bringing it on to myself?  
CHRISTA No, I just need to know (indistinct) ... You don't. You don't want to be very quiet hey. You will ... if you've got (indistinct) ... you will bring it up. You've got not (indistinct). Like in (indistinct)

ERNA No, I ... look, sometimes I think we give them their credit, okay, and then they continue, because you feel like ... I mean, like for instance you can just keep quiet and you know let it slip for the time, and then they continue. And for me I find it rather a little bit difficult because there is that older guy, deserving to be my dad; he's black; my ... and you know, I was not sitting very far from him, like you know in an open plan. I was sitting here was another lady and he was like sitting on the other side and, I mean, you know ee gossip and stuff - office gossip. And we get to hear how he is, you know, how he carries himself like he's got a girlfriend outside there in the world that we don't know of or of course he's married and all, and what happened was then he started ... kind of, you know, making moves on me. Then I kind of ... you know when this guy say hell, you know, all of a sudden he's just ... I mean, I'm not used to ... like I said, you know, sometimes this cultural thing can come where I respect him and see him you know as my father to a point where even in the workplace that issues where I know I will go crazy, but you know when he perhaps be around I might not approve, try to come to his level of respecting what if what not. And you know he said ... I remember there was one time on my birthday, my gosh, he kissed me in front of everyone on my cheek. And, you know, you're not like normally when you have birthdays you know you bring a cake and everybody in the office will come to the boardroom and whatever, and then you know congratulations C. And then he just came over and oh, you made it ... uhm. And you know this lady who was sitting next to me, you know, she was kind of my friend and whatever, and we were laughing afterwards, you know, it was like oh, my gosh, he what? And then it was just like you know it's a birthday thing - nothing really happened. And a couple of weeks later and then he started, you know C, you know on Friday we used to knock off at half past one, and then he's like you know where are you going afterwards; you know, well come to club wherever; you know, we must just go for margarita's and stuff. Uhm ... I was like what he even drinks those type of drinks? Really discriminative, because I mean, like I say, you know in the background, I mean he's that type of a guy, he's black and all - really, what does he know of a cocktail, this and that - margarita? You know, and I started thinking cocktails with me? You know I don't do alcohol. And I start that part first. You know, and I find it very ... with me? What will we talk about, you know. You know like how's your dad? His dad is the big boss and you don't really have anything much to say except how are you, thank you; good; goodnight; bye. You know, that type of a thing. No, it was like what

are we going to talk about and then I'm like (indistinct) ... no, you know, and then I just let it, you know. And then the next weekend he did the same thing - the next Friday he says the same thing, and I'm like no, I'm still going to go wherever and what not, I mean I've got a lift club where I was driving this late to work and back, and you know those type of things. And then he was the boss of this lady. Then ... he ... then I kept on saying, no I'm leaving with her, so I can't really ... she's relying on me to go home with her, so I can't really leave her. Then he came up with mechanism of realising her at 10 o'clock in the morning, so I'm alone. And then ... ja, I don't have an excuse according to him. Then he's like okay, so ... uhm, you know, the lady's name was Boni. So Boni's not here. So, what's up? Can we? I'm like no.

PAM  
ERNA

Can I ask a question? Were you married then?

Yes. Yes, I was married and all. He was there with the invitations and what not. He knows everything. Uhm ... you know, and then okay fine, then I'm like no, I don't want to, but then I was like you now, (indistinct). Then one of these days we were in the kitchen alone with him, somewhere somehow. You know when you go to the kitchen and you make coffee and what not and the next thing it's just the two of us, you know, stalling and what not. And then he grabbed me - I love you, dammit. Oh, leave me alone, you know! You know, I was like (indistinct) I was (indistinct) and I'm looking at it, you know, that awkwardness, did I really (indistinct) ... did I, was he, was he ... was he, you know? And then I just jumped off and I left and I kept quiet. And then I'm ... uhm, what do we do, what do you do, what do you call him. Then I sent an e-mail to my manager, CC the Labour Relations Manager and I said I'm going to cry, I'm going to crack and cry if this guy does this again, like you know, I didn't mention the names and what not. I just said you know this is something that happened, if it happens again I'm going to cry. I'm going to be forced to do something drastic, like you know a sexual harassment case. I will open it. I will do everything. And then the Labour Relations Manager called me. You know my Manager is very sweet, kind and doesn't like conflict and fighting, so he's like could I speak to you a minute. So, I spoke to him and he's just like okay, maybe ... oh, and then I told him you know what because of I know how this, you know, the prejudice and what not behind it in the work, I'm not going to reveal who the person is at the moment. I'm not going to say who he is, I'm just going to and then you know sometimes they try to lead all of these questions - is it a black person? I'm like I'm not going to say anything. I'm just saying this is what is happening. You will tell me how I am supposed to handle it now, you know. And then it's like no, just send and e-mail and you inform them that they're in HR because I mean they're the same department and like you know, you inform them so that you know they should know as an HR practitioner what is going to happen, what sexual harassment means, how important, you know, how critical it can be and you know how much harm it can do to their reputation or this, whatever, whatever, and see what is going to happen, you know. And just after our discussion when I went back I see an e-mail from him saying 'I am serious. I love you and I want you. Period.' That's ... that's, you know, like literally he was saying. And then I just kind of copied his words, you know, cuts out everything and forward it to the Labour Relations Manger and then he called me again and says okay, you've ... like you know, okay saying that he was ... we agreed to give him the e-mail and if he phone me



again that this is the steps that I'm going to take and see if, you know, if he repeats it again. And I did. And it stopped. He didn't do anything anymore. And I left. And three months later I hear from this lady that now he's now on the case of the, what do you call it, HR Administrator. He did the same thing, like you know another lady in the same department. She's going through the same thing and apparently, I mean, she kind of allow him to drive her like you know because she didn't have a car and all, so there was like a hiccup that he created that she was on it all along. So ... but ja.

JOSHUA So, he's just gone back  
ERNA He's devious. Ja, he is. I think he's unstable in all his ways.  
PAM Okay, Louisa.  
DEBBIE Hey?  
PAM And you? Do you want to discuss?  
DEBBIE I don't know if I want to. Okay. Well, it's the Deputy Headmaster at school.  
LINDA Ag, no.  
DEBBIE Ja.  
JOSHUA (indistinct)  
DEBBIE Where I'm working currently. Where I'm very unhappy currently.  
LINDA Shoe.  
DEBBIE But I actually recorded him and now I treat him like the asshole he is basically. Ja.  
ERNA So, you never did anything (indistinct).  
DEBBIE Well, I can ... I basically said to him well I played it back ... and I said to him if it does not stop I am going to do something about it. So, he leaves me alone.  
ERNA Uhm.  
DEBBIE But I can't stand seeing him.  
LINDA It must be quite ... (inbetween).  
DEBBIE It happens.  
ERNA I don't know.  
DEBBIE I guess. I mean, I've heard of a lot of ... I mean I've heard of L and G ... ja. So ...  
ERNA It does when they get away sometimes.  
DEBBIE No, it's funny. It's ... somehow I'm wondering how pervasive it actually is, hey?  
ERNA Uhm.  
DEBBIE Because in one Master's class we were four people within this year or the previous year.  
LINDA Shoe.  
ERNA Okay, happy ending?  
DEBBIE But listen here, there must be a speakers or something. These walls aren't that thin.  
CHRISTA Someone's shouting hey.  
ERNA No, no, no ... it's ... but today's things ... you're right. Unless it's that student, Christian fellowship.  
CHRISTA Uhm.  
ERNA They usually meet here what's this house again, just next to (indistinct), But on Friday evenings. I don't know. Thursday evenings?

### **3 Brief discussion and background to MAGGIE4**

Refer to the picture below. This transaction follows this pattern: At the point of the standstill, MAGGIE starts with a safe and academic topic: "I once read a study that...". This sets the group in motion and a number of different members participate. Then the group gets to another standstill, almost as if their course of action inevitably brought them to the edge of the precipice where they now need to climb down, but suddenly finding themselves too scared to move forward and not wanting to go back to cover ground that they already covered. At this standstill MAGGIE moves forward again and shares a sensitive and personal experience. The group responds by setting the ERNA Juggling show in motion to help them flee from the personal level MAGGIE has introduced. The ERNA show seems to reciprocate on a content level as it is also about sexual harassment, but the feel to it is not at all personal and sensitive, in fact, it feels like being entertained. Directly after the ERNA show, the group wants another member to share a similar story, but the mood is now of such a nature that she very unwillingly shares her story in superficial, broad strokes. The group then flees the room altogether by starting to talk about singing that they can hear coming from outside. This is where the transaction as I have punctuated it stops. The next transaction, MAGGIE4 starts immediately after the group fled to the singing outside with MAGGIE taking another step towards the goal of the group by saying: "I am feeling a bit exposed right now."

*MAGGIE4 quoted from text*

ERNA            They usually meet here what's this house again, just next to (indistinct), but on Friday evenings. I don't know. Thursday evenings?

MAGGIE        I am feeling a bit exposed now.

DEBBIE        No, they're not.

MAGGIE        But I mean ... I mean ...

CHRISTA       Well, you cleared it up very well.

MAGGIE        No, it wasn't ... you know, I think with something like sexual harassment, it's not always going to be a case where someone said something really out there, you know. It's just how ... you know, how one person feel. And I think in my situation why I felt uncomfortable was because he was maybe discriminating on my part. I don't know. But because he was so much older than I am. He was really a lot older, and it turned out that the cultural thing that you're saying also, you know, maybe it's about all of our cultures actually to respect the elderly, you know, I mean.

DEBBIE        For the elderly.

G                Laughs

MAGGIE        To ... ja. I mean I wouldn't just say I would not call him by his first name. You know, I would say Mister / whoever, you know, I mean ... so, I had that sort of general impression then he (inbetween)

ERNA            Then ... ja.

MAGGIE        Uhm.

JOEL            Do you feel like you have to explain yourself in here?

MAGGIE        A little, ja.

JOEL            A little?

MAGGIE        Ja.

PAM            Do you feel guilty? Do you think you've provoked it?

MAGGIE        Ja.

ERNA            But he ... she speaks, you know ... I'm trying to figure out the introversion, you know, because ...

DEBBIE        No, but she always does that - no emotions.

CHRISTA       That's quite good.

DEBBIE Ja, she always does that  
CHRISTA She's comfortable now with us (inbetween)  
JOEL Explains herself  
DEBBIE she always explains herself.  
DEBBIE Ja, she always explains herself.  
MAGGIE I know.  
DEBBIE Explain yourself (indistinct)  
MAGGIE No, I'm an extreme analyzer, so there is little that happens that I don't process because of the incident.  
ERNA And she don't dream about (indistinct).  
MAGGIE I think because ... I think that maybe because I didn't say anything about that situation to anyone and now I'm talking about it. Maybe that's what I'm feeling a bit exposed.  
ERNA Uhm.  
JOEL And you want to make sure that they understand you correctly?  
ERNA Ja.  
MAGGIE Ja  
CHRISTA You want us to hear the whole the story.  
LINDA Well, I've worked in another place for a very short time and it's sort of mechanical - mechanics, and people like that, and I was only temporarily in another woman's place, and the managers are all fifty and older. So, they're much older than what I am. All married. They have children - the works. And when they would come into my office they would say to each other 'look at the pretty thing we've just hired'. But that's the way they speak to everyone. So, it was okay for me because I realised that that's the things they do. They're like that. Or they would speak about their drinking habits in front of me, which is not something I want to know about.  
MAGGIE Ja.  
LINDA But that was their culture in that organisation. So, I don't think you should feel bad about it because I think stuff like that happens and makes you feel uncomfortable. I felt uncomfortable the first two times it happened and then I just realised that that's how they are. So, I don't feel threatened by it.  
MAGGIE I think ... (inbetween)  
LINDA (indistinct)  
MAGGIE Ja, to the (indistinct), but ... uhm ... the things I brought up that it's hard to define, it's hard to say okay, you know, this is inappropriate and you know anything besides that is not inappropriate. You sense it. You but they give it to you and (indistinct) as well because it could be your own personal stuff. I mean, I'm not really (indistinct) felt that I could digest it and I didn't ... not that in my religion we ... how do you put that? You know there are certain restrictions on how unmarried woman would interact and so I'm not as comfortable I think with certain interactions as may be other people may be. So I can't really judge another person and say you know, you're being in ... not with this particular instance, but in general, judge another person and say you are being inappropriate, because it's also my own personal thing.  
SHELLY Okay.  
ERNA If it's a culture issue you must talk.  
MAGGIE Ja.  
STEPHAN But the sense? What's the sense? You said you can sense it?  
MAGGIE It's ... I think the sexual harassment thing. I think it's a ... (inbetween)  
G (inbetween)

JOSHUA Ja, it's not just angry, because I agree with you also, apart from it being subjective to the person that gets into your space there, but I agree with you also in the sense that you can sense that person's intention, not only in sexual harassment, but in any...

MAGGIE You know if someone really likes you or whatever.

DEBBIE Ja.

LINDA Uhm.

DEBBIE I've started with Ninjitsu a while ago and the way they explained to us this ... you have your personal space and you immediately, I promise you, you immediately know if someone has aggressive intend towards you. They might have like a poker face, but you know. You feel it. And you sense it.

MAGGIE I can (inbetween)

DEBBIE I do.

MAGGIE Ja.

JOSHUA I heard a stupid joke the other day.

ALL laugh

DEBBIE Gaan jy nou ninjas mock?

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Below follows the Atlas outputs of the code families that I have labeled as forces. I did a set of forces for each of the MAGGIE transactions. So of course there are overlaps, but I am keeping them apart here so that I can write comments in Atlas pertaining to my reasoning behind my identification of each force per communication transaction. The comments that are displayed below are my comments I made in Atlas and have not been edited, integrated or interpreted. But this will give you an idea of where I am heading. My only concern is that this was a lot of work for only 1 person's interactions in 1 of the ten sessions. There are in total 9 group members and 10 sessions...But I think it will go quicker with the rest.

**a. Code Family: MAGGIE1 Driving force from group: Everyone should participate**

**Force name:** Everyone should participate  
**Type:** Driving force  
**Direction:** From group towards greater permeability of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 1, session 1

This driving force enables MAGGIE to share in the first place. It is the "as if" assumption that drives behaviour towards the "as if" goal. Thus the group acts as if the goal of the group is to give everyone a chance to participate around common ground and a safe topic. Until now MAGGIE has been one of two group members who haven't said anything. Directly after this transaction the group focuses its attention on the last member (FRANCIS) having been silent until now "En as jy nou kon praat wat sou je se?" (And if you could talk what would you say?)

Codes (4): [Pattern: DEBBIE Taking it away from MAGGIE] [Pattern: Taking turns to share around the 'common theme' of academic assignments on diversity] [Pattern: MAGGIE first interaction (second last person to speak)] [MAGGIE1 Dependent transaction]

Quotation(s): 4

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**b. Code Family: MAGGIE1 Driving force from individual: Attraction towards group goal and members**

**Force name:** Attraction towards group goal and members  
**Type:** Driving force  
**Direction:** From MAGGIE towards greater permeability of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 1, session 1

This driving force comes from within MAGGIE and enables her to open up the person/group boundary even more than what the group is prepared for. So, in conjunction with the driving force from the group to open up all person/group boundaries enough for participation from all to happen on a safe and predictable manner, this force further pushes towards greater permeability of MAGGIE's person/group boundary. Throughout the group life MAGGIE tries to work towards the group and its goal. This transaction is the first one so far that moves from academic towards personal. This member later on describes her feeling exposed / ashamed by her feeling attracted to the group and opening up - "Is it my fault that I feel abused?"

Codes (4): [Pattern: Level of communication moves from academic to personal] [Pattern: MAGGIE tries to work towards group and goal] [MAGGIE: Was it my own attraction that caused the uncomfortable situation?] [MAGGIE1 Dependent transaction]  
Quotation(s): 10

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**c. Code Family: MAGGIE1 Restraining force from group: Fear of opening up in hostile environment**

**Force name:** Fear of opening up in hostile environment  
**Type:** Restraining force  
**Direction:** From group towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 1, session 1

Fear of opening up / need to be guarded / fear of intimacy and the probable negative consequences. This fear is not the same as the fear of being consumed by love and intimacy. This is a fear of making yourself vulnerable not knowing if you will be respected or killed off. This force is part of the group's ambivalence towards being a group and pursuing the group goal and is the counter force for the driving force towards participation. The group in effect says: we want you to take part but we do not want you to take us in the direction of the group goal (which is to be open for learning and change). Directly before this transaction the group's issue with leadership and its goal is openly voiced: "This is uncomfortable: sitting here and being forced to talk". The moment MAGGIE then actually participates (in line with the group driving force towards participation), the conversation is taken away from her towards FRANCIS, the last member who has not participated up to this point.

Codes (30): [Content topic: Abstinence] [Content topic: Being disrespected by older men] [Content topic: Being forced to talk] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Cultural Diversity] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Homosexuality and the glass ceiling] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Introversion in the workplace] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Xenophobia] [Content topic: Funeral killing cow] [Content topic: Jealousy between women] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older married men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment by older men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older men is experienced by many members of the masters group] [Here and now comment:

Feeling exposed] [Here and now comment: Feeling uncomfortable] [Intervention: The group isn't listening to each other] [Mood: Anxious] [Mood: Nervousness] [Mood: Uncomfortable] [Pattern: ERNA Juggling Show] [Pattern: JOSHUA: taking it away from what can be sensed here] [Pattern: Fleeing out of the room] [Pattern: jealousy between the females] [Pattern: Pairs (PAM and CHRISTA)] [Pattern: Pairs (pattern)] [Respect me] [Sensing tensions and intentions] [MAGGIE: Opened my boundary and now exposed cause the group didn't reciprocate] [MAGGIE1 Dependent transaction]

Quotation(s): 52

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**d. Code Family: MAGGIE1 Restraining force from group: Not knowing how to open up**

**Force name:** Not knowing how to open up

**Type:** Restraining force

**Direction:** From group towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary

**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 1, session 1

The incompetent novice feeling around sex and being intimate. How far is too far? How many is too many? Is there some operating instructions somewhere? When is it good and when is it bad? In this group: We don't know how to engage and how to safely manage our engagement here.

Codes (6): [Content topic: How do I draw up the boundaries here and for future interaction] [Content topic: If you sleep around you get a bad name] [Content topic: Religion and guidelines for sex] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [Content topic: What are the rules of conduct here?] [MAGGIE1 Dependent transaction]

Quotation(s): 8

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**e. Code Family: MAGGIE1 Restraining force from group: Not sure if opening up is OK**

**Force name:** Not sure if opening up is OK

**Type:** Restraining force

**Direction:** From group towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary

**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 1, session 1

Is it OK (good and proper) to open up the person/group boundary? Isn't it better to abstain, not be attracted by or attractive to the group members? Is my special way of opening up good and proper? Are we permitted to really open up? Won't I get a bad name for opening up and enjoying it? When is opening up good and OK and when will it be interpreted as improper/harassing? In other words: Is sex OK? Is it OK to enjoy sex? And in the group: Is opening up here OK? Is it OK to enjoy opening up here in the group?

Codes (7): [Content topic: Abstinence] [Content topic: Attraction: OK or not?] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Homosexuality and the glass ceiling] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Work Permits] [Content topic: If you sleep around you get a bad name] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [MAGGIE1 Dependent transaction]

Quotation(s): 11

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**f. Code Family: MAGGIE1 Restraining force from individual: Shame and fear surrounding intimacy**

**Force name:** Shame and fear surrounding intimacy  
**Type:** Restraining force  
**Direction:** From MAGGIE towards greater rigidity of person/group boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 1, session 1

This is the force from within the individual that makes it difficult to open up the person/group boundary. MAGGIE almost immediately in this transaction explains why she has not participated thus far i.e. what has made it difficult for her: "I am an introvert". The content of her story (finding it difficult at her previous company to interact and open up) then reiterates her introversion. The title of her diversity assignment (the common denominator used until now to get all to participate) is also "introversion". Fairbairn's psychoanalytic (object relations) theory emphasizes the relationship between introversion, fear of intimacy and cognitively gifted individuals. MAGGIE shows her fear of and shame about intimacy in her later exchanges about sexual attraction and feeling exposed

Codes (9): [Content topic: Attraction: OK or not?] [Content topic: Religion and guidelines for sex] [Intervention: Clarifying MAGGIE sense of sexual discomfort] [Pattern: MAGGIE explaining herself] [MAGGIE: I am an introvert] [MAGGIE: maybe it's my fault] [MAGGIE: maybe it's my fault that I feel exposed] [MAGGIE: Was it my own attraction that caused the uncomfortable situation?] [MAGGIE1 Dependent transaction]  
Quotation(s): 12

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**g. Code Family: MAGGIE2 Driving force from group: Everyone should participate**

**Force name:** Everyone should participate  
**Type:** Driving force  
**Direction:** From group towards greater permeability of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 2, session 1

Here the group wants to make sure that, after being left exposed, MAGGIE is still on board in the game of superficial participation. This is evident from the fact that the group manages to get MAGGIE to now also, as the rest of the members, interact on an academic instead of a personal level. Further evidence is that not only one person, but three, prompt her about her leadership assignment (she also, ironically, attempted to take the lead in MAGGIE1 by being the first to want to move deeper. She is here being asked about leadership by two other members who also played leading roles in the group thus far). Thus, in search for an equilibrium of forces, the goal of this force is to attain safe conversational ground for everyone. This creates safety because everyone can be 'seen' by the group and if everyone acts 'as if' the goal is to safely speak about academic topics, then the group will not have to open its person/group boundaries and risk change

Codes (2): [Group gets MAGGIE to move to academic level again] [Invitation to MAGGIE to get on board again]  
Quotation(s): 1

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**h. Code Family: MAGGIE2 Driving force from individual: Wanting to be accepted by the group**

**Force name:** Wanting to be accepted by the group  
**Type:** Driving force  
**Direction:** From MAGGIE towards greater permeability of person/group boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 2, session 1

This is the force that compels MAGGIE to interact on the level requested from the group or else the possibly perceived risk of being excluded/expelled. MAGGIE responds on the same level as has been the norm thus far. This force becomes evident later again when she apologizes for wanting to push the group too far.

Codes (2): [Group gets MAGGIE to move to academic level again] [Pattern: MAGGIE tries to work towards group and goal]  
Quotation(s): 6

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**i. Code Family: MAGGIE3 Driving force from group: Everyone should participate**

**Force name:** Everyone should participate  
**Type:** Driving force  
**Direction:** From group towards greater permeability of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 3, session 1

This driving force has now more or less freed MAGGIE up to join in the group discussion. Still the goal of this force is only to get people to participate, not to get them to participate towards the group goal necessarily. At this point in time the group comes to a halt, so this force drives MAGGIE, who has already shown her willingness to act as leader in the group, to enter into a communication transaction and to invite others to join on a level proven to be comfortable to everyone.

Codes (3): [Group role: Leadership towards goal taken by MAGGIE] [Invites other members to join in] [MAGGIE3 Dependent transaction]  
Quotation(s): 2

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**j. Code Family: MAGGIE3 Driving force from individual: Attraction towards group and goal**

**Force name:** Attraction towards group goal and members  
**Type:** Driving force  
**Direction:** From MAGGIE towards greater permeability of person/group boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 3, session 1

This is the same force operating as in MAGGIE1. MAGGIE starts the interaction on the same academic level that she has been 'invited' to interact on during MAGGIE2. She does this at a point where the group comes to a standstill/silence of not knowing where to go now. The group then takes her contribution and interacts around it until again it comes to a standstill/impasse. MAGGIE then starts the interaction again, being driven by the force originating from within her, by opening up her person/group boundary and sharing a deeply

personal and sensitive experience with the group

The movement this force creates is in the direction of the group goal (being a group, thus opening up person/group boundaries for change and learning to occur) and the other members (she starts her interaction as a question to the others) - two elements that MAGGIE has shown attraction/openness towards throughout the group life.

Codes (5): [Group role: Leadership towards goal taken by MAGGIE] [Invites other members to join in] [Pattern: Group not-knowing-what-to-do-now-pause] [Pattern: Start on academic level, then move to personal level] [MAGGIE3 Dependent transaction]

Quotation(s): 3

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**k. Code Family: MAGGIE3 Restraining force from group: Fear of opening up in hostile environment**

**Force name:** Fear of opening up in hostile environment

**Type:** Restraining force

**Direction:** From group towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary

**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 3, session 1

This fear of what might happen in this hostile environment prevents the person/group boundaries to open up.

Codes (11): [Content topic: Being attractive vs not] [Content topic: Fighting the harassers] [Content topic: Jealousy between women] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment - the boundary?] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older married men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment by older men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older men is experienced by many members of the masters group] [Pattern: ERNA Juggling Show] [Pattern: Fleeing out of the room] [Pattern: jealousy between the females] [Pattern: Pairs (PAM and CHRISTA)]

Quotation(s): 30

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**l. Code Family: MAGGIE3 Restraining force from group: Perceived hostility**

**Force name:** Perceived hostility

**Type:** Restraining force

**Direction:** From group towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary

**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 3, session 1

The hostility, jealousy and competition between members all work together as a force that creates an environment where it is not safe to open up. Remember the environment is also wider than this group as suggested by DEBBIE when referring to the other class members being sexually harassed. This group function within an academic environment where competition and envy is rife. And here especially the tension is on a very primal sexual level as there are only one male group member, eight female group members and two male group leaders

Codes (25): [Content topic: Abstinence] [Content topic: Attractive candidates getting better attention] [Content topic: Being attractive vs not] [Content topic: Being disrespected by older men] [Content topic: Being forced to talk] [Content topic: Diversity assignment: HIV Uganda South Africa] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Xenophobia] [Content topic: Don't like te idea of killing - rather packaged meat] [Content topic: Fighting the harassers] [Content topic:

Funeral killing cow] [Content topic: Jealousy between women] [Content topic: Religion and judgment of others] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older married men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment by older men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older men is experienced by many members of the masters group] [Content topic: You have to kill the cow to eat it] [Pattern: jealousy between the females] [Pattern: DEBBIE challenging the ERNA show] [Pattern: DEBBIE Taking it away from MAGGIE] [Pattern: Pairs (PAM and CHRISTA)] [Pattern: Pairs (pattern)] [Pattern: Taking it away from MAGGIE] [Sensing tensions and intentions] [MAGGIE3 Dependent transaction]  
Quotation(s): 35

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**m. Code Family: MAGGIE3 Restraining force from individual: Fear of intimacy**

**Force name:** Fear of intimacy  
**Type:** Restraining force  
**Direction:** From MAGGIE towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 3, session 1

This is the same force from within MAGGIE that has been operating since the start of the group. This force gets activated again once she takes her second movement in this transaction by opening up her person/group boundary and therefore pushing against the boundaries of the other members. She starts her story by saying that she is actually too embarrassed to talk about it. Still, in the interaction between the driving and restraining forces from within MAGGIE, the driving force moves the equilibrium to a place of increased boundary permeability in comparison with the academic safe place.

Codes (1): [MAGGIE: I'm too embarrassed to talk about it]  
Quotation(s): 1

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**n. Code Family: MAGGIE3 Restraining force from group: Feeling powerless against the older male authority figures**

**Force name:** Feeling powerless against the older male authority figures  
**Type:** Restraining force  
**Direction:** From group towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 3, session 1

This underlying feeling of powerlessness that gets manifested both by the content themes and the patterns of fleeing away from the here and now literally takes away the group's ability to take charge of its own fate, manage its boundaries and invite change on both the group and the individual level.

Codes (14): [Content topic: Attractive candidates getting better attention] [Content topic: Being disrespected by older men] [Content topic: Being forced to talk] [Content topic: Being respected for who you are - identity] [Content topic: Best parts go to the old people or authority figures] [Content topic: Diversity Assignments: Generations Diversity] [Content topic: It's difficult to stand up against this authority figure] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older married men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual Harassment by older men in authority positions] [Content topic: Sexual harassment by older men is experienced by many members of the masters group] [Content topic: The tribe goes to the grave diggers] [Pattern: Group not-

knowing-what-to-do-now-pause] [Pattern: Pairs (PAM and CHRISTA)] [Pattern: Pairs (pattern)]  
Quotation(s): 23

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**o. Code Family: MAGGIE4 Driving force from individual: Attraction towards group and goal**

**Force name:** Attraction towards group and goal  
**Type:** Driving force  
**Direction:** From MAGGIE towards greater permeability of person/group boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 4, session 1

Her exchange here shows that she is working towards the group and its goal. So even though she had other options available to her (like sulking and retreating) she decided to interact in a way that was congruent with the stated goal of the group and with her feelings of respect towards the group and its members. She thus opens herself up yet again by saying that what the group just did was not OK.

Codes (1): [Pattern: MAGGIE tries to work towards group and goal]  
Quotation(s): 6

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**p. Code Family: MAGGIE4 Restraining force from group: Fear of opening up**

**Force name:** Fear of opening up  
**Type:** Restraining force  
**Direction:** From group towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 4, session 1

Quotation(s): 0

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**q. Code Family: MAGGIE4 Restraining force from group: We (all) are (should be) OK**

**Force name:** We (all) are (should be) OK  
**Type:** Restraining force  
**Direction:** From group towards greater rigidity of group/person boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 4, session 1

We are all and should all be OK. So as long we can believe this, there will no need for opening up boundaries so that change can occur in the group and its members.

Codes (4): [Pattern: LINDA: Try to link to MAGGIE via story of her own] [Sensing tensions and intentions] [Story to show tht actually all is fine and OK] [Theme: Group: How is MAGGIE? How do we understand her?]  
Quotation(s): 5

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**r. Code Family: MAGGIE4 Restraining force from individual: Self-preservation**

**Force name:** Self-preservation  
**Type:** Restraining force  
**Direction:** From MAGGIE towards greater rigidity of person/group boundary  
**Transaction:** MAGGIE transaction 4, session 1

Although one could possibly classify this entire transaction as one with the purpose of self-preservation, it actually seems like an interaction between the driving and restraining forces from within MAGGIE. Although it is also in self-preservation's best interest that MAGGIE be open and frank about her emotions, she immediately starts to explain and justify 1) her feeling exposed and 2) the story that she told. It is as if MAGGIE entrusted the group with something dear to her, but they nonchalantly ignored having received the gift. The fact that the group is not listening (impermeable group/person boundary) necessitates her to stop being in the here and now with her statement of feeling exposed, but to start explaining. The way that she then explains it, is as if she wants to protect the group from any blame or responsibility and she plays along with the group that then says she always explains herself. This pattern is mirrored in the story she told, on a content level. She describes the sexual harassment but then starts putting the blame on herself and taking the responsibility to be accountable from the manager onto herself. So here she tries to shield out any information flow from the group towards her by maintaining a habitual interactional pattern.

Codes (7): [Here and now comment: Feeling exposed] [Pattern: MAGGIE bringing it back to herself] [Pattern: MAGGIE wanting to be understood] [MAGGIE explaining / justifying herself] [MAGGIE: maybe it's my fault] [MAGGIE: maybe it's my fault that I feel exposed] [MAGGIE: Opened my boundary and now exposed cause the group didn't reciprocate]  
Quotation(s): 6

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## **Appendix C**

### **Letters of consent**



DEPARTEMENT MENSLIKEHULPBRONBESTUUR  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
Tel.: 012-420-3074  
Fax: 012-420-3574

17 July 2009

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH  
PROJECT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Dear group participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research project conducted by Jean Cooper and Melissa Brak from the Department of Human Resource Management, supervised by Prof. Johan Basson. The purpose of the project is to explore the dynamics and experiences in a training group and will mainly be based on the training group experience which forms part of the module MHB 801 (I/O Psychology Practice) of your Masters programme in Industrial and Organisational Psychology / Human Resources Management.

For the purposes of the research, a video recording of your MHB 801 (I/O Psychology Practice) training-group experience will be made. You will also be asked to give written feedback on your experience in the group. Further, depending on how the study unfolds, you might be approached by the research team to take part in an interview.

Should you thus give your consent for taking part in the research, this means that:

- The 2 ½ day training group experience that forms part of your MHB 801 module will be video recorded and transcribed by the research team;
- You will be asked to give written feedback on your training group experience;
- You also might be asked to take part in an interview, which will be recorded and transcribed;
- All the data from the training group, the written feedback and the interview will be interpreted and analyzed by the research team.

All written, transcribed and video material will be treated as confidential and will only be available to the research team. Also, your identity will not be associated with any research reports or publications that use the results from this study. Your participation (or not) in the research will not have any effect on your marks for the Module MHB 801 which the training groups form part of. You can also withdraw your consent at any time during the research process.



Taking part in the research could be a positive experience with regards to further learning about groups as we co-explore the group experience as researcher and research participant. Also, once completed, the results from the research will be shared with you.

With regards to risks: there are no significant risks involved in taking part in the research. Although there might be periods of discomfort experienced in the training-groups, taking part in the research process (i.e. giving consent for the data recording and analysis) should have no adverse consequences. Should any risks arise during the study, they will be disclosed to you.

Should the data from this research be used for future research projects, your informed consent will once again be obtained.

Any further questions or comments can be directed to the research team.

### **Consent**

I, (Full name and surname) ----- hereby give my full and informed consent to participate in this study. I declare that I have read and that I understand the consent form.

-----  
Signature of participant

-----  
Date

### **Research team**

#### Researcher 1

Jean Cooper  
Doctoral student (PhD I/O Psychology)  
Student number: 9614781  
082 334 9362  
jean.cooper@up.ac.za

#### Researcher 2

Melissa Brak  
Masters student (MCom I/O Psychology)  
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082 979 3971  
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#### Research supervisor

Prof Johan Basson  
012 420 3431  
johan.basson@up.ac.za



2 November 2011

**Tel: +27 12 420-2306**

**E-mail: anske.grobler@up.ac.za**

Prof JS Basson  
**Department of Human Resource Management**

Dear Professor Basson

**Project:** *The forces involved in becoming a member of a small group*  
**Researcher:** JH Cooper  
**Reference No:** 96147815  
**Supervisor:** Prof JS Basson  
**Department:** Human Resource Management

The Committee for Research Ethics' letter dated 15 October 2009 regarding the research of the above doctoral candidate refers.

After our discussion today and clarification of the outstanding issues requested in the abovementioned letter, The Committee for Research Ethics formally approved the above study on an *ad hoc* basis on 2 November 2011.

The approval is subject to the candidate abiding by the principles and parameters set out in his application and research proposal in the actual execution of the research.

The Committee requests you to convey this approval to Mr Cooper.

Sincerely

**PROF AF GROBLER**  
**CHAIR: COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS**

**cc: Prof KJ Stanz**

**Members:**

Prof AF Grobler (Chair); Dr N Barkhuizen; Prof C de Villiers; Prof JHvH de Wet; Mr T Gerber; Prof JF Kirsten; Prof B Lubbe; Ms K Plant; Prof M Stiglingh; Prof C Thornhill; Prof R van Eyden; Prof J van Vuuren

**Ex officio members:**

Chair: Research Committee; Prof SR van Jaarsveld, Faculty of Law

## Appendix D

### Full co-occurrence table

## FULL CO-OCCURRENCE TABLE

### Notes

1. This table shows all the codes as they have been allocated to each group member per session

### Table key

C = Christa

D = Debbie

E = Erna

F = Francis

J = Joshua

L = Linda

P = Pam

S = Shelly

T = Total

<b>Group: All sessions</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Away from Belonging</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>184</b>
Away from Belonging: Cutting other member short	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Belonging: Detached response	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Belonging: Exclusion of non-Afrikaans speakers	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Away from Belonging: Exclusion of non-Christian, pro gay adoption part of group	0	1	4	0	4	0	0	2	0	11
Away from Belonging: Group pushing Erna away	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Belonging: Isolating herself	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Belonging: Leave me alone	1	6	11	8	1	0	0	1	0	28
Away from Belonging: Not meeting the level of vulnerability and directness in the question	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Away from Belonging: Not meeting the level of vulnerability displayed	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Away from Belonging: Pairing between Debbie and Francis withholding from the group	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Away from Belonging: Resisting participation in the group	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Away from Belonging: Retaining sense of separateness from group by linking to partner	9	19	13	0	24	0	0	14	10	89
Away from Belonging: Silence from members who are not willing to participate or contribute	0	6	15	0	4	1	4	2	1	33
<b>Away from Individuality</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>94</b>
Away from Individuality: Asking permission to speak	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Away from Individuality: Not taking the stand / risk out there	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Away from Individuality: Pairing in order not to stand alone	9	19	12	0	24	0	0	16	10	90
Away from Individuality: Relativizing her contribution	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Away from Task</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>1705</b>
Away from Task: Christa shying away from level of honesty displayed in the question	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Away from Task: Create alternative group task	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Away from Task: Disconnect Erna Doesnt have a clue	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic	103	287	251	67	399	117	61	101	147	1533
Away from Task: Encouraging participation around frivolous talk	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Task: Experimenting with another group project	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Task: Fleeing from the room	2	4	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	10



<b>Group: All sessions</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Away from Task: Fleeing to jokes	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
Away from Task: Flight from deeper sharing	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
Away from Task: Grappling for alternative group task	3	11	21	0	9	1	4	2	2	53
Away from Task: Hiding behind Erna's activity	1	3	29	0	1	0	0	0	0	34
Away from Task: Intellectualizing and not here and now	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Task: Not being fully honest	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Away from Task: Resisting the openings created by leader to move to task	3	6	2	0	12	0	0	1	0	24
Away from Task: Shelly refusing to be honest	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	6	11
Away from Task: Shying away from conflict	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
Away from Task: Shying away from deep-level honesty	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Away from Task: Trying not be pulled into conversation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Task: Trying out group project with random discussion topic	0	2	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	8
<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>2552</b>
Towards Belonging : Are you in or out? How should we relate to you?	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Belonging: Accept me and respect me	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Towards Belonging: Accept me! Say I'm good enough!	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41
Towards Belonging: Accepts help from Debbie	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Active listening behaviour	0	6	2	0	2	10	2	1	0	23
Towards Belonging: Activting Erna's initiating role	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Affirming fellow member	0	7	1	3	0	9	19	2	4	45
Towards Belonging: Agreeing	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Towards Belonging: An inclusive and non-judgemental approach to group norms discussion	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Approaching the group as a pair	9	19	13	0	24	0	0	14	10	89
Towards Belonging: Are you OK with this feedback-process?	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4
Towards Belonging: Are you OK?	1	7	12	8	1	0	1	1	0	31
Towards Belonging: Asking fellow member to elaborate	16	2	3	0	2	4	1	2	1	31
Towards Belonging: Asking for safe self-disclosure	3	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	8
Towards Belonging: Asking permission to ask	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	5
Towards Belonging: Attempt to include Erna on a different level	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

**Group: All sessions**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Belonging: Becoming visible in order to be understood	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Being apologetic	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Belonging by participation	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Building on other member's contribution	1	12	0	1	0	0	15	0	4	33
Towards Belonging: Building the bridge for the conflict	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Challenging leaders by creating solidarity by sitting on the ground	18	21	29	4	71	7	0	17	5	172
Towards Belonging: Challenging the leaders by creating an us and them	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Checking ages of members	3	2	0	0	0	5	3	0	1	14
Towards Belonging: Checking in - reporting on last night	1	4	8	2	2	4	3	2	5	31
Towards Belonging: Checking on other member's attendance	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Towards Belonging: Clarifying contents of current discussion	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Belonging: Collective nervous grapple for something to do	3	5	6	0	5	0	0	0	1	20
Towards Belonging: Confirming the existence of a subgroup to protect against feeling exposed	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Creating an external enemy in the taxi drivers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Belonging: Creating expectation for other's contribution	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Creating sub-group to belong to	0	1	4	0	4	0	0	2	0	11
Towards Belonging: Direct question regarding other member's feelings	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Directing the turn-taking	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Drawing Maggy into conversation	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Drawing the group into her story with more detail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Towards Belonging: Empathic and patient tone	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Empathizing with fellow member	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Belonging: Emphasizing her presence in order to belong	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Emphasizing similarities	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Emphasizing similarities	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Encouraging others to join her sub-group outside	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Encouraging others to join in the current discussion	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Erna's audience	1	2	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
Towards Belonging: Explaining herself	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	7



**Group: All sessions**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Belonging: Feelings of togetherness put above feelings of conflict	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Frivolous participation	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Giving a story to support fellow member	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Towards Belonging: Giving advice	0	0	5	0	1	0	2	0	0	8
Towards Belonging: Giving Erna an opportunity to enter the conversation again	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Giving new direction to current discussion to include more members	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Group participation in open reflection	0	46	18	5	21	2	5	17	21	135
Towards Belonging: Help with translation	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: How did you experience US as a group?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Belonging: I dont want to hog the conversation	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: I like you guys	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: I want to know you better	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: I will not judge you and I will be there for you	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: I won't judge you	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Ice-breaking conversation	2	5	0	0	4	0	1	2	0	14
Towards Belonging: Identifying with other member	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Including member into current discussion	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Inclusion by translating	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Interacting with Debbie around her differences	0	3	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion	0	2	7	0	7	3	1	2	0	22
Towards Belonging: Invitation to come and join the group on its level	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Towards Belonging: Joining a new discussion	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Belonging: Joining Debbie in asking about facilitators' position	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Joining the sub-group in fleeing from the group task	2	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	9
Towards Belonging: Joking	4	7	1	0	24	1	5	2	0	44
Towards Belonging: Let US get a new task for the group	0	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Lets agree to disagree	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Linking between Debbie and Linda to create understanding	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Making contact with Francis	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	10





<b>Group: All sessions</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Belonging: Making it easier for new group member to join the group	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	5
Towards Belonging: Negotiating possible boundary crossing with the group	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Opening up and making vulnerable	2	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	8
Towards Belonging: Pairing between Debbie and Francis	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	111	230	202	41	285	82	46	85	136	1218
Towards Belonging: Positive feedback to other member's contribution	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5
Towards Belonging: Reaching out to Afrikaans subgroup	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Belonging: Ready for safe self-disclosure in service of belonging	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Relativizing her contribution	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Rescuing the group from the awkward silence	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Towards Belonging: Responding to direct question	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Responding to invitation to join group on its level	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Towards Belonging: Responding to Linda's attempt to console her	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Safe self-disclosure of personal information	4	10	10	9	1	15	50	16	6	121
Towards Belonging: Searching for group harmony	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Seeking common ground	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Belonging: Self-deprecating joke	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Setting up initiation ritual for Joshua	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Belonging: Sharing personal history to explain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Belonging: Showing empathy and interest in other group member	0	2	7	0	0	3	32	2	1	47
Towards Belonging: Showing gratitude	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Towards Belonging: Showing understanding of Debbie	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Soothing behaviour in order to not deal with task	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Sub-grouping with Maggy around not judging	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Suggesting activity to alleviate anxiety	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Supporting other member	0	2	3	0	1	1	2	1	0	10
Towards Belonging: Supporting the newly introduced topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Taking part in norms discussion without really becoming visible	0	5	4	3	0	7	0	0	0	19
Towards Belonging: Taking responsibility for getting yet another topic going	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

<b>Group: All sessions</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Belonging: Taking the lead in keeping the conversation going	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Taking turns in safe self-disclosure	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	15
Towards Belonging: True words spoken in jest	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Try to pull the facilitators in	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Trying to get a new discussion going	0	6	15	0	4	1	4	2	1	33
Towards Belonging: Trying to get member to participate	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to get new discussion going / Who's who in the zoo	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Trying to give other group members a chance to participate and not hide behind Erna	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Towards Belonging: Trying to include member in the discussion	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to make amends again after competitive behaviour with Debbie	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to re-enter the group	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to resolve conflict between Christian sub-group and group	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to shift show to Debbie	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to understand other member better	0	5	3	0	2	6	2	1	0	19
Towards Belonging: Us vs other possible groups in this situation	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Very diplomatic towards Erna	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Wants to become part of the group	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: We like this group	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	5
<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>862</b>
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by singing	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: (Pairing) Emphasizing difference between member and group	9	19	13	0	24	0	0	14	10	89
Towards Individuality: Asserting herself	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Asserting herself and her religious foundations	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by breaking the silence	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by pushing her opinion	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by speaking first	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by speaking last	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by taking the lead	0	2	4	1	7	2	1	0	0	17
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible through moving around in his chair	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

<b>Group: All sessions</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Individuality: Being open and honest	0	35	1	5	10	2	5	15	2	75
Towards Individuality: Challenging Debbie	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Challenging other member	0	6	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	11
Towards Individuality: Challenging the Christian sub-group	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Challenging the leaders	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: Competitive behaviour towards females	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Towards Individuality: Critical thinking	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
Towards Individuality: Defending her own preference	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Defending herself	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	6	11
Towards Individuality: Defending herself, I will spend time with whom I like and I like my name so use it!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: Defensive and irritated about having group speaking about her accent and culture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Towards Individuality: Defensive, sarcastic request	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: Defensively coming out with her racial difference	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Towards Individuality: Defensively explaining herself	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9
Towards Individuality: Differentiating behaviour, I am man and this is my opinion	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Differentiating herself by making it clear that she is not included in the subgroup that understands	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Differentiating herself by pointing to the African traditions	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Distancing herself from 'this mess'	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by aligning herself with the facilitators	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by emphasizing her special characteristics, activities and accomplishments	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by giving 'therapy-like' interpretation	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by moving to higher level of complex thought	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by showing her different approach to the group	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Individuality: Emphasizing her presence by changing the common ground topic to topic of her own choice	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: Giving new direction to the topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: I dont want to say what I feel.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: I want some of the limelight too	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Individual struggle between group purposes and her perceived value from it	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
Towards Individuality: Isolating herself by showing that she is not connected to what's going on in the group	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

<b>Group: All sessions</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Individuality: Not willing to relinquish the initial position taken	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: Passing moral judgement	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	6
Towards Individuality: Personal identity, I like the sound of my own name	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Towards Individuality: Personal struggle with cultural diversity becomes visible	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: Retaining her right to be silent	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Individuality: Revealing physical discomfort and possible leaving	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Sarcasm to protect herself from perceived attack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of biographical facts (personal)	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	1	0	6
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of fact regarding cultural/religious background	5	0	3	0	0	0	9	4	0	21
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical info	5	11	3	6	4	22	16	18	10	95
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of feelings connect to personal / private material	0	16	4	0	2	9	44	17	4	96
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion	0	15	6	4	0	0	58	0	7	90
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of personality	1	4	4	1	0	0	33	2	7	52
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure on ice-breaker level	1	4	15	1	4	2	3	2	3	35
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure regarding values, beliefs, interests, preferences, opinions and experiences	5	16	8	3	15	6	9	9	20	91
Towards Individuality: Self-preservation behaviour	1	6	11	8	1	0	0	1	0	28
Towards Individuality: Self-preservation by defending herself	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Stating her own needs and expectations of the group	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Individuality: Taking a personal stand / risk	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Towards Individuality: Taking an uncompromising stance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: Taking authority to direct the conversation	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: Trying to satisfy her own curiosity	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Warning before being honest about own experience	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1928</b>
Towards Task: asking for feedback from the group	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Bringing the discussion back to where it was before it was hijacked	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Checking perceptions with other members	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Task: Checking the place boundaries	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: checking time boundaries	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	4





**Group: All sessions**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
Towards Task: Inviting members to join in task	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	8
Towards Task: Leade'rs intervention and response by one member	3	6	2	0	12	0	0	1	0	24
Towards Task: Let's just be	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Open and honest reflection	0	2	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	8
Towards Task: Open and honest self-reflecting on own projections	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Towards Task: Reflecting on groups struggle with finding topics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on 5-minute silence project	0	6	7	5	6	0	0	5	3	32
Towards Task: Reflecting on and sharing current feeling here and now regarding self	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on being in the group	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Task: Reflecting on group boundaries and norms in terms of depth	0	59	26	8	24	2	34	20	21	194
Towards Task: Reflecting on group norms	2	6	11	8	8	4	0	9	0	48
Towards Task: Reflecting on group's ice-breaking activity	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on group's readiness to go deeper	0	36	2	5	10	2	8	15	2	80
Towards Task: Reflecting on here and now emotion regarding interpersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Towards Task: Reflecting on judgementalness in group	0	42	18	9	20	5	15	2	28	139
Towards Task: Reflecting on life story request	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group	1	20	15	10	2	1	47	5	5	106
Towards Task: Reflecting on members current state	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on pairing dynamic between Pam and Christa	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	6
Towards Task: Reflecting on purpose - lets just talk	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Reflecting on purpose of being present in the moment	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on silence	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	6
Towards Task: Reflecting on the group's direction	0	8	14	5	8	6	0	8	4	53
Towards Task: Reflecting on theme of security in the group	0	3	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	9
Towards Task: Reflecting on value from group	2	12	4	21	15	7	5	5	11	82
Towards Task: Reflecting on what just happened	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Task: Responding to direct question by Maggy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Task: Responding to facilitator's question	0	15	1	1	3	0	2	2	3	27
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ disclosure behaviour	0	9	5	1	0	0	54	8	15	92



**Group: All sessions**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)	0	5	4	1	0	0	37	1	1	49
Towards Task: Showing critical attempt to listen and understand topic content	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Stating the need to clear something out	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: Struggling with the group task	0	1	3	0	2	0	0	3	0	9
Towards Task: Trying to find an opening for exploring deeper	0	4	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	8
Towards Task: Trying to get the group going around a common theme	0	6	15	0	4	1	4	2	1	33
Towards Task: What am I supposed to do?	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

**Group: Session 1**

**Away from Belonging**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
Away from Belonging: Cutting other member short	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Belonging: Exclusion of non-Afrikaans speakers	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Away from Belonging: Group pushing Erna away	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Belonging: Retaining sense of separateness from group by linking to partner	6	0	4	0	4	0	0	9	6	29

**Away from Individuality**

Away from Individuality: Pairing in order not to stand alone	6	0	3	0	4	0	0	9	6	28
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**Away from Task**

Away from Task: Disconnect Erna Doesn't have a clue	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic	34	37	70	6	35	13	14	18	22	249
Away from Task: Encouraging participation around frivolous talk	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Task: Fleeing from the room	2	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	9
Away from Task: Fleeing to jokes	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Away from Task: Flight from deeper sharing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Task: Hiding behind Erna's activity	0	1	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	18

**Towards Belonging**

Towards Belonging: Accept me and respect me	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Towards Belonging: Accept me! Say I'm good enough!	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
Towards Belonging: Active listening behaviour	0	5	2	0	2	10	2	1	0	22







**Group: Session 1**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by moving to higher level of complex thought	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by showing her different approach to the group	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Emphasizing her presence by changing the common ground topic to topic of her own choice	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: Isolating herself by showing that she is not connected to what's going on in the group	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Personal identity, I like the sound of my own name	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Towards Individuality: Personal struggle with cultural diversity becomes visible	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of biographical facts (personal)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of fact regarding cultural/religious background	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	7
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of feelings connect to personal / private material	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	4
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of personality	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure regarding values, beliefs, interests, preferences, opinions and experiences	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	4
Towards Individuality: Self-preservation by defending herself	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Taking authority to direct the conversation	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>
Towards Task: Checking the place boundaries	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Task: checking time boundaries	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Clarifying task boundaries	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Critical listening and reflecting	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Task: Critical thinking about discussion topic	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Exploring other member's feelings with regards to topic discussion	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	4
Towards Task: Expressing immediate emotion with regards to group	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Task: Giving feedback about fellow member's behaviour in the group	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Task: Humour and playfulness	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Reflecting on and sharing current feeling here and now regarding self	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: Responding to direct question by Maggy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Task: Responding to facilitator's question	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ disclosure behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2





**Group: Session 2**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Individuality: Giving new direction to the topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: Passing moral judgement	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	6
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of biographical facts (personal)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical info	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure on ice-breaker level	0	1	10	0	2	0	2	0	0	15
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure regarding values, beliefs, interests, preferences, opinions and experiences	4	3	1	2	4	0	3	2	8	27
Towards Individuality: Taking an uncompromising stance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>
Towards Task: Bringing the discussion back to where it was before it was hijacked	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Clarifying what other member meant	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: Commenting on group not speaking	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Critical thinking about discussion topic	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Towards Task: Critically evaluating question and its relation to the discussion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Task: Expressing immediate emotion with regards to group	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Giving feedback about fellow member's behaviour in the group	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Here and now comment regarding other member	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Humour and playfulness	2	2	1	0	4	0	0	1	0	10
Towards Task: Reflecting on here and now emotion regarding interpersonal	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on what just happened	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Stating the need to clear something out	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: What am I supposed to do?	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

**Group: Session 3**

**Away from Belonging**

Away from Belonging: Retaining sense of separateness from group by linking to partner

**Away from Individuality**

Away from Individuality: Pairing in order not to stand alone

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Away from Belonging</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>
Away from Belonging: Retaining sense of separateness from group by linking to partner	3	0	6	0	0	0	0	3	3	15
<b>Away from Individuality</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>
Away from Individuality: Pairing in order not to stand alone	3	0	6	0	0	0	0	3	3	15



**Group: Session 3**

**Away from Task**

Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic

Away from Task: Hiding behind Erna's activity

**Towards Belonging**

Towards Belonging : Are you in or out? How should we relate to you?

Towards Belonging: Accept me! Say I'm good enough!

Towards Belonging: Active listening behaviour

Towards Belonging: Activting Erna's initiating role

Towards Belonging: Approaching the group as a pair

Towards Belonging: Asking fellow member to elaborate

Towards Belonging: Asking for safe self-disclosure

Towards Belonging: Becoming visible in order to be understood

Towards Belonging: Building on other member's contribution

Towards Belonging: Checking ages of members

Towards Belonging: Checking in - reporting on last night

Towards Belonging: Creating an external enemy in the taxi drivers

Towards Belonging: Directing the turn-taking

Towards Belonging: Drawing Maggy into conversation

Towards Belonging: Empathic and patient tone

Towards Belonging: Erna's audience

Towards Belonging: Explaining herself

Towards Belonging: Help with translation

Towards Belonging: I want to know you better

Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion

Towards Belonging: Joining Debbie in asking about facilitators' position

Towards Belonging: Joking

Towards Belonging: Let US get a new task for the group

Towards Belonging: Making contact with Francis

Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
<b>Away from Task</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>55</b>
Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic	5	5	11	3	6	7	2	5	1	45
Away from Task: Hiding behind Erna's activity	1	2	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	10
<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>249</b>
Towards Belonging : Are you in or out? How should we relate to you?	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Belonging: Accept me! Say I'm good enough!	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Active listening behaviour	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Activting Erna's initiating role	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Approaching the group as a pair	3	0	6	0	0	0	0	3	3	15
Towards Belonging: Asking fellow member to elaborate	8	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	14
Towards Belonging: Asking for safe self-disclosure	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Becoming visible in order to be understood	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Building on other member's contribution	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Checking ages of members	3	2	0	0	0	5	3	0	1	14
Towards Belonging: Checking in - reporting on last night	1	3	5	1	2	2	1	2	3	20
Towards Belonging: Creating an external enemy in the taxi drivers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Belonging: Directing the turn-taking	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Drawing Maggy into conversation	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Empathic and patient tone	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Erna's audience	1	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Towards Belonging: Explaining herself	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Belonging: Help with translation	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: I want to know you better	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion	0	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Joining Debbie in asking about facilitators' position	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Joking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Belonging: Let US get a new task for the group	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Towards Belonging: Making contact with Francis	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	10
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	5	3	9	3	5	6	2	5	1	39

**Group: Session 3**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Belonging: Ready for safe self-disclosure in service of belonging	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Safe self-disclosure of personal information	4	3	6	9	1	7	12	3	4	49
Towards Belonging: Self-deprecating joke	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Showing empathy and interest in other group member	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Supporting other member	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Supporting the newly introduced topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Taking responsibility for getting yet another topic going	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Taking the lead in keeping the conversation going	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Taking turns in safe self-disclosure	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	15
Towards Belonging: Try to pull the facilitators in	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Trying to understand other member better	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Very diplomatic towards Erna	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>150</b>
Towards Individuality: (Pairing) Emphasizing difference between member and group	3	0	6	0	0	0	0	3	3	15
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by speaking last	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by taking the lead	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
Towards Individuality: Challenging the leaders	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: Defending herself	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	7
Towards Individuality: Defensive and irritated about having group speaking about her accent and culture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Towards Individuality: Defensive, sarcastic request	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Individuality: Defensively coming out with her racial difference	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Towards Individuality: Defensively explaining herself	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by emphasizing her special characteristics, activities and accomplishments	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: I dont want to say what I feel.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Sarcasm to protect herself from perceived attack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of biographical facts (personal)	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	4
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of fact regarding cultural/religious background	2	0	3	0	0	0	9	0	0	14
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical info	5	5	3	6	1	13	7	2	6	48
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of feelings connect to personal / provate material	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

**Group: Session 3**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	4
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure on ice-breaker level	1	3	5	1	2	2	1	2	3	20
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure regarding values, beliefs, interests, preferences, opinions and experiences	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	7
Towards Individuality: Trying to satisfy her own curiosity	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Warning before being honest about own experience	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>98</b>
Towards Task: Clarifying facilitator's question	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Towards Task: Critical listening and reflecting	2	2	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	9
Towards Task: Critical thinking about discussion topic	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Explaining her motives	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Explore emotions expressed by other member	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Exploring curiosity about other member	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Towards Task: Exploring her own reaction towards question	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Towards Task: Exploring norms of what can be asked and what not	3	2	9	4	0	0	10	5	2	35
Towards Task: Exploring reactions regarding being stereotyped	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	9
Towards Task: Expressing immediate emotion with regards to group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Task: Giving feedback about fellow member's behaviour in the group	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Towards Task: Humour and playfulness	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Task: Inviting honest response	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on life story request	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on what just happened	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Responding to facilitator's question	0	11	1	1	0	0	1	2	3	19

**Group: Session 4**

**Away from Belonging**

Away from Belonging: Retaining sense of separateness from group by linking to partner

**Away from Individuality**

Away from Individuality: Pairing in order not to stand alone

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Away from Belonging</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>
Away from Belonging: Retaining sense of separateness from group by linking to partner	0	4	1	0	6	0	0	1	0	12
<b>Away from Individuality</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>
Away from Individuality: Pairing in order not to stand alone	0	4	1	0	6	0	0	1	0	12



**Group: Session 4**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Away from Individuality: Relativizing her contribution	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Away from Task</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>193</b>
Away from Task: Create alternative group task	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic	13	30	33	1	36	15	13	18	16	175
Away from Task: Experimenting with another group project	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Task: Fleeing to jokes	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Away from Task: Hiding behind Erna's activity	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Away from Task: Trying out group project with random discussion topic	0	2	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	8
<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>268</b>
Towards Belonging: Accept me! Say I'm good enough!	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Towards Belonging: An inclusive and non-judgemental approach to group norms discussion	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Approaching the group as a pair	0	4	1	0	6	0	0	1	0	12
Towards Belonging: Asking for safe self-disclosure	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Asking permission to ask	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Being apologetic	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Building the bridge for the conflict	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Challenging the leaders by creating an us and them	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Erna's audience	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Belonging: Identifying with other member	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Interacting with Debbie around her differences	0	3	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Joking	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Let US get a new task for the group	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Linking between Debbie and Linda to create understanding	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	13	30	33	1	35	15	13	18	16	174
Towards Belonging: Relativizing her contribution	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Safe self-disclosure of personal information	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Towards Belonging: Searching for group harmony	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Showing understanding of Debbie	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2

**Group: Session 4**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Belonging: Taking part in norms discussion without really becoming visible	0	5	4	3	0	7	0	0	0	19
Towards Belonging: Trying to understand other member better	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Us vs other possible groups in this situation	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>83</b>
Towards Individuality: (Pairing) Emphasizing difference between member and group	0	4	1	0	6	0	0	1	0	12
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by breaking the silence	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by taking the lead	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Defending her own preference	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by emphasizing her special characteristics, activities and accomplishments	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by showing her different approach to the group	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Individual struggle between group purposes and her perceived value from it	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical info	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of feelings connect to personal / provate material	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of personality	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure regarding values, beliefs, interests, preferences, opinions and experiences	0	10	7	1	6	3	4	3	3	37
Towards Individuality: Stating her own needs and expectations of the group	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>323</b>
Towards Task: Exploring curiosity about other member	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Towards Task: Exploring differences	0	5	1	0	4	0	0	1	2	13
Towards Task: Exploring norms of what can be asked and what not	0	5	4	3	0	7	0	0	0	19
Towards Task: Expressing immediate emotion with regards to group	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Towards Task: Giving feedback about fellow member's behaviour in the group	4	13	31	1	15	5	0	2	4	75
Towards Task: Having or on the verge of having peronsal insight	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Task: Humour and playfulness	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Let's just be	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecitng on groups struggle with finding topics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on 5-minute silence project	0	6	7	5	6	0	0	5	3	32
Towards Task: Reflecting on being in the group	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Task: Reflecting on group norms	2	6	11	8	8	4	0	9	0	48



**Group: Session 4**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
Towards Task: Reflecting on purpose - lets just talk	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Reflecting on purpose of being present in the moment	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on the group's direction	0	8	14	5	8	6	0	8	4	53
Towards Task: Reflecting on value from group	2	4	4	18	4	2	0	5	4	43
Towards Task: Reflecting on what just happened	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Responding to facilitator's question	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	6
Towards Task: Showing critical attempt to listen and understand topic content	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Struggling with the group task	0	1	3	0	2	0	0	3	0	9

**Group: Session 5**

**Away from Task**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic	0	2	0	0	5	0	0	2	0	9
Away from Task: Fleeing from the room	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Away from Task: Flight from deeper sharing	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2

**Towards Belonging**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>66</b>
Towards Belonging: Affirming fellow member	0	0	1	2	0	7	0	2	0	12
Towards Belonging: Are you OK with this feedback-process?	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4
Towards Belonging: Asking permission to ask	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Empathizing with fellow member	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Towards Belonging: Emphasizing similarities	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Erna's audience	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: I dont want to hog the conversation	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: I will not judge you and I will be there for you	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: I won't judge you	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Ice-breaking conversation	2	5	0	0	4	0	1	2	0	14
Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Joking	1	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	7
Towards Belonging: Negotiating possible boundary crossing with the group	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

**Group: Session 5**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	5
Towards Belonging: Safe self-disclosure of personal information	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Showing gratitude	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Trying to understand other member better	0	4	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	9
<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by speaking first	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by taking the lead	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: Challenging other member	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by aligning herself with the facilitators	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by moving to higher level of complex thought	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by showing her different approach to the group	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: I want some of the limelight too	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Revealing physical discomfort and possible leaving	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of feelings connect to personal / private material	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion	0	3	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	8
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>322</b>
Towards Task: Checking the place boundaries	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Clarifying task boundaries	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Clarifying what other member meant	0	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	3	9
Towards Task: Critically defending what's happening in the group	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Disclosure, feedback and reflection on member's behaviour	9	91	21	26	36	8	6	9	21	227
Towards Task: Expressing immediate emotion with regards to group	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Giving feedback about fellow member's behaviour in the group	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Humour and playfulness	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	4
Towards Task: Invitation for personal feedback	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Task: Open and honest self-reflecting on own projections	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Towards Task: Reflecting on group's ice-breaking activity	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on group's readiness to go deeper	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	5
Towards Task: Reflecting on group boundaries and norms in terms of depth	0	8	5	0	3	0	18	2	0	36

**Group: Session 5**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
Towards Task: Reflecting on judgementalness in group	0	6	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	9
Towards Task: Reflecting on theme of security in the group	0	3	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	9
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ disclosure behaviour	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Towards Task: Trying to find an opening for exploring deeper	0	4	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	8

**Group: Session 6**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
<b>Away from Task</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>416</b>
Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic	23	86	42	27	123	36	15	19	21	392
Away from Task: Resisting the openings created by leader to move to task	3	6	2	0	12	0	0	1	0	24
<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>702</b>
Towards Belonging: Challenging leaders by creating solidarity by sitting on the ground	18	21	29	4	71	7	0	17	5	172
Towards Belonging: Group participation in open reflection	0	46	18	5	21	2	5	17	21	135
Towards Belonging: Introducing safe topic for discussion	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Joking	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	23	86	42	27	123	36	15	19	21	392
<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>82</b>
Towards Individuality: Becoming visible by taking the lead	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Individuality: Being open and honest	0	35	1	5	10	2	5	15	2	75
Towards Individuality: Distinguishing herself by emphasizing her special characteristics, activities and accomplishments	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>298</b>
Towards Task: Leader's intervention and response by one member	3	6	2	0	12	0	0	1	0	24
Towards Task: Reflecting on group's readiness to go deeper	0	35	1	5	10	2	5	15	2	75
Towards Task: Reflecting on group boundaries and norms in terms of depth	0	46	18	5	21	2	5	17	21	135
Towards Task: Reflecting on judgementalness in group	0	11	17	0	11	0	0	2	19	60
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4

<b>Group: Session 7</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Away from Belonging</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>45</b>
Away from Belonging: Silence from members who are not willing to participate or contribute	0	6	15	0	4	1	4	2	1	33
<b>Away from Task</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>53</b>
Away from Task: Grappling for alternative group task	0	6	15	0	4	1	4	2	1	33
<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>232</b>
Towards Belonging: Asking fellow member to elaborate	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Towards Belonging: Checking in - reporting on last night	0	1	3	1	0	2	2	0	2	11
Towards Belonging: Safe self-disclosure of personal information	0	5	4	0	0	0	37	11	1	58
Towards Belonging: Showing empathy and interest in other group member	0	2	4	0	0	0	31	0	1	38
Towards Belonging: Trying to get a new discussion going	0	6	15	0	4	1	4	2	1	33
Towards Belonging: Trying to give other group members a chance to participate and not hide behind Erna	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>204</b>
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of feelings connect to personal / provate material	0	8	4	0	0	0	37	16	1	66
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion	0	9	4	1	0	0	50	0	5	69
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of personality	0	2	4	0	0	0	31	0	1	38
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>338</b>
Towards Task: Reflecting on group boundaries and norms in terms of depth	0	5	3	3	0	0	11	1	0	23
Towards Task: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group	0	10	4	1	0	0	46	4	5	70
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ disclosure behaviour	0	7	4	1	0	0	52	5	5	74
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)	0	2	4	0	0	0	33	0	1	40
Towards Task: Trying to get the group going around a common theme	0	6	15	0	4	1	4	2	1	33
 <b>Group: Session 8</b>	 <b>C</b>	 <b>D</b>	 <b>E</b>	 <b>F</b>	 <b>J</b>	 <b>L</b>	 <b>M</b>	 <b>P</b>	 <b>S</b>	 <b>T</b>
<b>Away from Belonging</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
Away from Belonging: Resisting participation in the group	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Away from Task</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>

**Group: Session 8**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	4
Away from Task: Intellectualizing and not here and now	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Away from Task: Not being fully honest	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>49</b>
Towards Belonging: Affirming fellow member	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Towards Belonging: Are you OK?	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Asking fellow member to elaborate	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
Towards Belonging: Being apologetic	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Building on other member's contribution	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Towards Belonging: Giving advice	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Towards Belonging: Invitation to come and join the group on its level	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	4
Towards Belonging: Rescuing the group from the awkward silence	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Towards Belonging: Responding to invitation to join group on its level	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Towards Belonging: Safe self-disclosure of personal information	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	1	9
Towards Belonging: Showing gratitude	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to get member to participate	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Belonging: Trying to understand other member better	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>60</b>
Towards Individuality: Asserting herself	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Critical thinking	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Individuality: Retaining her right to be silent	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of facts and biographical info	0	0	0	0	3	9	2	0	4	18
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of feelings connect to personal / private material	0	0	0	0	2	9	2	0	3	16
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of here and now emotion	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of personality	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	6
Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure regarding values, beliefs, interests, preferences, opinions and experiences	0	2	0	0	5	3	0	0	1	11
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>91</b>
Towards Task: checking time boundaries	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3

**Group: Session 8**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Task: Clarifying what other member meant	0	5	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	12
Towards Task: Critical listening and reflecting	0	5	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	11
Towards Task: Critical reflection on group and comparison with yesterday	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	5
Towards Task: Critical thinking about group process	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Disclosre, feedback and reflection on member's behaviour	0	4	0	6	0	3	1	0	14	28
Towards Task: Expressing immediate emotion with regards to group	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Having or on the verge of having peronsal insight	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	4
Towards Task: Inviting members to join in task	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	8
Towards Task: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
Towards Task: Reflecting on members current state	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on what just happened	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Responding to facilitator's question	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ disclosure behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10

**Group: Session 9**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Away from Belonging</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>
Away from Belonging: Leave me alone	1	6	11	8	1	0	0	1	0	28
<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>
Towards Belonging: Are you OK?	1	6	11	8	1	0	0	1	0	28
Towards Belonging: Joking	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	5
<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>
Towards Individuality: Self-preservation behaviour	1	6	11	8	1	0	0	1	0	28
<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>383</b>
Towards Task: asking for feedback from the group	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Towards Task: Disclosre, feedback and reflection on member's behaviour	5	104	0	4	60	33	29	26	4	265
Towards Task: Exploring and reflecting upon leaders' role and impact and members response to leaders	17	11	1	2	6	0	4	5	0	46
Towards Task: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group	1	6	11	8	2	1	0	1	0	30
Towards Task: Reflecting on silence	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	6



**Group: Session 9**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
Towards Task: Reflecting on value from group	0	8	0	3	11	5	5	0	1	33

**Group: Session 10**

**Away from Belonging**

	C	D	E	F	J	L	M	P	S	T
Away from Belonging: Detached response	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Away from Belonging: Isolating herself	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
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<b>Away from Individuality</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
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Away from Individuality: Asking permission to speak	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
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Away from Individuality: Pairing in order not to stand alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
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<b>Away from Task</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
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Away from Task: Discussing off-task topic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
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Away from Task: Trying not be pulled into conversation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
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<b>Towards Belonging</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>116</b>
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Towards Belonging: Affirming fellow member	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
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Towards Belonging: Are you OK?	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
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Towards Belonging: Asking permission to ask	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
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Towards Belonging: How did you experience US as a group?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
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Towards Belonging: I like you guys	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
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Towards Belonging: Joking	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
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Towards Belonging: Participating in current discussion	31	33	0	1	14	3	1	3	12	98
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Towards Belonging: Showing gratitude	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
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Towards Belonging: True words spoken in jest	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	6
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Towards Belonging: Trying to re-enter the group	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
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<b>Towards Individuality</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>
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Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of feelings connect to personal / private material	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
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Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure of personality	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
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Towards Individuality: Self-disclosure regarding values, beliefs, interests, preferences, opinions and experiences	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	5
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<b>Towards Task</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>
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Towards Task: Critical thinking about discussion topic	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5
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**Group: Session 10**

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
Towards Task: Exploring other member's feelings with regards to topic discussion	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Towards Task: Reflecting on member's behaviour in the group	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Reflecting on pairing dynamic between Pam and Christa	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	6
Towards Task: Reflecting on value from group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
Towards Task: Reflecting on what just happened	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ disclosure behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Towards Task: Self-reflective/ opening up behaviour (making self vulnerable)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1