

15

MANAGING GROUPS

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- A Explain why groups are important in organizations and should be taken seriously by managers.
- ▲ Discuss the characteristics of various types of formal and informal groups.
- ▲ Identify reasons why people join groups.
- ▲ Discuss such group processes and characteristics as cohesiveness, roles, status, norms, coalition formation, and risky shift.
- A Describe the impacts of group size and spatial arrangements.
- A Explain the workings of the informal organization.
- A Discuss the stages through which groups progress as they move toward maturity. A Cite characteristics and products of groupthink and identify ways to prevail group think. A Discuss guidelines for the effective management of group meetings.

In his popular book, *Theory Z*, William Ouchi [1981) contrasts the model Japanese organization to the model American organization. A key difference is the greater Japanese emphasis on collective decision making and collective responsibility. Teamwork, group [rather than individual] bonuses, concern for consensus, and attention to interpersonal relationships are conspicuous in the Japanese model. As discussed in previous chapters, Ouchi's Type Z organization incorporates many of these characteristics. What the characteristics have in common is attention to groups. A **group** is a collection of individuals who have a common goal, are interdependent, and perceive themselves as a unit.¹ Harold Leavitt [1975] has suggested several reasons why groups are important and should be taken seriously by managers. They are:

- A Small groups seem to be good for people. They may satisfy membership needs and provide a useful range of activities for members. They provide support in times of stress. They provide settings in which people learn about trust and cooperation,
- A Groups seem to be good problem-finding tools. As we will explore in the next chapter, groups may be useful in promoting creativity and innovation.
- A In a wide variety of situations, groups make better decision, than individuals. In the previous chapter we saw that groups

I. This definition is based on D. L. Bradford, *Group Dynamics* [Chicago, IL: Suvin Research Associates, 1984). For a discussion of definitions of groups, see D. Carlwright and A. Zander, *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory*, 3d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), 46-48.

outperform individuals in many problem-solving contexts.

A Groups are great tools for implementation. They gain commitment from their members so that group decisions are more willingly carried out.

A Groups can control and discipline their members in ways that are often very difficult through more impersonal disciplinary systems.

A As organizations grow larger, small groups appear to be useful mechanisms for fending off many of the negative effects of large size. They help prevent communication lines from growing too long, the hierarchy from getting too steep, and the individual from getting lost in the crowd.

A Groups are natural phenomena and facts of organizational life. They can be created, but their development cannot be prevented. The question is not whether groups should exist, but whether they should be planned.

In this chapter we will consider the effective management of groups in organizations. Figure 15-1 provides a rough outline of the issues to be considered. We will first identify reasons why people join groups. Then, we will discuss types of groups. Third, we will examine a variety of important group processes and characteristics. Fourth, we will consider issues in group development, including a model of the evolution of the informal organization and an examination of group movement toward maturity. Finally, we will consider issues in the effective management of groups. The factors we will discuss influence such outcomes as group performance and member satisfaction. Those group outcomes, in turn, cycle back to affect the future condition, behavior, development, and management of the group.

Figure L5-1 ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED



TYPES OF GROUPS

Groups may be formal or informal. Formal groups are created by the organization to help accomplish some organizational objective. Their

members work together to get a job done. **Informal groups** are created by the members themselves. Both types of groups are important in organizations.

Types of Formal Groups

Formal groups may be classified as command groups or task groups. These group types differ in their membership and duties.

Command Groups. **Command groups**, or **functional groups**, consist of managers and their subordinates and show up on the organization chart. The group made up of a director of marketing and her immediate subordinates would be an example. As shown in Figure 15-2, these command groups "fit together" to make up the hierarchy. The leader of each group is typically also a member of a higher level group and thus

Figure 15 2

HOW LINKING PINS CONNECT COMMAND GROUPS

A



Source: Adapted from *New Patterns of Management* by Rensis Likert. Copyright © 1961 by McGraw-Hill Book Company. Reproduced with permission

serves as a **linking pin**, coordinating activities and communications between levels.² Command groups generally are relatively permanent.

Task Groups. **Task groups**, or **committees**, are formed for a specific purpose, such as exchange of information, coordination of activities, generation of recommendations, development of new procedures, or solution of specific problems. Their members may be drawn from various parts of the organization as needed. **Ad hoc** committees are typically created for a short-term purpose and have a limited life. A search-and-screen committee organized to nominate candidates for a key managerial position would be an example. **Standing committees** are relatively permanent task groups that deal with issues on an ongoing basis. An example would be an ethics review committee set up to advise top management on the ethical implications of decisions.

The fact that groups are formed by the organization does not necessarily imply that they are simply puppets of management. For instance, J. Richard Hackman [1978] has discussed **self-managing work groups**. These are "intact [if small] social systems whose members have the authority to handle internal processes as they see fit in order to generate a specific group product, service, or decision."³ The self-managing work group is in essence job enrichment at the level of the group.

Types of Informal Groups

Informal groups may be classified as interest groups or friendship groups. Together, they make up the informal organization.

Interest Groups. **Interest groups** arise when individuals unite to achieve some common purpose. As an example, a group might be formed to petition for a recall of a judge, to **file a grievance**, or to **pitch in** to do a job.

Friendship Groups. **Friendship groups** are formed because of some attraction, due perhaps to similar values, backgrounds, or ages. Friendship groups may engage in a wide variety of activities both on and off the job.

Informal groups give members a forum to communicate, to gain some control over their environments, and to provide status and recognition. While they are formed by members themselves rather than by the organization, informal groups may help achieve organizational purposes.

2. The idea of the linking pin originates with R. Likert, *New Patterns of Management* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1961).

3. L. R. Hackman and G. R. Oldham, *Work Redesign* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1980), 164.

Informal groups, created by their members rather than by the organization, are important to the achievement of organizational goals,



For instance, a group that forms so that members can help one another accomplish a task may help both the members and the organization. Informal groups are a reality that management cannot wish or coerce away. Because of this, management should recognize them and try to work with them for mutual benefit. We will take a closer look at the informal organization later.

GROUP FORMATION

Individuals join groups for a variety of reasons. We suggested earlier that individuals may join informal groups because of friendship or common interests and that formal groups are formed to promote organizational purposes. Some other, though perhaps related, reasons for group formation include proximity, need satisfaction, collective power, and group goals.

Proximity

Physical proximity and contact provide the opportunity for group formation. Certainly, if people are not able to somehow get together, they will have little chance to interact and to form a group. George Homans (1950), in a model to be elaborated on later in the chapter, sees proximity



Academic Profile

HENRY P. SIMS and CHARLES C. MANZ

Henry P. Sims (Ph.D., Michigan State University) is Professor of Organizational Behavior at Pennsylvania State University. His research interests focus on executive leadership—especially how executives lead others to be self-managed—and how executive verbal behavior influences the motivation and performance of others. In 1981, his research was prominently summarized in an interview in *U.S. News and World Report*.



Charles C. Manz (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University) is an Assistant Professor of Strategic Management and Organization at the University of Minnesota. His research interests include self-leadership, vicarious learning, self-managed work groups, leadership, power and control, and group processes. He is the author of *The Art of Self-Leadership* and of articles appearing in *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *National Productivity Review*, and elsewhere. He has served as a consultant, researcher, and executive education leader with many organizations.

Q: Some of your recent work has dealt with self-managing work groups. Where did the idea of self-managing work groups originate?

A: Certainly the idea of autonomous work groups has been present in the literature for some time. Our own personal theoretical work has been highly influenced by the idea of "self-regulation" from the field of psychology. In the United States, self-managing work groups have emerged mainly from the desire of practicing managers to bring a better system to the workplace. In general, these managers have not been inspired by formal theory, but have been willing to pragmatically experiment with a wide variety of participative and teamwork organizational structures.

Q: What are the benefits of self-managing work groups?

A: Employees gain a considerable amount of personal control over the day-by-day, minute-by-minute activities on the job. For many people, this personal control becomes extremely important, even though it may be directed at seemingly insignificant parts of the job.

From an organizational viewpoint, the benefits are also substantial. First, conflict is generally reduced, making the day-to-day work experience much more harmonious. Second, self-managing groups seem to be significantly better in terms of the quality of their product. Self-managing groups are also more flexible and accommodating to changes. Most importantly, productivity is generally better. Many managers report gains of 20 to 40 percent when compared with traditional forms of organizations.

Q: How widespread is the current use of self-managing work groups?

A: One estimate says that about 300 manufacturing plants in the United States use some form of self-managing groups. This is significant in terms of raw numbers, but it is still very, very small in terms of percentage. Overall, we think that self-managing groups are still not well known nor well understood.

Q: In what sorts of situations would self-managing work groups be most applicable?

A: They would be more appropriate where technical interdependence between tasks is high, where product quality is especially significant, and where motivation and commitment of the work force are important. Further, since significant training and investment are required, the application should not be transitory or short term. Overall, we think that self-managing concepts have wide-range applicability, at both the group and individual levels, and as applied to both salaried and hourly employees. Q: Do you have any recommendations concerning the use of self-managing work groups?

A: For managers who are considering the implementation of self-managing work groups, our strongest recommendation is for them to visit previous applications and see for themselves. For us, the opportunity to see self-managing groups in action was a most revealing experience. We have observed extraordinary commitment and contribution from so-called "ordinary" employees. Once you see the exceptional power of this organizational form, it dramatically changes your viewpoint of how effectively groups can actually operate.

as one factor influencing a complex interplay of activity, interaction, and sentiment. Proximity gives people the chance to share ideas, opinions, and feelings. Such sharing may lead to feelings of liking. Those feelings, in turn, may lead to desires to carry out more activities together, and thus to interact.

Need Satisfaction

Certainly, most people join groups because they feel that membership may help satisfy their needs. One function of groups is to provide safety and security in numbers. Unions, investment clubs, and street gangs are examples of groups that help satisfy such needs in various ways. Group membership clearly may directly satisfy needs for affiliation and social support. Groups may also help fulfill esteem needs—for instance, membership in a particular law firm or sorority may be seen as prestigious. Even growth needs may be met by group membership. As examples, memberships in literary groups, art clubs, or chess societies may all present growth opportunities.

Collective Power

People may form groups because of the collective power afforded by the group. Quite simply, the fact that a number of individuals pooled their efforts affords power, and thus the ability to accomplish objectives, which would not otherwise be possible. Members of the Nature Conservancy or of the National Rifle Association, for instance, believe that group membership provides leverage. Collective power is also another reason for union membership. Later in this chapter we will consider the related topic of coalition formation.

Group Goals

Finally, individuals may join groups because they agree with the goals of the group. The authors, for instance, serve on the boards of community organizations because they agree with the goals of those organizations, family enhancement and matching children with adult role models. Similarly, many people join fund-raising or advocacy groups to help the groups attain their goals.

GROUP DIMENSIONS INFLUENCING EFFECTIVENESS

Groups are complex, dynamic entities. Their effectiveness depends upon the rich and sometimes subtle interplay of many variables. In this

section we will consider some of the most important of the processes and characteristics influencing group effectiveness. s-

Cohesiveness

Group cohesiveness is the degree to which members are attracted to one another, reflected in their desires to retain membership and to resist leaving. More cohesive groups are generally more effective in achieving their goals. There is usually greater communication among members, higher member satisfaction, decreased member tension and anxiety, and heightened pressure toward conformity.

The sources of cohesiveness are much like those of group formation. For instance, they may reside in the personal attractiveness of group members, the attractiveness of the group task, or the prestige of group membership. As the group achieves its goals, cohesiveness increases. Large groups are less cohesive than small groups. High status of the group and outside pressures on the group both increase cohesiveness.

Roles

Group members play a variety of roles, both inside and outside the organization. A role is a set of shared expectations concerning appropriate behavior. There might be an expectation, for instance, that a nurse should behave, and should not behave, in certain ways. The role set is the group of people who have these expectations concerning appropriate behavior. The sent role is the set of expectations which members of the role set convey to the individual. The received role is the individual's perception of that sent role. The enacted role is the way the individual behaves in response to received roles.

Unfortunately, role expectations may be unclear or may cause conflict. Role ambiguity occurs when:

- A Employees lack clear information about what people expect them to accomplish.
- A Employees know what outcomes people expect but don't know how to achieve those outcomes.
- A Employees don't know what personal costs or benefits are associated with meeting particular expectations.

Role conflict occurs when employees are expected to engage in activities that clash with their own expectations or are somehow inconsistent. There are five types:

- A Intersender role conflict results from conflicting expectations of different role senders. For example, supervisors sometimes find

that their subordinates expect them to identify with labor while their superiors expect them to see themselves as part of management.

- A Intrasender role conflict occurs when a single role sender transmits incompatible expectations. This sort of conflict might occur if a boss says to place more emphasis on quality, but at the same time is demanding greater quantity.
- A Person-role conflict results from clashes between role demands and personal values and expectations. A police officer who is called on to evict an aging tenant, or a manager who must fire loyal employees because of budget cuts, may experience such conflict.
- A Interrole conflict comes about through the incompatible demands of different roles. A person's role as operations manager of a company that needs wetlands to expand production capacity may conflict with her role as officer of a local conservation group.
- A Role overload occurs because various role expectations, while not inherently inconsistent, simply cannot all be satisfied in the time available. The increasing number of women entering the work force, often already heavily burdened by the demands of the roles of spouse and mother, may face such role overload.

Both role conflict and role ambiguity have been associated with an array of negative consequences, including dissatisfaction, anxiety, turnover, and low performance.⁴

Status

Status is social ranking within a group. Achieved status depends on a person's achievements. Ascribed status depends not on achievement but on such factors as age, lineage, or sex. While ascribed status is generally relatively fixed, achieved status may be altered.

Several things affect achieved status.⁵ They include:

- A *Occupation*. As shown in Table 15-1, there are substantial differences in the levels of status afforded to various occupations. The "icebreaking" question, "What do you do?" gives one quick gauge of relative status.
- A *The type of materials one works on*. As a rule, the more costly

4. See, for instance, A. P. Brief, R. S. Schuler, and M. Van Sell, *Managing Job Satisfaction* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971); and R. S. Schuler, R. J. Aldag, and A. P. Brief, "Role Conflict and Ambiguity: A Scale Analysis," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* 20(1977): 11-28.

5. J. A. Lippert, *The Analysis of Organizations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1961).

Table 15-1 PRESTIGE SCORES OF SELECTED JOBS

Job	Score
Physician	95.8
Stockbroker	81.7
Advertising executive	80.8
Accountant	71.2
Office manager ¹	68.3
Stenographer	52.6
Inspector in manufacturing plant	51.3
Bookkeeper	50.0
Cashier	35.6
Assembly-line worker	28.3
Delivery truck driver	16.9
Warehouse clerk	22.4
Janitor	12.5
Ragpicker	04.6

Source: C.E. Bose and P.H. Rossi, "Gender and Jobs: Prestige Standings of Occupations as Affected by Gender," *American Sociological Review* (June 1983): 327-28. Reprinted with permission.

the materials individuals work on, the more status they have. Diamond cutters have more status than wood carvers.

▲ *Skill or knowledge required to do the job.*

A *Rank in the formal hierarchy.* Typically, the closer employees are to the chief executive officer, the higher their status.

▲ *Pay.* To many people, pay is a key gauge of status. It provides a concrete, visible gauge of achievement.

▲ *Seniority,*

▲ *The status of the employee's associates.*

Typically, one's rank in the social system is marked by **status symbols**. These are concrete signs of status. Titles, offices, clothing, and access to special facilities [such as the executive dining room or exercise room] may all serve as status symbols.

Status is important to organization members, many of whom would rather have a change in title than a pay hike. When individuals are forced to take actions which are inconsistent with their perceived status, tension is likely to occur. For instance, an employee with 20 years of seniority and considerable job skills may see taking orders from a young MBA with no experience as demeaning.

Norms and Conformity

Norms are expectations about how group members ought to behave. There may be a norm, for instance, that suits should be worn

SOME STATUS SYMBOLS

A survey of 143 chief executive officers by the American Society
Design revealed the following:

- ▲ 75 have offices with a view
 - A 73 have corner offices
 - A 61 have offices on the top floor
 - A 62 have private washrooms
 - A 51 have a separate office for a secretary
 - A 45 have private adjoining waiting
rooms
 - A 67 have original artwork in their offices
 - A 12 have wet bars
 - A 4% have exercise areas
-

Source: Adapted from *Forbes* [July 4, 1983], 10. Reprinted with

when making important sales presentations. Other norms might relate to performance, honesty, teamwork, loyalty, or anything else the group feels is important. The norms of loyalty and harmony are reflected in the morning Matsushita Electric song, presented in Figure 15-3.

■ Figure 15-3

THE MATSUSHITA WORKERS' SONG

For the building of a new Japan,
Let's put our strength and minds together,
Doing our best to promote production,
Sending our goods to the people of the world,
Endlessly and continuously,
Like water gushing from a fountain.
Grow, industry, grow, grow, grow!
Harmony and sincerity!
Matsushita Electric!

Source: From *THE EMERGING JAPANESE SUPERSTATE* by Herman Kahn
1970 Hudson Institute. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Prentice-Hall
Inc.

According to J. Richard Hackman (1976), norms:

- ▲ Are structured characteristics of groups that simplify the
influence process;

- A Apply only to behavior and not to private thoughts and feelings of group members;
- ▲ Generally develop only in relation to those matters that most group members consider important;
- A Usually develop slowly over time; and,
- A Sometimes apply only to certain group members.

If individuals behave in ways that violate group norms, group members exert pressure for conformity to those norms. Pressure might take the form of "friendly" comments, threats, ridicule, ostracism, or even physical abuse. Conformity pressures are especially great when the norm is very central to the group, when the group is cohesive, when the situation is ambiguous, and when a large percentage of members accept the norm.

Whether group pressure for conformity to norms is desirable from the point of view of the firm depends on the norm. Conformity to norms of high performance, an honest day's work, and creativity will generally be beneficial. Conformity to norms of rate restriction, leaving work early, and pilferage is clearly unwelcome. Donald Roy, a sociologist, took a job in a machine shop in order to observe work culture. Read his classic description of group norms in Situation 1.

SITUATION 1

Quota Restriction and Goldbricking in a Machine Shop

From [my first] to my last day at the plant, I was subject to warnings and predictions concerning price cuts. Pressure was the heaviest from Joe Mucha, day man on my machine, who shared my job repertoire and kept a close eye on my production. On November 14, the day after my first attained quota, Mucha advised:

"Don't let it go over \$1.25 per hour, or the time-study man will be right down here! And they don't waste time, either! They watch the records like a hawk! I got ahead, so I took it easy for a couple of hours."

Joe told me that I had made \$ 10.01 yesterday and warned me not to go over \$1.25 an hour. He told me to figure the set-ups and the time on each operation very carefully so that I would not total over \$10.25 in any one day.

Jack Sharkey defined the quota carefully but forcefully when I turned in \$10.50 one day, or \$1.31 an hour.

Jack Sharkey spoke to me after Joe left. "What's the matter? Are you trying to upset the apple cart?"

Jack explained in a friendly manner that \$10.50 was too much to turn in, even on an old job.

"The turret-lathe men can turn in \$1.35," said Jack, but their rate is 90 cents, and ours 85 cents."

Jack warned me that the Methods Department could lower their prices on any job, old or new, by changing the fixture slightly, or changing the size of drill. According to Jack, a couple of operators (first and second shift on the same drill) got to competing with each other to see how much they could turn in. They got up to \$1.65 an hour, and the price was cut in half. And from then on they had to run that job themselves, as none of the other operators would accept the job.

According to Jack, it would be all right for us to turn in \$1.28 or \$1.29 an hour, when it figured out that way, but it was not all right to turn in \$1.30 an hour.

Well, now I know where the maximum is—\$1.29 an hour.

Source: D. Roy. "Quota Restriction and Goldbricking in a Machine Shop," *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY* 57 (1952): 430-37. Copyright © 1952 by The University of Chicago Press. Reprinted with permission.

As Roy's experience suggests, new group members are gradually integrated into the group through socialization. This is a process of "learning the ropes"—gaining an understanding of norms, values, and behavior patterns.

Sometimes, conformity can take on ominous hues. An experiment by Solomon Asch (1951), for instance, showed that, if group pressures are great enough, people will often conform to a majority opinion that is clearly false. In that experiment, subjects were asked to indicate which of three lines on a card was the same length as a comparison line. Even though the answer was obvious, in about one-third of the cases subjects tended to agree with others who first, as confederates of the experimenter, unanimously picked the incorrect line. Also, Stanley Milgram (1974) carried out a series of experiments on obedience to authority. He found that many subjects would conform to the demands of authority figures even when they thought they were administering dangerous, and potentially fatal, electric shocks to other subjects. When conformity leads to acceptance of wrong choices, to unethical behavior, or to the stilling prospect of the "Organization Man," it is dangerous.

Coalition Formation

Coalitions are alliances of organizational members combining their individual powers, resources, and persuasive efforts to achieve



greater influence on decision processes than the members could accomplish alone.⁶ Coalitions may be used to gain the upper hand in elections, resource allocation decisions, promotion decisions, and the like. Richard Cyert and James March (1963) saw coalition formation as a basic element in organizational functioning. Individuals work for the firm but have their own specific interests. To advance their interests, they join coalitions. Negotiations occur between conflicting coalitions to resolve differences. That resolution may come about through the dominance of one coalition or through compromise.

Various hypotheses have been advanced concerning how coalitions form. Experiments tend to support the minimum resource theory, which argues that members would like to form a coalition that controls the minimum amount of resources necessary to gain the upper hand.⁷ If a majority is needed, for instance, members controlling 51 percent of resources might form a coalition. In that way, they have substantial leverage, being able to share the full 49 percent "spoils." If more resources were included in the coalition, there would be fewer spoils to share and perhaps more members with which to share them.

Risky Shift

As we discussed in Chapter 3, risk-taking propensity can be very important in organizations. There is a concern that managers may be shunning risky alternatives, preferring to play it safe with secure, if unexciting, choices. So, anything that can be done to influence risk preferences may be important. For decades, researchers have concerned themselves with the issue of how groups impact on risk preferences. The result of that research stream is known as the risky shift phenomenon, presented in Figure 15-4.

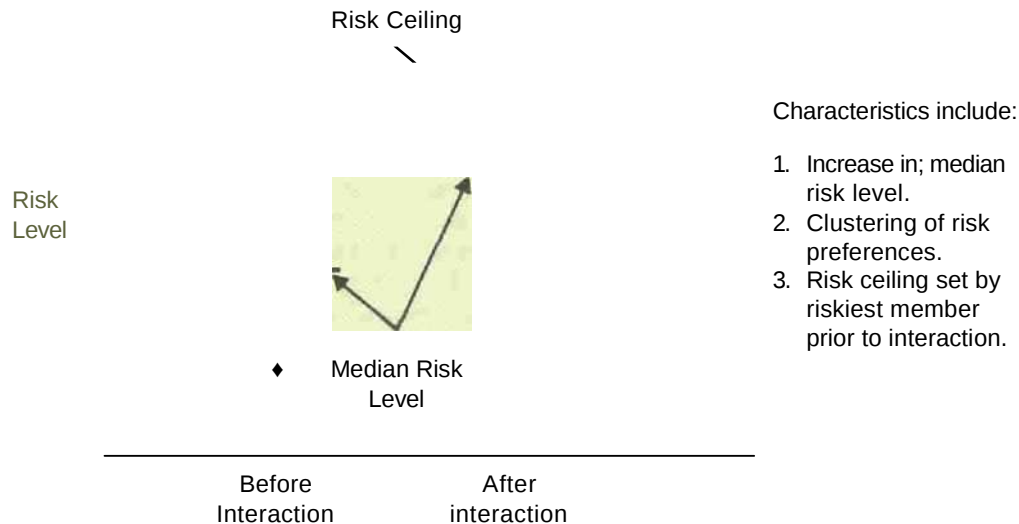
As shown in the figure, the risky shift phenomenon has three characteristics:

- A Relative to risk preferences of individuals, those of groups—or of individuals after group interaction—are higher. That is, there is a risky shift.
- ▲ After group interaction, member risk preferences cluster. There is less variability in risk preferences than before interaction.
- ▲ The riskiest member prior to interaction sets a ceiling on risk preferences after interaction. Instead of all members' risk preferences rising, those preferences tend to compress, accordion-like, against the risk ceiling.

6. B. Bass, *Organizational Psychology* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1965), 105.

7. W. A. Garrison, "A Theory of Coalition Formation," *American Sociological Review* 26 (1961): 373-82.

Figure 15-4

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RISKY SHIFT PHENOMENON

To keep things interesting, there is a complication—sometimes group decisions are *less* risky than those of individuals. When society values risk taking, such as in dealings with money, group decisions *are* riskier than those of individuals. When society sees caution as appropriate, such as in cases where health or welfare of children is at stake, groups *make* less risky decisions than individuals. In general, the average group tendency reflects the dominant cultural value for the particular kind of problem. So, the risky shift may better be termed an extremity shift.

Several hypotheses have been suggested to explain this phenomenon. The four most popular are the following:

- A *Familiarization hypothesis*. This hypothesis sees caution being in part the result of lack of knowledge. That is, an individual lacking information may choose to play it safe. With group discussion, and thus with more information concerning alternatives, individuals may feel more comfortable and thus *may* be willing to choose a less secure alternative.
- A *Diffusion of responsibility hypothesis*. Quite simply, the diffusion of responsibility hypothesis argues that, when individuals are responsible for only a slice of the risk pie, they are willing to accept a larger pie than if they were the sole consumers, *they*

shown in Situation 1, they can share the responsibility, and if necessary, the guilt or blame for bad outcomes.

SITUATION 2 Execution

by Committee

The idea of diffusion of responsibility is brought into sharp focus by changes in how executions are taking place around the country.

In South Carolina, officials decided to have the electric-chair apparatus rewired from one switch to three to make the execution a team effort. "This way, someone won't know exactly whether he did that or not," says William D. Leeke, the commissioner of the Department of Corrections.

In New Jersey, one executioner will inject a lethal dose of three drugs, another a harmless saline solution, North Carolina employs three executioners to administer the same method of death. Georgia, which uses the electric chair, has three volunteers from the prison staff: all three push buttons, but only one button has the charge. Utah used a firing squad in the 1977 execution of Gary Gilmore, its first execution in many years; two of the five gunmen, all volunteers from law-enforcement groups, had blanks. "We share the responsibility," Florida's Mr. Dugger says.

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Leadership hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, group leaders may be riskier than non-leaders. Since those leaders would tend to dominate the conversation, more pro-risk than anti-risk comments would be aired, and a risky shift might result.

Risk-as-social-value hypothesis. This hypothesis has two underlying premises:

- a. Society attaches certain values to risk taking. For some sorts of decisions, those values favor greater risk. For others, they favor caution.
- b. We tend to err in our self-assessments of risk taking in the socially desirable direction.

As a result of group interaction, according to this hypothesis, we recognize the errors in our self-assessments. To defend our self images, we thus shift our risk preferences in the socially desirable direction.

Each of these hypotheses may have some validity.^a However, the risk-as-social-value hypothesis best explains the cautious shift and the ceiling effect.

EFFECTS OF GROUP SIZE AND SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Many of the group dimensions we have considered are influenced by group size and spatial arrangements. For instance, we will see in this section that size and spatial arrangements may influence status perceptions, interaction patterns, leadership, and coalition formation. Ultimately, they can affect member satisfaction, decision quality, and other group outcomes.

Group Size

Groups of various sizes have their own special characteristics. As we will see, some of those characteristics interfere with effective group functioning. Many of the dynamics we will discuss are relevant for groups of all types. However, the following discussion is primarily directed at interacting groups which will be used for problem-solving purposes.^{3*}

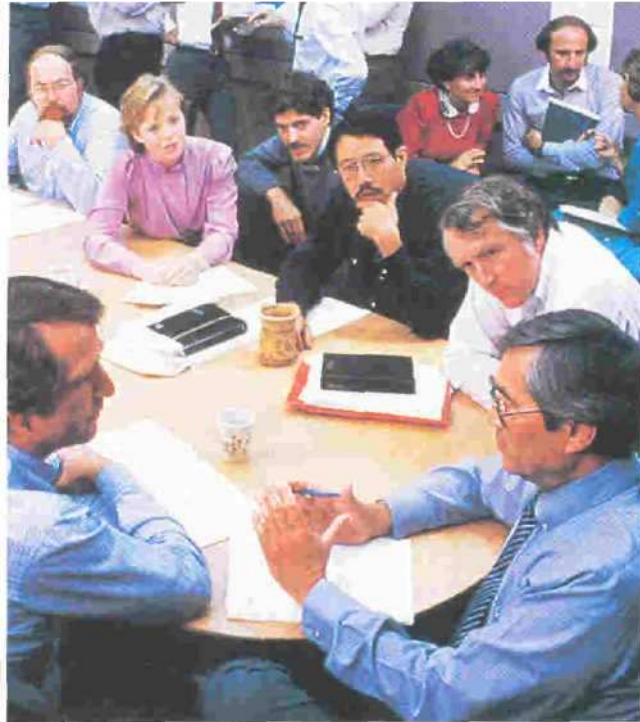
Small Groups. In a two-person group, or dyad, each member knows that if the other leaves, the group task will not be accomplished. Also, the dyad has none of the mechanisms that are available in larger groups to resolve disputes—members can't appeal to group norms, to majority opinion, or to another group member to help settle disagreements. As a result, dyads are characterized by tension and anxiety. Each member is reluctant to give opinions and continually asks for opinions. There are either high levels of antagonism or conscious attempts to hide latent antagonism. Not surprisingly, dyads are unstable.

Three-person groups, triads, have a tendency for coalition formation, with two members uniting against the other. The minority member

8. For a comprehensive, though a bit dated, review, see R. D. Clark, III, "Cruup Induced Shift Toward Risk: A Critical Appraisal," *Psychological Bulletin* 76 (1971): 251-71. For a recent summary of studies relating to the risky shift phenomenon, see R. W. Napju and M. K. Gershenfeld, *Groups: Theory and Experience*, 3d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985), 202-203.

9. Much of this discussion is based on F. A. Shull, A. I. Delbecq, and L. L. Cummings, *Organizational Decision Making* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1970), 144-51. h, examinations of the role of group size, see L. L. Cummings, G. P. Huber, and E. Aronson, "Effects of Size and Spatial Arrangements on Group Decision Making," *Academy of Management Journal* 17 (1974): 460-75; and C. E. Manners, Jr., "Another Look at Groups: Group Problem Solving, and Member Consensus," *Academy of Management Journal*, 19 (1975): 715-24.

Group size may affect member satisfaction, decision quality, and other group outcomes.



in a triad is necessarily an isolate and is likely to be resentful. Triads also tend to be unstable, with considerable shifting of coalitions.

With four-person groups, there is a good chance of a tie vote, and thus of a stalemate. While ties are possible with any even-sized group, the chances decrease as the group gets larger. Further, interactions in groups of four or fewer members tend to be highly personalized. Members feel that they are personally tied to their statements. As a result, it is hard for them to change their opinions without losing face.

Large Groups. When groups are larger than six or seven members, a variety of difficulties arise. For example:

- A As size increases, the potential number of interactions increases geometrically. As a result, coordination becomes very difficult.
- A Because of difficulties in coordination, there are tendencies to centralize communication flows.
- A As size increases, each person has less chance to make inputs.
- A In large groups, dominant members become increasingly aggressive.
- A When group size exceeds six or seven members, we have difficulty thinking of members as individuals.
- A In large groups, some members become passive, sitting back and remaining quiet.

Large groups do have some advantages. They permit a wide range of member inputs, so they may be helpful if a very large number of alternatives must be generated, or if much information must be brought to bear on a problem.

Five-Person Groups. Five-member groups seem to have a number of benefits. For instance:

- ▲ If all members vote, there cannot be a tie.
- ▲ In the event of a disagreement, the group tends to split into a majority of three and a minority of two. So, there does not tend to be a single isolated individual.
- ▲ The group is small enough to let everyone make inputs but big enough to allow members to change their opinions and roles

Choosing an Appropriate Group Size. The characteristics of groups of various sizes suggest that for most purposes a five-person group is best. If creativity is needed, a larger group may be helpful. These suggestions are supported by empirical evidence, summarized in Figure 15-5; We should note, however, that if larger groups are needed, it may be best to use a group technique that avoids some of the problems of large interacting groups. We will consider two such techniques—the nominal group technique and the Delphi process—in the next chapter. Sometimes, of course, it may simply be best not to use a group. Finally, common sense should be used. It may be too costly to bring more than a few individuals together. Or, there may be more than five people who for one reason or another must be involved.

Group Spatial Arrangements¹⁰

Spatial arrangements of group members may impact on such things as anxiety, perceptions of leadership and status, communication flows, and the propensity to behave in various ways.

Territoriality. **Individual territory** and **group territory** refer to fixed areas over which an individual or a group takes a proprietary interest. An example of individual territory would be a favorite chair, or a work space that is considered to be private. A gang's turf, a section of the corner eatery that is used only by locals, or a conference room reserved for meetings by executives would be examples of group territory. Territory

¹⁰O. This section relies heavily on A. C. Filley, *Interpersonal Conflict Resolution* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Company, 1975).

Figure 15*5

HOW GROUP SIZE
INFLUENCES OUTCOMES

Maximized at Small Size)	Maximized at Size 5 or 6	Maximized at Larger Size
Member participation Member consensus	Emergence of effective leadership Decision quality Member satisfaction	Range of member inputs

jealously guarded. When entering another's territory, one is a bit uncomfortable.

Personal Space. **Personal space** is the self-established area of privacy and control which surrounds a person. Like territoriality, it implies a sort of ownership. However, personal space moves with the individual. Edward Hall (1968) has characterized personal space in terms of four zones as follows:

- A The **intimate** zone is a bubble extending, **for** Americans, to about 18 inches from the skin. As the name implies, we allow others to enter this space for only the very best of reasons, such as lovemaking, protecting, and comforting. When other circumstances—such as a crowded elevator—force us to allow people into our intimate space, we tend to treat them as objects rather than persons.
- A The **personal zone** ranges from about one and one-half to four feet from the person. It is used for comfortable interaction with others and connotes closeness and friendship.
- A The social zone, from 4 to 12 feet, is used for most impersonal business. People working together use the inner part of this zone. The outer part is used for more formal interactions.
- A The **public** zone, more than 12 feet, is beyond the range of comfortable interaction.

These distances vary by culture. Businesspersons entering other cultures must be especially careful to learn appropriate zones for various interactions. Typically, people experience discomfort when their personal space is improperly entered. They will generally protest or leave the situation rather than accept it.

Seating Arrangements. Seating arrangements are important. High-status individuals choose positions of high potential eye contact

with others, such as the front of a room or the head of a table. Interestingly, a person randomly placed in a position of high eye contact is more likely to be perceived as a leader, or is more likely to be selected as a leader, than a person in a position of low eye contact. Also, communication flows are likely to be directed to this visible person, and he likely to be perceived as having high status.

Further, if individuals are allowed to select themselves around a table, they tend to choose arrangements deemed appropriate for the task. When people expect to be cooperating, they sit side by side. When they expect to compete, they tend to sit face to face. It may be that these positions are most comfortable for the particular tasks, or that they are simply the "expected" positions.

People seated in formal arrangements experience greater anxiety than those allowed to choose positions.¹¹ And, when people are seated in ways suggesting a particular interaction style, their potential for cooperation or competition changes accordingly.

THE INFORMAL ORGANIZATION

As we suggested earlier, informal groups may be very important in organizations. Together, the patterns of behavior and influence grown out of friendship and interest groups comprise what is termed the informal organization. George Homans has provided a useful framework for understanding the informal organization. His model is presented in Figure 15-6. The model consists of four stages, moving from left to right

Environment

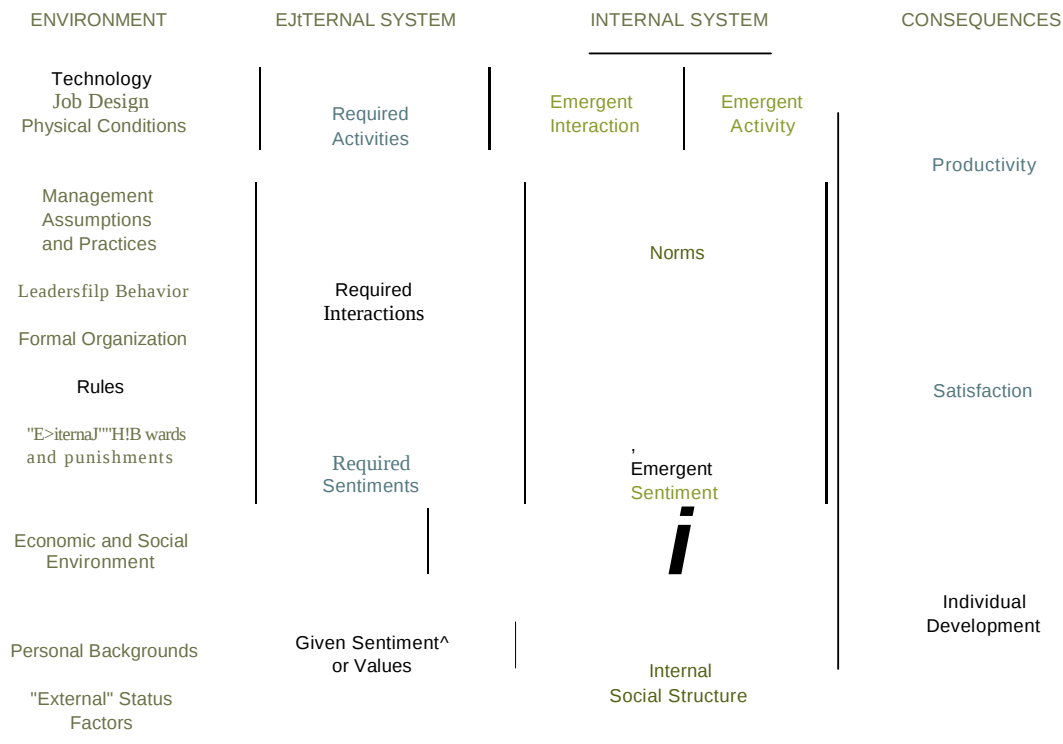
The first stage is made up of the environment that influences group behavior. The environment includes the physical aspects of the task to be accomplished, organizational policies and practices, organizational climate, the external environment, and personal backgrounds of members. These factors interact to impact on the second stage, the external system.

External System

The external system is directly influenced by the environment. It includes required activities, interactions, and sentiments, given sentiments or values, and their interactions. Required activities are in which members must perform as part of their jobs. They result

11. R. K. Myers, "Some Effects of Seating Arrangements in Counseling," unpublished doctoral dissertation [University of Florida, 1969]

15-6 THE HOMANS MODEL OF WORK BEHAVIOR



Source: Adapted from Arthur N. Turner, "A Conceptual Scheme for Describing Work-Group Behavior" in Paul R. Lawrence and John A. Seller, *Organizational Behavior and Administration*. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. and The Dorsey Press, 1965, p. 158 Copyright © 1961 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted by permission of the Harvard Business School.

factors such as the nature of the job, organizational policies, leadership styles, and the external environment. Required interactions also result from job demands. A manager may have to interact with subordinates on a regular basis. Or, the formal job description may state that a marketing manager is responsible for liaison with consumer groups. Required sentiments are attitudes an individual must possess to be able to perform acceptably. A doctor must have a respect for life, a judge a belief in justice, and a scholar a reverence for knowledge. At a broader level, employees must feel that they should put in a fair day's work. Finally, given sentiments or values are other attitudes employees hold which are neither prohibited nor required. For instance, these may be feelings about politics, religion, or other employees.

Internal System

According to Homans, the **internal system** is the elaboration of group behavior that simultaneously arises out of the external system and reacts upon it. It is called internal since it is not directly conditioned by the environment. The internal system is comprised of emergent activities, interactions, and sentiments. Emergent activities are activities that are spontaneously evolved to express the attitudes of persons toward one another. Emergent interactions are social interactions that develop over time. Emergent sentiments develop on the job. They include things such as a liking or disliking for other persons and approval or disapproval of the things they do. As shown in Figure 15-6, these emergent activities, interactions, and sentiments are mutually dependent. For instance, Homans argues that people who interact frequently tend to have stronger sentiments of friendship for one another. And, people who feel sentiments of liking for one another will express those sentiments in activities beyond those required.

As group norms (a type of sentiment) develop from this interplay, they are communicated to group members through verbal and nonverbal interaction. Emergent group activity is, in turn, influenced. Further, social structure develops within the group. For instance, some members begin to rank above others in the group because their activities are evaluated highly according to standards set by the group norms.

Consequences

Finally, the internal system influences the **consequences**, or outcomes, such as productivity, satisfaction, and individual development. Since the activities, interactions, and sentiments that emerge may be different from those required, management may be surprised—perhaps unpleasantly—by these outcomes. For instance, as the vignette drawn from Donald Roy's work suggested, management actions may cause such reactions as rate restriction, resistance to management directives, and hard feelings.

STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

The Homans model provides a view of how the informal organization develops which also provides insights into group process. In this section, we will examine the related issue of how groups grow (or don't grow) toward maturity. While the Homans model applies to informal groups, these stages in the movement toward maturity can be applied to either formal or informal groups.

Groups rarely function effectively when they are first formed. Members need to get to know one another, to understand the group's goals, to see how they fit into the group, and so on. Some groups never leave this disoriented, groping state. Others achieve a sort of maturity. Some characteristics of mature groups include:^{12*}

- A Members functioning as a unit;
- A Members participating effectively in the group effort;
- A Members being oriented toward a single goal;
- A Members having the equipment; tools, and skills necessary to attain the group's goals; and
- A Members asking and receiving suggestions, opinions, and information from each other.

Groups generally go through five stages in reaching maturity. They do not necessarily move neatly from one stage to another.¹³ They may be in different stages simultaneously, and they may even move backward in the stages. However, proper development requires that groups deal with each stage. Unfortunately, few groups fully realize their potential by reaching the final stage.

Stage 1; Membership

At this first stage people are deciding the degree to which they want to become committed to the group. They ask whether the benefits of membership outweigh the costs of time, effort, and personal vulnerability which may be required. People are "feeling their way" at this stage, testing how they fit in the group. They are generally unwilling to take strong stands. Group goals at this stage are often unclear, and it is hard for the group to be productive. Members size one another up, begin to make linkages with others, and see how their personal goals fit with group goals.

Stage 2: Subgrouping

Here, members form subgroups with others who are similar in terms of interests, values, needs, perceptions, or other characteristics.

12. Bass, *Organizational Psychology*.

13. These stages are based on S. L. Obert, "The Development of Organizational Task Groups" unpublished doctoral dissertation (Case Western Reserve University, 1979). For a fuller discussion, see Bradford, *Group Dynamics*, 33-36. For other views of stages of group development, see L. N. Jewell and H. I. Reitz, *Group Effectiveness in Organizations* [Glenview, IL: Scott, Foreman St. Company, 1981]; and B. W. Tuckman and M. A. C. Jensen, "Stages of Small Group Development Revisited," *Group and Organizational Studies* 2 (1977); 419-27.

This gives them a sense of support and encourages them to take risks and voice disagreements. There is a sense that subgroups, rather than individuals, are interacting. At this stage group goals become more clear, most members have made a commitment to those goals, cohesiveness and norms develop, and group output increases. However, subgroup loyalties may lead to harmful rivalries between subgroups and reluctance to disagree with other subgroup members. Leaders may encourage development beyond this stage by highlighting disagreements within subgroups and similarities across subgroups.

Stage 3: Confrontation

Once individuals feel that they can take an unpopular position without being isolated, they are willing to express disagreements and engage in conflict. Such conflict typically first occurs across subgroups. While initially unsettling, conflict brings out diverse viewpoints and ensures that issues will be dealt with rather than avoided. When the group can handle confrontation and deal with disagreements constructively, real progress is possible. Such resolution tends to unify the group and to make subgroups more fluid in composition. However, there is a danger that, having successfully resolved some conflict and desiring to remain a happy group, members will become afraid to "rock the boat." Good leadership is needed here to see that disagreements continue to be aired and that conflict remains depersonalized.

Stage 4: Individual Differentiation'

In Stage 4, groups begin to approach their potential. Since it is recognized that members are pursuing commonly-agreed-upon goals, members feel free to be themselves. Members are given considerable autonomy to pursue their own areas of responsibility. Groups at this stage are hard working and effective. Meetings are intense. Because there is an emphasis on self-reliance, however, members may be unwilling to seek support from others. Relatively few groups reach this stage,

Stage 5: Collaboration

This stage differs from the fourth in the sense that members are now mutually supportive in reaching the group's goals. Support either with assignments or in interpersonal areas. While conflicts continue to occur, they are task oriented. If members don't successfully carry out their duties, there is initial confrontation followed by assistance to prevent future failure.

GROUPTHINK

Especially when they are dealing with important and controversial issues, interacting groups are prone to a phenomenon which Irving Janis [1971;1982] has termed groupthink. **Groupthink** is a condition in which group members overemphasize concurrence seeking at the expense of realistic appraisal. Group norms develop which bolster morale at the expense of critical thinking.

Symptoms of Groupthink

Janis has proposed the following symptoms of groupthink:

- A Victims of groupthink share an illusion of invulnerability. This reassures them about dangers and causes overoptimism and failure to respond to warnings of danger.
- A Victims of groupthink rationalize to discount warnings and other negative feedback.
- A Victims of groupthink believe unquestioningly in the inherent morality of the group. Since they believe that what they are doing is right, they ignore ethical or moral consequences of their decisions.
- A Victims of groupthink hold stereotyped views of members of opposing groups. Such members are seen as weak or ignorant or evil.
- A Victims of groupthink apply pressure to anyone who expresses doubts about the group's shared illusions or who questions the validity of the arguments supporting a policy alternative favored by the majority.
- A Victims of groupthink practice self-censorship, keeping silent about their misgivings and even minimizing to themselves the importance of their doubts.
- A Victims of groupthink share an illusion of unanimity within the group concerning judgments expressed by members who speak in favor of the majority view.
- A Victims of groupthink sometimes appoint themselves as mind-guards acting to shield the group from adverse information that might break the shared complacency about the effectiveness and morality of past decisions.

Products of Groupthink

Groupthink results in a number of consequences which interfere with effective group decision making. For instance, the group limits its

discussion to just a few alternatives. After a course of action is initially selected, members ignore new information concerning its risks and drawbacks. At the same time, they avoid information concerning benefits of rejected alternatives. Members make little attempt to use experts to obtain more precise information. And, because they are so confident that things will turn out well, group members fail to consider things that may go wrong and, thus, do not develop contingency plans.

Preventing Groupthink

Groupthink is clearly an undesirable and potentially dangerous phenomenon. Janis sees it as a major contributor to such faulty decisions as the failure to prepare for the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the escalation of the Vietnam conflict. The same sorts of processes undoubtedly occur in business organizations as well. As a result, Janis provides the following suggestions for preventing groupthink. These are good guidelines to keep in mind any time a group is used for problem solving.

- A The group leader should encourage all group members to air doubts and objections. ▲ When key members of a hierarchy assign a mission to a group, they should adopt an impartial stance rather than initially state their preferences. A Before the group reaches a final consensus, the leader should encourage members to discuss the group's deliberations with trusted associates and then report their reactions back to the group. A The group should invite outside experts to meetings and encourage them to challenge members' views. A When the issue being dealt with involves a competitor, time, should be devoted to assessment of warning signals from the competitor and of alternative scenarios of the competitor's intentions. A When the group is considering alternatives, it should from time to time split into subgroups to meet separately, under different chairpersons, and then get together to resolve differences.
- ▲\A After a preliminary consensus concerning the preferred alternative is reached, the group should hold a "second-chance" meeting at which members express remaining doubts and rethink the entire issue before making a final choice.

Devil's Advocate. A final suggestion for preventing groupthink: "suggested by Janis is the devil's advocate. A **devil's advocate** is a

member who acts as a critic of the plan.¹⁴ The devil's advocate tries to ferret out problems with the plan and to propose reasons why it should not be adopted. The advocate's role is to create dissonance, ensuring that the group takes a hard second look at its preferred alternative.

Having an individual designated as the devil's advocate makes it clear that an adversarial stance is legitimate. It brings out criticisms that might not otherwise emerge, and it highlights underlying assumptions.

Nevertheless, there are problems with the devil's advocate approach. For one thing, some people become demoralized if their views are constantly criticized. As a result, they may come up with safe solutions, not especially creative or risky, but able to stand up to criticism. Also, if the devil's advocate is successful in finding problems with the plan, there is no new plan to take its place. The devil's advocate approach focuses on what is wrong without pointing out what is right.

Dialectical Inquiry. Dialectical inquiry tries to accomplish the goals of the devil's advocate approach in a more constructive way. **Dialectical inquiry** is a procedure in which a situation is approached from two opposite points of view. It is hoped that out of this clash of a thesis and an antithesis, a creative synthesis will emerge. The steps of dialectical inquiry include:¹⁵

1. A plan and the data used to derive it are identified.
2. An attempt is made to identify the assumptions underlying the plan.
3. A counterplan is identified which is feasible, politically viable, and generally credible but rests on assumptions which are "opposite" those supporting the plan. These "opposite" assumptions should represent the most serious competition for the assumptions of the plan. Thus, the "opposite" of the assumptions of capitalism might be those of communism.
4. A structured debate is conducted in which those responsible for formulating strategy hear arguments in support of the plan and the counterplan.

5. For discussions of the devil's advocate, see R. O. Mason, "A Dialectical Approach to Strategic Planning," *Management Science* 15 (1969): B403-B414; and T. T. Herbert and R. W. Estes, "Improving Executive Decisions by Formalizing Dissent: The Corporate Devil's Advocate," *Academy of Management Review* 1 (1977): 662-67.

6. Dialectical inquiry is based on the writings of G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of the Mind* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964). These steps are based on Mason, *Dialectical Approach*. For further information on the controversy surrounding dialectical inquiry, see R. A. Cosier, "Dialectical Inquiry in Strategic Planning: A Case of Premature Acceptance?" *Academy of Management Review* 6 (1981): 643-48; _____, "Further Thoughts on Dialectical Inquiry: A Rejoinder to Mitroff and Mason," *Academy of Management Review* 6 (1981): 653-54; L. I. Mitroff and R. O. Mason, "The Metaphysics of Policy and Planning: A Reply to Cosier," *Academy of Management Review* 6 (1981): 649-51; and C. R. Schwenk and R. A. Cosier, "Effects of Expert, Devil's Advocate, and Dialectical Inquiry Methods on Prediction Performance," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* 26(1980):409-24.

5. A "creative synthesis" is arrived at by plan formulators including the best elements of both alternatives.

While dialectical inquiry represents a potentially constructive approach, it is time consuming and requires considerable training. Also, it may lead to a series of compromises between the original plan and the counterplan. If the original plan was correct, this will be unfortunate.

Evidence on the devil's advocate approach and dialectical inquiry is unclear. It does seem that if the devil's advocate approach is used, the devil's advocate should adopt an impersonal, lawyer-like demeanor rather than act as a vindictive, carping critic. Many users of dialectical inquiry have found it to be very useful. Nevertheless, experimental evidence comparing dialectical inquiry with the devil's advocate has tended to favor the latter.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING GROUP MEETINGS

Many managers regularly face the task of conducting group meetings. While these meetings can be structured in many ways, a common form is the committee meeting. In such a meeting members are typically free to interact as they explore issues, generate alternatives, make choices, and so on. Committee meetings are often among the most frustrating of humanity's inventions. Dominant members control the process, the meeting wanders onto wondrous tangents, and some members are reluctant to make inputs.

In the next chapter we will consider a variety of alternatives to the committee. In this section, we present George Huber's (1980) useful set of guidelines for managing committees. Basically, Huber calls for definition of the committee's assignment and application of the traditional management functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling to committee management. Following is a summary of guidelines.

Defining the Committee's Assignment

This involves specification of the committee's purpose, responsibility, and needs. If possible, each should be stated in writing.

- A What is the issue with which the group must deal? What is its scope?
- A What is the group's responsibility? to make the final decision to give advice? to exchange information?

- A What are the requirements the group must meet? For instance, what are the deadlines? What should be the format of the group output?

Planning the Overall Group Effort

Once the group's assignment is defined, it is necessary to plan the group effort systematically to accomplish that assignment.

- ▲ Divide the group's overall assignment into parts. This helps overcome psychological hurdles and makes it easier to develop estimates of time and resource needs.
- ▲ Estimate the time and other resources needed to complete each part of the assignment and the overall assignment.
- A Determine the time and other resources available, and take appropriate actions to reduce any gaps between what is needed and what is available. This may involve changing the assignment, getting the deadline extended, or making other adjustments.

Organizing and Staffing the Committee

The group's composition has a major effect on how well it does, as well as on satisfaction of its members. The following suggestions may prove helpful.

- A Make sure that key information is available. It is important to specify information needs early and to staff accordingly.
- A Make sure that those who will be affected get to participate. This will reduce later resistance to the decision. Participation may take many forms, such as group membership, interviews, or hearings.
- A Do not allow past practices to dictate group membership. New members bring a fresh perspective and different expertise. And, participation is a developmental experience.
- A Appoint a leader who is group oriented yet willing and able to exert control. The leader should try to facilitate the group's efforts rather than assign his or her will. Still, groups with leaders who are unwilling to control when needed tend to be ineffective and to have dissatisfied members.
- A Consider having different members participate in different parts of the overall assignment. For instance, it may be useful to have one set of members explore the problem, another (such as a search committee) generate alternatives, and so on.

Directing and Controlling the Committee

At this point, it is time to actually have the committee carry out its assignment.

- ▲ Help the group members get acquainted. For instance, distribute biographical sketches, hold coffee hours for members to chat, or have members introduce themselves at the first meeting.
- ▲ Help the group follow the plan. To do this:
 - a. At the beginning of each meeting, review the progress made to date and establish the task of the individual meeting.
 - b. As early as possible in the meeting, get a report from each member with a preassigned task.
 - c. At the end of the meeting, summarize what was accomplished, where this puts the group on its schedule, and what will be the group task at the next meeting.
 - d. At the end of the meeting, make public and clear which members have which assignments to complete by the next meeting.
- ▲ Use information displays such as chalkboards, flipcharts, and handouts.
- ▲ Help the group achieve equitable participation by managing the discussion. This may involve use of guiding comments such as, "We've heard the case for this proposal. Now let's hear the arguments against it." Or, members can be asked to take turns when giving their views.
- ▲ Focus on agreement about the reasonableness of the reason rather than on agreement about the choice itself.
 - a. Early in the choice-making step, have the group agree on how it will ultimately make its choice.
 - b. Have the group agree to be satisfied with the situation when members understand the reasoning that leads to group choice.
 - c. Obtain an explicit indication that the prevailing reason is understood by each group member.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

As a manager, you will regularly be called on to work with] as a leader, member, observer, or even adversary. It is crucial that ml

have an understanding of group characteristics and processes, as well as of how groups form and mature.

You will deal with both formal and informal groups. People join these groups for many reasons and, for generally similar reasons, want to remain in them. The groups will not easily dissolve. They can certainly not be wished away. Be especially careful to recognize the importance of informal groups and to work with them to achieve organizational goals. Remember that, because of the workings of the informal organization, actions required by management may meet with resistance and other unintended consequences. Try to anticipate such reactions and consequences.

When specifying desired behaviors for group members, try to make your expectations clear in order to avoid role ambiguity. Ask, too, whether you are contributing to role conflict. See if there are things you can do to help your subordinates deal with role overload.

Most managers expect their subordinates to show some degree of conformity to norms. After all, norms reflect important group sentiments. However, conformity may be good or bad for the organization, depending on the norm. Further, very high levels of conformity, whatever the norm, may be undesirable. At the extreme, they may lead to unethical behavior, unquestioning obedience to authority, and lack of creativity.

Since risk taking is an important dimension in organizations, you may want to use groups to influence the level of risk taking. For most business-related decisions, such as those dealing with finances, group interaction results in riskier decisions. So, if risk is desired, a group process may be helpful. If conditions call for risk aversion, group processes should be used with caution.

When forming and organizing a group, give some consideration to the issues of size and spatial arrangements. For instance, a group size of five is optimal for many purposes. And, if cooperation is desired, face-to-face seating of potential adversaries should be avoided.

When managing groups, be aware of the stages of development through which they must pass on the rocky road to maturity. Don't expect harmony and consensus at each of those stages. In fact, the lack of disagreement and differentiation may reflect group stagnation, and even groupthink. Anticipate conflicts and view them as necessary steps to group progress.

If symptoms of groupthink do occur in a group of which you are a member or leader, take steps to shake the group out of its comfortable shell. Invite outside opinions and install mechanisms to generate healthy criticism. Such formalized techniques as the devil's advocate and dialectical inquiry may be especially helpful.

Finally, if you are called on to run group meetings, provide enough structure to help offset the tangents, passivity, and other problems for which such meetings are noted. Plan, organize, staff, direct, and control the group process. Such structure is generally welcomed.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

ad hoc committees command groups or functional groups consequences devil's advocate dialectical inquiry enacted role external system formal groups friendship groups group group cohesiveness group territory ■group think individual territory informal groups informal organization interest groups internal system interrole conflict intersender role conflict intimate zone intrasender role conflict	linking pin minimum resource theory norms person-role conflict personal space personal zone public zone received role risky shift phenomenon role role ambiguity role conflict role overload role set self-managing work groups sent role social zone socialization standing committees status status symbols task groups or committees
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REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why should managers be concerned with groups in organizations?
2. What is the difference between a formal group and an informal group? between a command group and a task group? between a friendship group and an interest group?
3. Identify four reasons why people join groups.
4. What are some consequences of group cohesiveness?
5. Describe the various types of role conflict.
6. Cite five things that affect achieved status.
7. Identify possible problems with conformity to group norms.
8. What is the minimum resource theory?
9. Describe the risky shift phenomenon and cite explanation for that phenomenon.
10. How do group size and spatial arrangements impact on group outcomes?
11. What are the stages in Homans' model of the informal organization?
12. Define the stages in group development.
13. Describe groupthink and give four suggestions for overcoming it.
14. Give four guidelines for organizing and staffing the decision¹ group.

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CASE 15 A Nurse-Managed Nursing

For a long time, nursing has been the quintessential number two position: It combines slot of responsibility with little autonomy or glory. The idea of being stuck in perpetual second place has driven some educated, ambitious nurses right out of the profession.

But some of the ambitious ones who stayed have begun to shape a new role for themselves: number one. And as these nurses change their jobs, they also forge new relationships with doctors and patients.

In their new roles, nurses—not doctors or hospital administrators—manage their own businesses. Some nurses have set up independent practices, hanging out shingles and seeing patients without doctors present. Other nurses have set up nurse-managed clinics or centers.

The idea that nurses can have a practice separate from doctors may be hard for some to digest. Nursing has evolved in the public consciousness as a kind of assistant doctor position, the job of carrying out orders, cleaning up, and holding hands after the real work is done.

Actually, nurses say, their work can be different from, and can complement, doctors' work. Doctors tend to see patients who are ill or injured and in need of immediate attention. Nurses can keep watch over people's health from month to month; they can monitor long-term problems like emphysema, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, or Parkinson's disease. And they can do routine physical exams to spot minor ailments before they become major ones. Certain

groups of the population—especially children, the elderly, and women, all of whom need regular exams—are the nurses' natural constituency.

Many doctors are uneasy about nurse-controlled nursing. The doctor glut in this country means no welcome to potential competitors. More than that, doctors say they worry that nurses will overstep their bounds, assuming a medical role without the training. "If a nurse wants to practice medicine, a nurse should go to medical school," says William R. DeLay of the American Academy of Family Physicians. "And if more physicians' services are needed in a community, another physician should be brought there."

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1. What needs of nurses do you think are fulfilled by the establishment of nurse-managed clinics or centers?
2. How is nurse-managed nursing likely to impact on nurses' roles? on their status; on their power?
3. This case indicates that some doctors oppose nurse-managed nursing because of potential competition and concerns about competence. Can you suggest other possible reasons for their opposition?

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