

**Team Development and
Organisational Development as
Means for Conflict Prevention and
Conflict Resolution**

Rudi Ballreich &
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Abstract

In this article, we identify five levels of cooperation within teams: the individual members, the content level, the interaction level, the procedural level and the level that governs the quality of external relations of the group to its environment. Each of these levels can be a source of conflict potential and therefore a good starting point for efforts at conflict resolution. We offer a number of suggestions for addressing conflict within teams at all these levels. In particular, we propose the rethinking of individual roles and of methods of team decision-making.

It is also essential, if conflict potential is to be properly addressed, to correctly diagnose the team's level of development: 'Forming / Storming' (team constitutes itself; team members assume individual roles), 'Norming' (group reaches rational agreements, aimed at maximising the effectiveness of its performance), 'Performing' (group clarifies issues on the rational, emotional and intentional levels) and 'Reforming' (group learns how to reconstitute itself on short notice and to structure its interactions and working methods creatively).

For each of these phases, we assess conflict potentials and opportunities for conflict management. As they come to understand these, teams will find that they are more able to quickly recognise conflicts at their inception and constructively approach them with all the means at their disposal.

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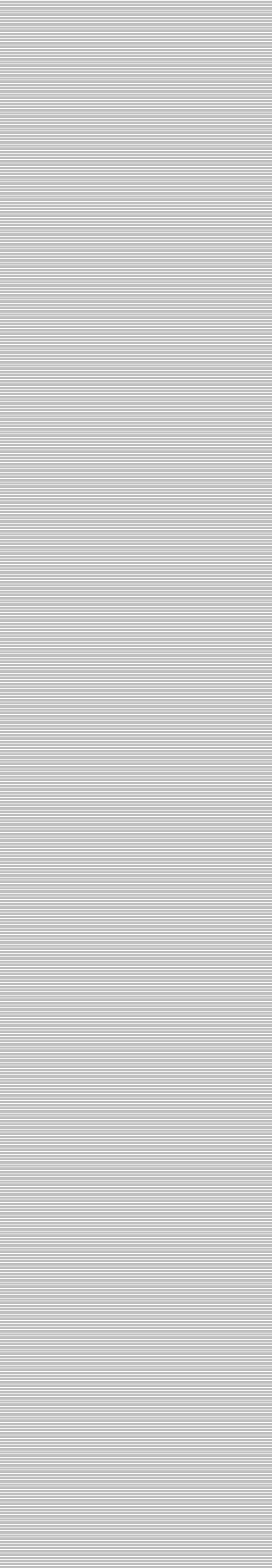
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Most professional third parties working in the fields of conflict resolution, peace building and conflict settlement are themselves operating in some form of organisational context, and function as members of a team in a large-scale organisation. Consequently, they are often subject to tensions and conflicts, which can impair their activity in the field.

In a representative survey conducted in the Netherlands during 1984 (Glasl 1984), social workers throughout the country were questioned about conflicts in their organisational environment. The results show that the very individuals who regularly and successfully help their clients to solve 'hot' conflicts (carried out openly and with great emotion) themselves suffer from many 'cold' conflicts (expressed covertly) in their own organisations, and generally fail to deal with these in a professional manner. Instead, such conflicts are deflected or allowed to drag on, and have destructive ramifications on the client-related work in the field of conflict. In some cases, the stress of this situation can even lead to burn-out problems and retreat from this field of occupation.

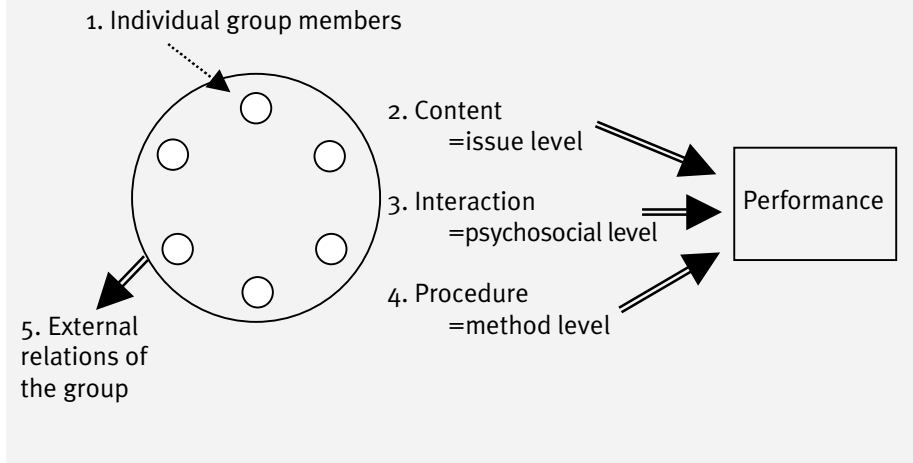
It is for this reason that a proper understanding of conflict potential within teams and organisations is imperative. In this article, we will outline the most frequently observed potential sources of conflict, and then suggest some possible ways to utilise conflict transformation and resolution. After all, at least during the first three stages of escalation (Glasl 1999, p. 83 ff), the affected parties can usually themselves undertake the work of conflict resolution with a good chance of success. It is only later that it becomes necessary for organisations to call in professional external assistance from conflict experts in order to deal with their own internal problems of conflict (Glasl 1999, pp. 118 ff).

II. Teams as Potential for Conflict

Teams are defined as work groups that are charged with the fulfilment of a performance task which requires joint cooperation. This distinguishes them clearly from other groups, which might instead seek to attain individual learning results that are acquired in groups, or merely cultivate social and other forms of contacts.

In order to achieve this desired performance, good conditions must either exist or be created at all five levels within the team (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: The five levels of teamwork



The five levels of teamwork are defined as follows:

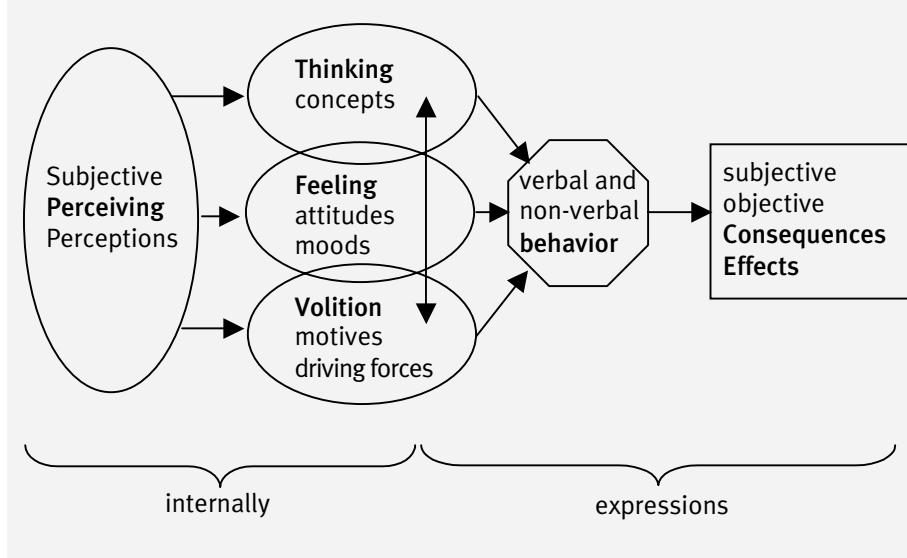
1. **Individual group members:** this is a function of the individual personalities, as well as of their perceptions, concepts and ideas, emotions, intentions and behaviours.
2. **Content, issue level:** the focus here is on the issue topic, and on the task to be performed.
3. **Interaction, psychosocial level:** the mutual attitudes of the group members are important, as well as the state of relations between them, and the observed climate, roles, and behaviour patterns.
4. **Procedure, method level:** techniques of problem-solving in a team, such as analysis methods, decision methods, creativity techniques, formal internal rules for the team, and use of auxiliary means.
5. **External group relations:** the way in which information and contacts are cultivated with the rest of the organisation including rules regarding deputising.

Each of these five levels can spawn potential for conflict and can therefore also be a good starting point for conflict resolution. As the levels are also mutually networked, they can also influence each other and thus create further indirect potential for conflict. The dynamics of a group are, consequently, complicated and difficult to analyse. Often a problem will arise at one level, for instance on level 4, if a complex decision is to be taken with unsuitable methods, but be manifested for example at level 3 (interaction = psychosocial level), as team relations become burdened by mutual irritation. Finally, this could conceivably lead to further consequences at level 1 (the individual group member), if one person chooses to leave the group, depriving the team of his or her knowledge and skills.

III.1 The Individual Group Member as Potential for Conflict

A group member can struggle with *intrapsychological* tensions and conflicts, and express these externally as he seeks to cooperate with other team members. The known conflict mechanisms in this context (Rubin / Pruitt / Kim 1994 pp. 11 ff, Glasl 1997 pp. 34 ff, Glasl 1999 p. 19 ff) usually appear within individuals (Fig. 2) and corrupt their perceptions, thinking, feeling, volition, and external behaviour.

Fig. 2: Intrapsychological factors



These intra-psychological mechanisms can only be generally sketched out at this point. Nevertheless, understanding them is critical if conflicts are to be successfully processed in teams or organisations.

The **perception capability** of the individual can be strongly impaired through the effects of stress, tension and pressure. The result can lead to selective or distorted perception, ‘cognitive short-sightedness’, or even the fading out of perceptions that do not conform to the preconceived picture. This is how prejudices occur and become fixed, since all evidence which might contradict previous perceptions is suppressed and disregarded.

The **concepts and ideas which people form on the basis of such distorted perceptions** are likely to become hardened into one-sided, black-and-white pictures, which can no longer easily be corrected by further evidence or perceptions. Only information that confirms the prejudice is acknowledged.

In the **emotional sector**, empathy dries up. People become encapsulated one from another, prisoners of their own feelings. Sympathy and antipathy serve to create a polarised emotional picture. If

the conflict escalates, this can take on autistic dimensions, as all point of reference to the outside world is lost.

In the **volitional sector**, unconscious and semiconscious driving forces and motives become dominant. There can even be a trend towards fanaticism, as volition hardens into an 'all or nothing' approach characterised by demands expressed in the form of ultimatums.

Perceiving, thinking, feeling and willing all mutually reinforce one another in a vicious spiral. As escalation gyrates outwards, it can lead to regression in all spiritual areas. People no longer behave in line with the maturity commensurate with their age level. Instead, in encounters with their opponents in the conflict, their thinking, feeling and volition develop patterns which would be more appropriate to earlier development phases, but now no longer conform to the degree of maturity one should reasonably expect them to express.

In the **external behaviour** of these individuals, a notable 'impoverishment' appears. A wealth of variants is lost, as behavior becomes stereotyped and can even deteriorate to the point of compulsiveness, as the actor loses effective control of his actions.

Inevitably, this will lead to **consequences** of the conflict behavior, which corresponds to a continually lessening degree to the conscious intentions. The undesired and subconscious side effects thus gain the upper hand over the desired and conscious consequences of willed behavior.

Conflict resolution techniques can and should be applied to any one or more of these domains. Thus, the 'multi-track-approach' has for some time already been practiced in both the micro- and meso-social sectors. Practitioners have worked at unravelling false perceptions (Blake / Mouton 1964, Burton 1969, Walton 1969), allowing distorted perception mechanisms to be cleared, and hardened concepts to be dissolved. In addition to this, they have had some success in healing polarised emotions, so that empathy can be revived. Fixation on ultimatums can be properly addressed by examining alternative modes of action, as well as by reviewing one's own patterns of volition.

III.2 The Content of the Issue Level as Potential for Conflict

Officially, issues are the very substance of negotiations. Rational individuals often assume that conflicts cannot arise as long as everybody remains 'objective'. However, as a conflict escalates, issue-related and psychosocial issues become increasingly mixed. It may be necessary to collect and unravel the various themes in a dispute and look at them more precisely. Potential for conflict can easily arise at this level

if practitioners fail to recognise that any issue can be perceived and assessed differently from different perspectives of varying subject disciplines. Unfortunately, concepts can only rarely be clarified to everyone's satisfaction: the result is misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

III.3 The Interaction of Psychosocial Level as Potential For Conflict

Groups too must learn to deal with their differences openly. Such openness can only be possible if the necessary measures of esteem and confidence have developed among the participants – 'confidence that my teammates respect me and that I will not be excluded from the group, even if I say something critical'. This confidence is the 'topsoil' in which open communication and the constructive processing of conflicts flourish.

As groups cooperate, **roles** are crystallised, roles which Brocher (1967) has usefully systematised. This process establishes which group member is most suitable to undertake specific group tasks, and thus helps each member to find his or her proper place in the group.

These roles most often relate to the issue-specific work to be done "*task roles*", exemplified by seizing initiatives, co-coordinating, summarising, and presenting results. In addition to this, they concern the social level as "*group building and sustaining roles*" that encourage members to express feelings, mediate, and reduce tensions. Finally, the roles can relate as "*conflict and tension indicating roles*" to one's own experience: aggressive behaviour, dominating, blocking, competing, making jokes and withdrawal.

These roles need not necessarily be assumed by the same persons. The more flexibly individual group members can take over both sustaining and task roles, the better this will be for the work process. The fewer disturbance roles are played; since personal interests will dominate less often, the easier it will be for cooperation to succeed.

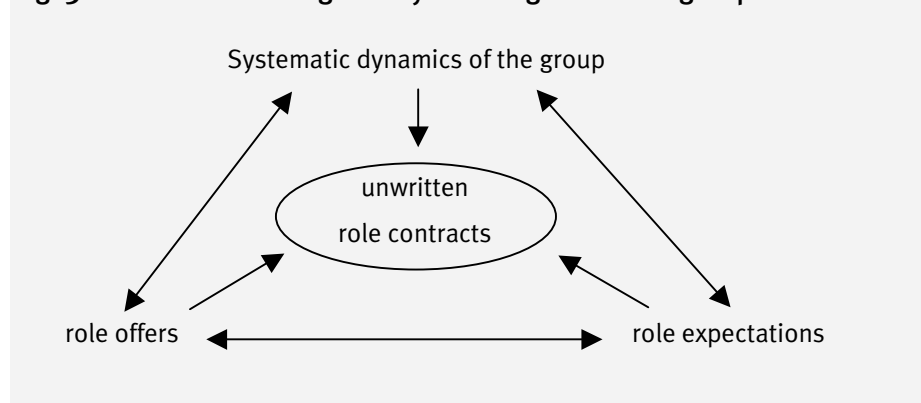
Roles are normally assumed unconsciously. 'Unwritten, implicit role agreements' arise when a team member fulfils the given expectations of his or her team-mates by means of their activities. After a few repetitions, these expectations and the behaviours they engender will become 'chronic' or 'habitual'. They will be 'taken for granted' and expected in the future as well. This is reinforced through positive sanctions: behaviour that is in line with expectations will be rewarded by affection, love, and comforts. Conversely, if expectations are not fulfilled, the behaviour will be punished by means of negative sanctions such as discomfort, punishment and threat of exclusion.

If a member of the group finds this unwritten agreement to be constraining, he or she will attempt to break out. The group will then defend itself by means of massive sanctions, as it withdraws its attention, making negative or derogatory remarks about the team member, and thus forcing resumption of the expected and customary behaviour. If this does not work, the result will be a conflict attributable to role refusal.

Each group will need to organise itself around certain roles if it is to both achieve its goals and also maintain cohesion as a team. Certain influences are extended onto the group both from the outside world and from interactions at the social level, which may well lead to the forming of group-specific interaction patterns from which individuals will find that they can only withdraw with difficulty.

This systemic and subconscious group dynamic (Fig. 3) will have an effect on new group members, forcing them into roles that would normally not become them. For instance, if one member of a group is an outsider and chooses to leave the group, it is highly probable that a new member will be pushed into this role, or that another (existing) group member will be forced to become the outsider.

Fig. 3: Factors influencing the crystallising of roles in groups



In order for groups to be able to work productively, certain core tasks must be performed. The responsibility for these, and the corresponding actions, are frequently assigned to the same individuals. Belbin (1992) investigated a number of these role types in groups, and organised them into a model. Some group members, for instance, regularly assume responsibility for creative ideas; others are particularly active when it comes to assessing, while others in turn work mostly in the field of monitoring and control.

Conflicts tend to occur when a group member:

- feels pressure from the group to assume a role which they do not want and to which he or she objects;

- experiences the allocated roles as constraining and inhibiting development,
- feels that the sanctions imposed, in order to induce him or her to maintain a role, as incommensurate;
- cannot develop acquired capabilities in the assigned role;
- wishes to go beyond an extrinsic definition of his or her role to self-definition.

In every group there are **hierarchy** roles. Each group member will ask themselves more or less consciously: 'What is my value to this organisation? Do the others acknowledge that value? Am I superfluous or can I sometimes play "top dog?"' Aware team members will also ask themselves whether the role expectations connected with their own self-image can be fulfilled in this group, and above all whether the situation in which they find themselves might one day pose a threat to their own self-confidence.

Two kinds of leadership roles are often assumed in groups (Hofstätter 1957, pp. 133 ff):

- **issue-oriented leadership (the 'father role')**: this is achieved primarily by diligence and sector-specific knowledge or expertise, helping the group in achieving its objective goals;
- **relation-oriented leadership (the 'mother role')**, which is usually a result of developed popularity among group members and serves to further social cohesion.

Both of these leadership roles can be located in the hierarchy of each group. Team members who lead in this way are either satisfied with their assigned place, or they may instead strive for further recognition through more concerted activity. Thus, the role positions are not static, but are subject to constant change as a result of the group's natural psychodynamic processes.

The following questions are of particular importance in this context:

- What position does the formal leader of the group occupy in terms of these hierarchies?
- Is there an informal leader who is held in higher regard by the group than the formal one?

Roul Schindler (1969) has described just how these dynamics of rank can play an important subliminal role in all group interactions and how they can easily lead to conflicts. The major consideration is that each group will constitute itself either in contrast to other groups or in response to specific tasks, and thus will have one or more opponents. Therefore, dynamics will develop both within the group as a function of the hierarchy of the members, and also in the context of relations with external opponents.

The following patterns can evolve:

- The **initiative carrier** is the leader. He stands for the issue.
- The **confidence bearers** are loyal to the leader. They are technically competent. They look up to the leader and hope to be leaders themselves at some stage.
- The **most popular or most diligent** is recognised as such and universally popular.
- The **majority of the group members** will willingly orient themselves towards the group's objectives and work hard to achieve them.
- The **whipping boy** is the 'black sheep' of the group. He is treated condescendingly and marginalised. He sympathises with the enemy and can become a traitor if he chooses to seek revenge.
- The **group opponent**, or whatever it is that the group seeks to master, is the primary source of resistance against which the hierarchical dynamics form.

It is essential, if good cooperation is to develop in teams, for all participants to be flexible and to assume various roles according to the requirements of the situation. For example, team members must be prepared to proceed with the objective task, or instead to work to promote the climate within the group. Sometimes they will assume leadership, while at other times, they will perform supporting tasks. Individuals too strongly fixated on their own roles, for example the shy person, the dominant person, the one who talks all the time, or the clown, can inhibit the process of cooperation. Group members must rather learn to recognise their own distinct behaviour patterns and role expectations, to review these and to adapt them to the given situation. Thus, a high degree of role flexibility is the critical hallmark of properly developed teams.

III.4 The Procedure – Method Level and Its Potential For Conflict

Conflicts are often initially experienced as **relation-specific**, even though the problems can actually be traced to a poor selection of work methods. If, for example, a decision is reached by means of an unsuitable method, it can lead to tensions between the group members. It is simply not possible to plane wood with a screwdriver, nor is it feasible to fasten screws with a plane. Teams must learn and familiarise themselves with a variety of working procedures and methods, and must become good at reaching right decisions as to which procedure is most suitable for which purpose.

In practice, many different methods have been developed for a wide variety of purposes. In her study of methods, Anna Grandori (1984) has distinguished between various “rules” (prescriptive principles) which govern the various methods:

1. **Search rules, search methods:** how can we identify alternative solutions?
2. **Selection rules, selection methods:** how can we then select the preferred alternative for this problem?
3. **Learning rules, learning methods:** how can we efficiently obtain information about a particular alternative?

These rules or methods will vary, depending on

- the **degree of uncertainty** (available information or lack of knowledge); and
- the **degree of conflicting interest** (compatibility or non-compatibility).

If all relevant facts and data are known, so that the team enjoys a fairly high degree of security, a decision will be reached differently than in situations with substantial uncertainty, for instance about future economic or political developments. Furthermore, if the persons or groups involved in the decision insist on asserting particular interests from the very start, the team will behave differently than it would were the team members less fixated on pre-existing standpoints.

Using the three “rule modes” as a base, Grandori then classifies commonly observed decision-making processes on the basis of their specific purposes:

- *Creativity methods* designed to develop completely new ideas (see also Kirst / Diekmeyer 1973, De Bono 1970, 1985) and methods for collecting facts and opinions, such as card enquiries, brainstorming

and brain writing (see Seifert 1999, 2000) are variants of the **search method**.

- Methods for *considering and selecting alternative actions*, such as ‘awarding points’ and voting on preferences (Siemens 1974, Seifert 1999) are **selection methods**.
- Techniques for *analysis of fault causes* and for *improving* products, such as Kaizen techniques (Imai 1993) are **learning methods**.

At present, many training and coaching sessions teach different techniques to the extent that an adequate survey of the field has become virtually impossible. Since many trainers seek to position their specific approach to decision-making as their own branded product for reasons of competition, the same methods - often only with slight changes - can be found bearing a wide variety of names, without any credit given to the original method and its creator or author. This inevitably leads to a dispute on method if practitioners make the claim that their own approach is the best and is universally applicable. If group members have thus attended different training sessions, they may subsequently find themselves in conflict with one another as to the question of which method is best for them. It is only when they manage to recognise and clearly define which method best serves a specific purpose that such a dispute can be effectively resolved .

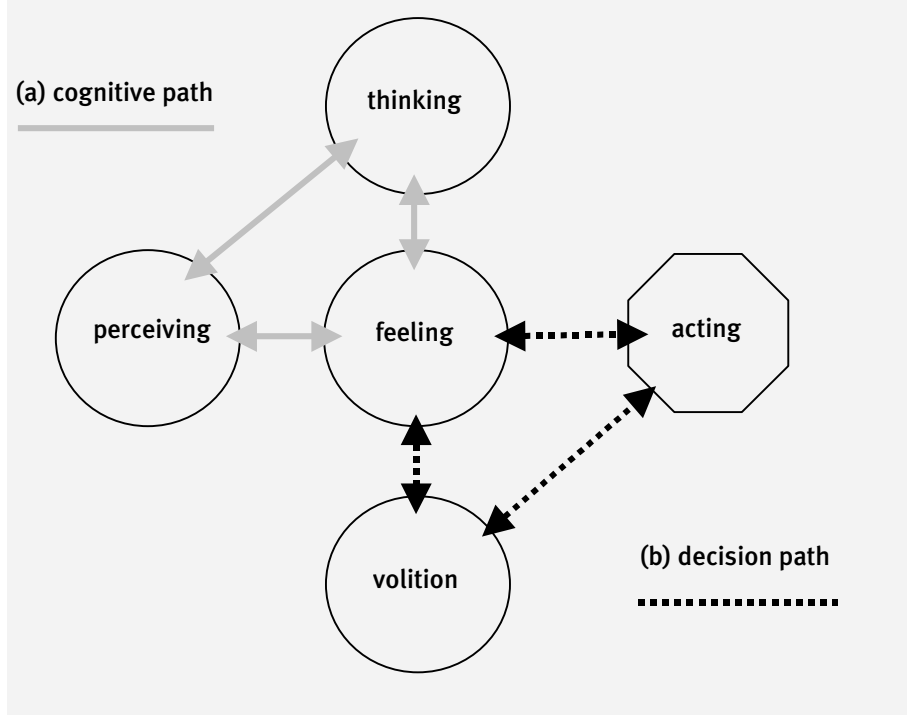
Alexander Bos (1974), in his model of “dynamic judgment formation” (see Ballreich 2000) distinguishes between two kinds of process:

- (a) the **thinking and cognitive path**, i.e. processes for analysing or diagnosing a problem in order to gain better knowledge; and
- (b) the **volition and decision path**, i.e. processes for identifying and selecting goals and alternative courses of action.

Both cases involve a process of judgment formation in which feeling plays a central role. In the case of the **cognitive path**, the team must seek to bring about a synthesis of feeling, between perceiving and reflecting. In the case of the **decision path**, it is mainly a matter of forming a bridge, by means of feeling, between the goals and the *advance thinking out* of possibilities for realisation of those goals by means of concrete actions and behaviours.

In conjunction with the model shown above in Fig. 2, this can be illustrated as in Fig. 4.

Fig. 4: The elements of the cognitive path and of the decision path



Bos also notes that some processes pursue this path in a *linear-sequential* fashion (see Glasl 1999 pp. 127 ff). Here, the teams gather all available facts in the *cognitive path*, in order that they can consider and reflect on these, then interpret and classify them. In the *decision path*, on the other hand, according to the linear sequential school, team goals are first set and discussed; only then can the possible implementation paths be examined and selected.

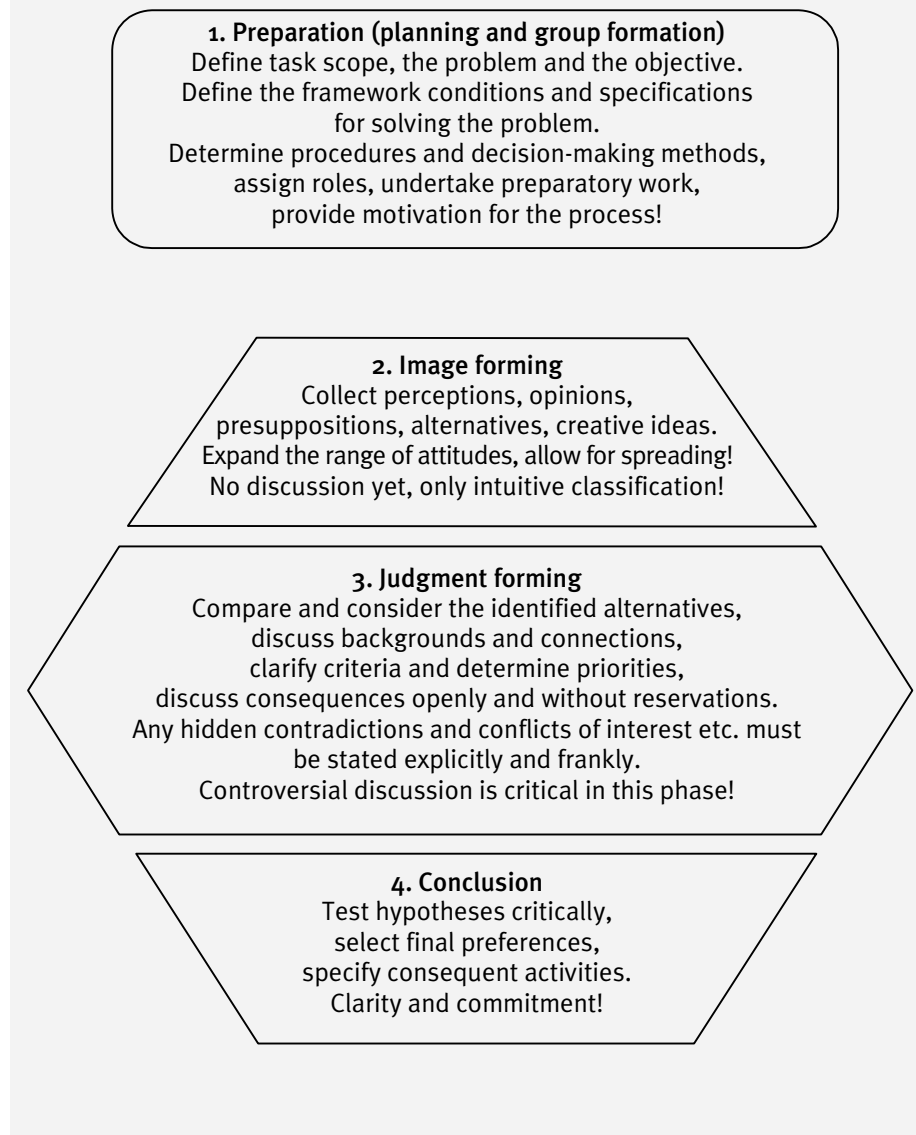
According to Bos (1974 pp. 52 ff), these approaches are to be contrasted with the “dynamic judgment forming” model, which argues instead for regular *rhythmic alternation* between the given poles of perceiving-thinking and volition-acting. In a cyclical procedure, team perceptions are continuously revisited in the *cognitive path* while formed concepts are repeatedly reviewed on the basis of what is perceived. *Feelings* of amazement or evidence-experience, of apprehension or release, of consistency or inconsistency also play a major role in this connection. In short, feeling is at the heart of judgment forming, as is illustrated below in the schematic representation.

The situation is similar in the *decision path*, as goals are examined and tested for feasibility and desirability. Only when feelings are perceived to be congruent with what is wanted and thought out in advance, is it possible to take a firm and binding decision.

It is further possible to distinguish between different phases within this process of dynamic judgment forming. First, teams must make sure that they collect sufficient empirical material: the facts must be

clearly established before interpretation and assessment can begin. Thus, qualitative phases will develop, within which a rhythmic searching motion in the spirit of Bos can take place. Fig. 5 shows four such qualitative phases on both the cognitive and the decision paths, from a bird's eye perspective. Although the specific features of the cognitive and decision paths are of importance, we will focus solely upon the principle features of the model.

Fig. 5: Qualitative phases of the cognitive and decision paths



For the **cognitive path**, the findings of Grandori and Bos concerning the potentials for conflict can be summarised as follows:

In the **preparation (planning and group formation) phase**, according to Grandori's model, *learning methods* are particularly important, since they will govern advance thinking in an initially unmanageable period. Building on this, both feeling and volition will play

a crucial role; otherwise, the group activity can quickly lose energy due to a 'cold start'. If teamwork is undertaken without adequate enthusiasm, no team member will subsequently identify with the results. Here, the group may experience a struggle between flows, as some members prefer to work spontaneously and intuitively (dominance of the volition pole), while others insist on detailed planning (dominance of the thinking pole). Furthermore, if the scope of tasks, problem complexity and objectives and the decision-making methods are not clarified sufficiently from the start, the team will experience difficulties in terms of a damaging loss of orientation.

In the **image-forming phase**, according to Grandori, the *searching and learning methods* become the most important. As explained by Bos, the polarity between perceiving and thinking, most of all, affects an exhaustive review of *perception*.

Potential for conflict can arise whenever a team lacks the necessary range of attitudes and thus cannot sufficiently expand its range of approaches. Accordingly, if the team commences discussion (the judgment-forming phase) prematurely, it will risk reinforcing any existing preconceived opinions by selective perception. If gathered material is classified too early on the basis of purely rational criteria, this can also lead to tensions, as already formed and unreflected thinking patterns can hinder the discovery of new elements.

In the **judgment-forming phase**, the *searching and selection methods* will be the most critical. Bos emphasises the importance of feeling along with the poles of perceiving-thinking, in order to derive the full benefit from existing differences by controversial discussion and ensure that the group does not fall prey to "group-think" (Janis 1972). Janis studied group behaviour in various crisis situations and showed how group pressure can exert negative sanctions on diverging opinions. This can be exemplified by group members, who are forced to join the dominant group against their better principles and conscience, for fear of being excluded. The constructive confrontation that would be required, here, must approach differences and contradictions not as threats, but instead as a source of enrichment for the group. The more forcefully the differences are articulated at the issue level, the more important it will be to express acknowledgment and regard for the person of the opponent or dissident at this level of interaction.

In the **conclusion phase**, Grandori says that the *searching methods* will dominate, as the team seeks to reach agreement on the most plausible finding. According to Bos, thinking and feeling now play the greatest roles. Potential for conflict will arise, however, as soon as doubts concerning the validity of the conclusions reached in the process arise, and the group begins to energetically contest any team member who questions the group findings. The more mature groups will make

sure that they include fundamental questioning in the final phase of their work as a form of self-performed quality control. Nevertheless, it can lead to irritations if one group member brings in new information at 'five minutes to midnight', data that should have been gathered much earlier, in the concept-forming phase.

The following key areas of analysis are relevant for the **decision path**:

As with the realisation processes, *searching methods* can be seen during **preparation**, as well as both feeling and volition. Thus, the same potential for conflict will become apparent as was described for the cognitive path. In addition, the proper clarification of the framework conditions and specifications for analysis will become relevant. This is necessary in order to prevent the team from developing illusions about the extent of its potential for structuring, illusions which can later lead to frustration. It is important to clarify the work goal: should the group only go as far as concept structuring and only identify alternatives for action? Alternatively, should it also discuss criteria and priorities for judgment forming and provide recommendations for the eventual decision? Should it select the alternative actions itself and even decide on these? The answers to these questions will determine the fundamental roles of the team as well as the quality of its cooperation in the decision-making process within an organisation (Vroom / Yetton 1973). (These are set out in Figures 6 and 7.)

In the **image-forming phase** teams are in an even greater danger of 'jumping to conclusions', especially if some of the group members press for a decision to be taken at the first opportunity for action. Managing this risk requires particular constraint.

In the **judgment-forming phase**, conflict is most likely to arise as criteria are clarified and prioritised, making proper *search and selection methods* essential. Since the results of this phase will also strongly influence the eventual decision to be taken, team members will often be guilty of suggestive discussions and manipulative polemics, as they attempt to use these tactics to influence the final results, largely thinking along the lines of 'first get the player, then the ball!'

Bos has stated that, in the field of tension between volition and acting, it is usually advisable to carefully review objectives as they are put forward, not only in terms of their eventual ease of implementation, but also emotionally, demanding of them consistency in the judgment-forming phase. Feeling can only develop fully in the context of the rhythmic-polar movement of discussion between the volition and the action poles. Since this discussion phase is likely to be controversial, decision quality will greatly depend on the level of empathy, open-mindedness and tolerance achieved within the group, especially if there

is no ensuing “group-think”. Even more than during the cognitive process, frank discussion of implicit value concepts and intentions will bring conflict material to the surface. These fundamental value issues - raised en-route or as ‘by-products’ of the task discussion - must be considered carefully as overall judgments are formed.

In the **conclusion phase**, particular attention should be drawn towards an orientation of feelings and pragmatic action, as supported by appropriate *selection methods*. The question as to whether the leader’s vote alone is sufficient for a decision, or whether a majority decision or general consensus are necessary, cannot primarily be answered ideologically. Rather, it is better for a team to specify its preferred decision-making method earlier, in the preparatory phase, so that the rules will not need to be changed while the game is in process, which generally gives rise to conflicts.

The question of whether or not a consensus decision is advisable for a particular team situation will depend primarily on the culture of the organisation. If the official philosophy is that of an enterprise valuing equality, then nearly everything will have to be decided in consensus, even if this results in major delays and drains the team’s energies. As soon as the group has proceeded through a maturation process, as described in Section 4 below, it will be more able to deal with issuing mandates and delegating in such a way that consensus will only be required for strategic and fundamental decisions. This will leave operative decisions to be taken by majority vote or through delegation of authority to individual team members.

The decisive tests for the quality of decisions are the questions of acceptance: ‘To what extent do the group members stand by the decision taken? Are they willing to defend it against any attacks by others?’ After all, in addition to the actual problem to be resolved, the issue of acceptance is the most important facet of overall teamwork quality; and, according to Vroom / Yetton (1973), this will depend on the degree and the style of participation encountered during the decision-making process.

III.5 External Relations as Potential For Conflict

The relations between a team and its organisational setting can also contain many seeds of conflict. One important aspect is to specify the degree of participation of the team in defining itself against higher-ranking levels or other teams within the organisation. It is therefore worth considering degrees of participation by analogy with Tannenbaum / Schmidt (1958).

Fig. 6: Degrees of participation in the decision-making process according to Tannenbaum / Schmidt (1958)

	leeway for decision of the superior			
				leeway for decision of the group
	autocratic/ directive	consultative	participative	cooperative/ autonomous

A supervisor is behaving in an *authoritative* or *directive* manner if he or she will only allow the team members to participate in a decision to a small extent. If the team's opinions are considered more seriously, the management style is termed *consultative*. A *participative* management style allows for not only the voicing of opinions, but also a limited influence in the outcome of the decision. Finally, the *cooperative* management style grants the team overriding influence, or even complete *autonomy*.

Linking this graduated, mutual influence by the management and the team with phases 2 to 4 of the decision-making process set out in Fig. 7, results in a variety of forms. This is often described as 'co-knowledge' or 'co-decisions' in co-determination policy issues.

Fig. 7: Degrees of participation and phases in a decision-making process (Glasl / Lievegoed 1993, p.142)

Conclusion	leeway for decision of the superior			
Judgement-forming				leeway for decision of the group
Image-forming				
	autocratic/ directive	consultative	participative	cooperative
	co-doing to co-knowing	co-thinking	co-recommending to co-discussing	co-deciding to deciding autonomously

The team can ensure that its work will be harmonious and constructive to the extent that it succeeds in formally clarifying and defining tasks, areas of competence and responsibilities. This is especially relevant to higher- or equal-ranking teams within the same organisation.

This further involves agreements on mutual commitments to provide information: this is conducted in the form of a formal order for a project, thus allowing relevant interfaces between teams to become binding 'seams'.

It is probably advisable to allow more time for this exercise at the start of the team effort, rather than risking the subsequent disappointment and disruption resulting from a lack of clarity. 'Mopping up' invariably requires more time and effort on the part of all involved than would have been expended on prevention in the first place.

When a team seeks to communicate its interim or final results, it should do this in a manner consistent with the phased model for cognitive and decision processes, reflecting accurately just how far the team has advanced in its efforts to identify a solution, especially in relation to the rest of the organisation. If, for instance, a project team has come to a conclusion before the rest of the organisation has even become aware of the problem, the presentation of the team's findings is likely to meet with incomprehension and rejection – For who needs a solution to a problem not yet perceived – Project teams would, therefore, be well advised to present step-by-step information as they progress, explaining the path that they are taking. This will assist in avoiding any 'phase misfit' in the organisation.

Any problems, which may be encountered at the psychosocial level between the team and its environment, are unlikely to be solved so easily by the application of formal rules. As a result, competition and overt rivalry can easily ensue. Sometimes, the team itself may have contributed to the development of 'hostile concepts' and to the eruption of open or covert struggles to form coalitions. In such cases, teams should seek to apply the methods of conflict resolution proposed by Blake / Sheppard / Mouton (1964) to break down stereotypes.

In short, even a difference in culture between the development status of a team (Section 4) and the development phase of the rest of the organisation (Glasl 1994) can generate a strong potential for conflict. In this case, the team's development is an integral part of more comprehensive development in the organisation at large. For this reason, it might be fruitful to look briefly at the general dynamics of organisational development.

Most organisations (or even smaller or larger sub-organisations) will trace their development through a number of phases:

1. **‘Pioneer phase’:** So-called ‘pioneer personalities’ will mould the organisation to fit their own particular way of life. Here, informal relations will prevail. There will be virtually no formal division of tasks; instead, team staff will collect and focus on activities that match their personality profile. Improvisation permits a high degree of flexibility. Such teams are characterised by closeness and loyalty to their customers: ‘we do everything!’ Unfortunately, as these organisations grow and face the challenges of technological innovation, they often become chaotic and inefficient and thus find themselves in a crisis.
2. **‘Differentiation phase’:** The team will strive for order, rational planning and effective monitoring of activities and results. Standardisation and mechanisation push the more human aspects of the team’s dynamics into the background. Division of labour creates horizontal differentiation in the work process. Planning, execution and monitoring are allocated to specialists. Vertically, top management concentrates on long-term programs, while middle management is charged with providing material and human resources. The assigned task of the lower management levels is to lead staff in a directive manner.

This phase of development brings with it a very concrete risk: if attention is too strongly focused on the efficient design of internal structures, organisations can easily lose sight of their customers. Excessive formalisation and organisation can result in a rigid and bureaucratic organisation, with units closed off against one another. This is the typical crisis of the ‘over-ripe’ differentiation phase.

3. **‘Integration phase’:** The limits of the management and organisational concepts that have so far prevailed are now recognised. Organisations therefore move to concentrate on the benefits that their customers should be able to expect. They develop new sets of guiding principles and strategies from joint discussions conducted in a cooperative management style focused on benefits to customers. Core processes are radically reviewed and improved, and support and management structures reoriented to promote these core processes. The result is a new set of organisational structures consisting of smaller organisational units, networked on an organisation-wide basis. These units should be given the greatest possible entrepreneurial autonomy and decision-making authority.

The particular challenge of this phase becomes readily apparent as the strong focus on customer orientation causes organisations to neglect other groups (‘stakeholders’) in the organisation and its

environment, such as the suppliers and social interest groups. These groups may then come to feel that they are treated as second-class partners, so that the overall value-added quality of the organisation is inhibited.

4. **‘Association phase’:** The organisation now expands its awareness and its responsibilities beyond its own organisational boundaries. It focuses energy on the adding of value, starting upstream with the supplier and their pre-suppliers, and then continuing downstream to customers and to their customers. This results in new and more effective forms of cooperation with the supplier and customer chains. It may well extend to the provision of full insight into cost structures, and joint participation in market research and in product development. As a result, the organisation moves to structure its interactions with a number of external organisations, in order to effectively transform its interfaces with various environments into ‘well-functioning seams’.

This phase can also generate its share of problems and crises. In this case, the political sector can take action against such associative structures if they begin to by-pass or weaken democratic, government control and surveillance institutions by acting as a ‘state within the state’. Since relatively few organisations have reached this development stage, there is little empirical research material available to document the relevant risks and points of crisis.

It is evident that teams in this phase must be made aware of the unique features of their organisational setting if they do not wish to find themselves isolated or relegated to an outsider role.

IV. Development Phases of Teams

Similar to individuals (Lievegoed 1979), groups pass through a number of development phases, leading from relative dependency upon the outside to greater independence and then to maturity. Moreover, just as adults will sometimes revert to a difficult childish phase or engage in behaviour more typical of puberty, teams are also not always stable in their development patterns; they may at any time regress into earlier phases.

The phase model of group development described below is a variation on the Tuckman model (1965), expanded by Glasl (1996). Its distinguishing characteristic is the insight that describes the status form of a group as it moves through development phases, forms that can develop repeatedly as the dynamics of cooperation change in response to either external or internal factors (see Götz 1998).

Fig. 8: The 4 development phases of teams according to Glasl

1. Forming / Storming	2. Norming	3. Performing	4. Reforming
			
1.A: Forming Seeking contacts, scanning: What am I worth here? Orientation to external standards and symbols 1.B: Storming Pairing off, struggle for leadership "fight and flight" conquest games, trying out role arrangements	Group draws up its own rules for success, decision-making, performance, influence. Binding sanctions Leadership duo = "father" role for authority and "mother" role for securing the atmosphere Tension between rational top current and emotional undertow	Breaking up of stereotype roles/styles and clichés Role flexibility, leadership changes acc. to situation Learning partnerships Thinking-feeling-volition become explicit – geared to work objectives Balancing of performance-person-team	Self-structuring / self-renewal of the team: objectives, values, roles, structures are identified acc. to situation External relations are structured openly Ability to form and loosen relations, creative constitution and dissolution of teams

The overview in Fig. 8 illustrates the four phases of a maturation and development process through which a team is likely to pass. Nevertheless, at any stage a team can unconsciously or deliberately decide not to proceed, choosing instead to revert to the preceding phase. Alternatively, the team may remain at a certain stage of development for a longer period, as changes in membership, turbulence in its environment or other circumstances inhibit further development of the group.

Awareness of these four development phases and of their various cultures and structures will enable a more systematic consideration of the team's social development status and thus allow it to take conscious decisions regarding its next steps. The model does not seek to describe any law of nature; neither should it be regarded as a prescriptive or normative set of rules. What it does instead is to point out risks and opportunities. It is of course always up to the relevant individuals within each group to decide how to take advantage of those opportunities or whether to move towards mitigating the risks.

IV.1 Phase 1: Forming and Storming - Finding and Coming Together

When a group comes together for the first time, there will always be uncertainties between the team members regarding both the work objective and the group situation. It is likely that a strong desire for security and clear orientation will dominate. Contacts are first established on an 'ad hoc' basis and are characterised by a 'wait and see' attitude. The group is explored and scanned. How should I see myself in comparison to the others? With whom can I best establish contact? How can I present or position myself most favourably? What is my potential value to the group? In answering these questions, the team members will orient themselves in terms of the external values and status symbols that they bring to the group from the external environment.

In this initial situation, comfortable, 'safe' behaviour will prevail, although behaviour is likely to be strongly influenced by preconceived expectations of the group and its associated positive or negative images. These are a few of the most salient features of the group-finding during the 'forming' process.

Some team members, however, may instead choose to 'grasp the bull by the horns'. They will go on the offensive in order to overcome their uncertainty. The resulting situation is likely to be unstable for everyone and can alternate repeatedly between phases of harmony and periods of friction and tension.

As group members gain their initial bearings and are no longer strangers to one another, they will begin to reveal a bit more of their 'real self'. They will act and react in a more personal manner. Their pleasure and displeasure, their wishes and desires will come to the fore. It will be increasingly important to them to assert their own interests and maintain their position. The result is likely to be a struggle for power and influence in the group, a 'fight and flight'. The authority of the formal group leader may also be questioned in the process, as the group passes through a period of 'fermentation.' This 'storming' is an integral component of the group-forming process.

The issue-related work of the team may be further affected by such disputes. In this phase, more energy is available for application to content-specific objectives. Just how the work is to be divided and organised, the manner in which decisions are to be taken, who is to check what, and to assume which tasks - all these questions are now discussed frankly and animatedly within the team

It is also true that, although objective issues are discussed, there lies under the surface a struggle within the team concerning self-presentation and positions, as members seek to test or combat various forms of influence. In this process, they manage to establish who is to

receive certain recognition, as well as to determine who is to fulfil specific roles or allocate them to others.

These various disputes tend in turn to produce renewed uncertainty, and to engender a feeling of mistrust among the different group members. This will lead to yet more security needs, needs which often find their satisfaction in the support offered by other team members sharing the same opinion ('pairing off'). Who thinks like I do? To whom do I feel linked? As a result, subgroups and cliques may develop.

These group disputes are conducted on a very personal level. As a by-product of these emotional encounters, the group develops its own sense of intimacy, thus creating its own history with shared emotional experiences.

'Forming' and 'storming', together, form the fundamentally unstable process of approximation, rebuff and re-formation, processes within which team members experiment with rank, roles and mutual relations.

IV. 2 Phase 2: Norming - Creating one's own Rules

In order to overcome the state of confrontation and friction, which inevitably develops from Phase 1, teams will make a number of minor and major decisions, especially as they attempt to clarify work procedures. Establishment of robust 'rules of the game' is essential if productive work is to be enabled. In this phase, a group will often fall back on norms and rules with which it has already experienced success in other group contexts.

At the issue-related work level, the group finds that it is able to handle its terms of reference independently. It will devote considerable attention to the elaboration of proper procedures and work methods, and to secure them by means of sanctions. As a result, it will bring about internal peace and security.

At the psychosocial level, group members will now want to bring about good, rationally steered cooperation: consequently, they will refrain from engaging in competitive behaviour. The goal is to feel good in the group and to generate energy for the provision of inputs. Esteem, helpfulness, consideration and humour will now all take their places in the group. A 'we-feeling' develops, reinforced by shared performance and experiences of success. The values, norms and rules of cooperation adapted from the external environment will form the core of an agreement culture with which all group members can identify.

Roles will be rationally clarified so that reasonable work processes can be drawn up for future tasks. Each team member will then be assigned an appropriate role in relation to the task to be accomplished. The focus moves towards issue-specific requirements; feelings of dissatisfaction will be regarded as a disturbance and consequently suppressed.

Although this process will engender a certain short-lived stability, it is unlikely to develop further into the long-term. Thus, both motivation and work input levels of the individual members will decline. Performance will be adequate, but hardly outstanding. Although the group will work productively together at a certain level, it will be difficult to motivate it to achieve special inputs. This superficially congenial social behaviour will soon be established as an unshakable norm and will thus tend to conceal disagreements that have already formed beneath the surface. If such negative feelings are suppressed, the further development of the group will be severely inhibited.

In the long-term, the one-sided nature of this phase may well prove to be an impediment to the team's further development. As the objective comes to dominate, impersonal rules and mechanisms can make the team seem like a system in which the non-rational is afforded no place. This emphasis on objectivity may lead to both coolness and hardness in the team, and force the more sentient aspects underground. A certain uneasiness can emerge. Some team members will demand 'more space for human elements' and thus risk triggering violent disputes about the meaning and limits of general rules. Others will ask for more freedom and individual responsibility. Still others will plead for even stricter rules and sanctions, fearing that as the emotional is revealed and addressed, team task performance will suffer.

These tensions frequently lead to the emergence of a dual management system (Hofstätter 1957, pp. 133 ff). On the one hand, the team will recognise an issue-related and performance-driven 'father' figure, who then takes on the responsibility for managing the performance tasks of the team. On the other hand, a 'mother' role is likely to develop: a team member who looks after the group's cohesion, working to foster a positive atmosphere and good interpersonal relations within the group. This second person is thus taking on a kind of 'counter-leadership'. The proper functioning of these two roles will help to stabilise the 'performing' phase of the team for a relatively long period.

As the second phase runs its course, the group members will have developed stereotypical images of one another based on behaviour routines, caricatures which can all too often get in the way of the development of actual personalities. Thus, team members see themselves as prisoners of role allocations imposed by the group. Tensions will increase between the rational 'surface current' and the

suppressed emotional 'undertow.' New conflicts and new 'storming' are now on the agenda.

In this phase, the external relations of the team are also likely to be highly rigid and even marked by hostility. As it seeks to reinforce its own sense of self-worth, the group will erect boundaries around itself, effectively excluding any outsiders.

IV.3 Phase 3: Performing and Performance Capability

As teams move into a third phase of development, their roles are clarified and brought further into line with their personal needs. In this process, they must work to render the stereotype images of Phase 2 explicit and then to break them down.

Between them, group members must work for clarification at the levels of thinking, feeling and volition. Here, they will express and approximate varying concepts of satisfactory teamwork, share and coordinate their personal goals and intentions, and attempt to articulate a binding vision and shared value orientation. In addition, they will examine sources of sympathy and antipathy in their mutual relations, making behavioural agreements in order to defuse them. This will enable the group members to integrate the various facets of their personality with their work, rather than splitting them off. If a group succeeds in 'forming' in this way, and in making its psychosocial level compatible, it will find that its work goals are met as well.

In this third phase, the group will also improve its procedural capabilities: it will work to find appropriate methods and techniques to accomplish its assigned tasks. Rather than relying on inviolable general agreements, the team will instead learn to combine flexibility with self-discipline. In this way, a more productive and humane atmosphere can develop, based on recognition and the constructive use of differences, conducive to an agreed learning partnership. The team will now radiate strength and find that it is able to work together at a higher level of performance.

Nevertheless, this phase also harbours a risk. Newly formed behaviour modes and newly established procedures may easily become rooted and inflexible in the long-term. To guard against this, teams must work concertedly to achieve role flexibility. They must strive to constantly adjust the roles and leadership contributions of the members, in order to react as situations change.

Leadership should therefore not be centred on any one person; instead, the team members will learn to carry out their work on the basis of individual responsibility and commitment, always recognising just

where new initiatives and support are called for. Following the maxim of ‘leadership changing according to the situation’, they will themselves provide the necessary steering impulses. They will duly recognise that while it is of course essential **that** certain impulses be given, it is less important **from whom** they originate.

For this to succeed, the group must become proficient in ‘**metacommunication**’: communication above and about the events taking place in the group and regarding perceived steps necessary to improve climate and performance. It must also practice ‘**metalearning**’: the group must learn how it learns best and implement this insight by means of actions which will contribute to group development and performance enhancement.

At this point, team members will identify with the team and with its scope of tasks to the extent that they will apply their entire potential into the joint task. Work results will be optimised. The team will further structure its relations with outsiders, openly and with respect, even if it still devotes its primary sympathy to the members of the group and continues to experience and intensively cultivate its ‘we-feeling’.

It is at this point that the team has matured to a level of authentic value-setting. The previous struggle between dependency and counter-dependency (according to Bennis / Shepard, 1956) has become constructive “interdependency”. As they learn to judiciously apply various forms of external controls, the group members will have discovered ways and means to achieve the right balance between self- and external determination.

IV.4 Phase 4: Reforming - Self-Structuring and the Ability to Change

In the course of the previous three phases, the work group has learned how to harness the potential of its members to both optimise performance and enable its members to realise and develop their personal potential. These two objectives are not necessarily in themselves incompatible, rather the assignment of task capabilities and the personal development of the team members are inter-dependent team goals.

What is new in the reforming phase is that the group must learn to adapt and renew itself, a skill that will be practiced constantly and independently. In this process, it will come to understand the power of “dying and becoming”, as Goethe put it. They will recognise that both the work environment and the internal / personal life of the group are constantly changing as the team continues to take on both new tasks and members.

Many modern organisations have come to expect their staff to work in several project teams at once, without becoming hindered by role or loyalty conflicts. This requires not only continuous changes in, and of, the group, but also a developed **ability** to change. The fact that individual team members have become a part of a number of concurrent project teams should not be regarded as treason but rather taken as an essential part of the working environment.

If they are to flexibly react to situations, i.e. to truly become a team that learns from, and can effectively organise, its own development, team members must develop a capability to accurately perceive changes both in its external environment and within the team, and then to deal effectively with these. In practice, this will mean that the team will pass through several phases of uncertainty, as it constantly seeks to redefine the roles, rules and work goals, which it has acquired in the individual phases of its previous group development. The group will learn to reconstitute itself in order to take on new tasks, and will run through the phases of its development with this target in mind. In addition to this, it will come to accept the need to dissolve itself again after the task is achieved, letting go of old bonds, interest constellations or feelings.

Groups that prove capable of restructuring themselves and flexibly changing in this way will learn to handle this process autonomously. They will be able to renew themselves, always taking full account of the individual interests of the team members, the processes in the group and the requirements of the environment (especially the organisation and the customers). Only by mastering these skills can teams hope to work effectively within the many internal and external networks of modern organisations.

In summary, these four development phases will show certain characteristics during the progression:

- from superficiality and lack of commitment to depth and commitment
- from unconscious external drivers to a conscious balance between external and self-steering
- from struggles around unilateral dependency to a constructive handling of interdependency.

In his theory of group development, Bion (1961) primarily concentrated on the first steps of forming and storming; his work with short-term training groups focused on exploring this initial situation. From this, he came to see the constantly recurring risk of teams falling into regression. However, further research into task-related work groups has shown that, beyond this, teams can expect further stages of maturation. These will not necessarily develop automatically, rather they must be deliberately willed, and the group must embark on the path

towards them, thus participating actively in the learning and development process.

The description shows that there are various potentials for conflict in the individual development stages.

In phase 1 of the 'forming and storming':

- team instability;
- a struggle for profiles and positions, as well as the formation of supportive coalitions, the team will show whether it is likely to revert regularly to these initial patterns, or whether it will instead venture the step to the next development phase. This will lead to significant differences in attitude about conflict.

In phase 2 of the 'norming':

- tension between the superficially rational 'surface current' and the emotional undertow; leading to
- conflicts between the roles of the dual leadership and their respective followers; or to
- efforts to do justice to the emotional dimension in group activities, while at the same time not compromising the rational, possibly preventing violently intervention by others. (This is primarily achieved through even more norming);
- attempts to break out of tacitly accepted role assignments, and instead develop new role definitions. This is, however, likely to be resisted by other team members, who will instead seek to reinforce existing role arrangements through the application of sanctions;
- team friction, as the stereotypical images are increasingly regarded as restrictive and fixating, and therefore rejected.

In phase 3 of the 'performing':

- whenever the team members come to identify the need for and thus propose different kinds of leadership and structuring initiatives; one member might wish to accelerate, for instance, while others will seek to slow down the process;
- whenever opinions differ as to the need for, and the effectiveness of, metacommunication: one team member might find 'talking about talking' ineffective, while this process may for others be the beginning of some valuable in-depth communication;
- whenever team members exert moral and psychological pressure on others, imposing excessively high expectations and demands for social competence and thus triggering tense behaviour. The problem here is that these team members fail to recognise that since the different group members will never be equal in strength, it is unrealistic to expect the same contributions from each of them;

- if, as a result of this, the initial enthusiasm for the group and for teamwork, and the regard that individual members have for each other, turn, first, into effusive and excessive esteem and unreasonable demands, and then plunges the team into 'negative hyperbole' after it experiences disappointments, ending in a vicious circle of self- and extrinsic denigration;
- work at the level of the 3rd development phase will regularly demand a high degree of mental activity, creativity and willingness to accept responsibility, some team members may express a desire to make life easier by returning to the simple rules of 'norming' - while other group members may resist this.

In phase 4 of the 'Reforming':

- the group members can exhibit differing degrees of patience for the ever essential group finding processes, and can apply pressure to make forming, 'storming' and 'norming', all lead to performing at an earlier stage;
- as team processes are constantly repeated, some team members can engage in routine 'apparent' participation, behaviour which is experienced by the others as insincere and unsupportive, and thus irritating;
- the fundamental openness of the team towards its environment can become mentally tiring for individual group members, especially if it is accompanied by a general 'desire for confluence'. In other words, the individuality of the single group members becomes subsumed by the collective.

The most frequent source of tension in this phase lies in transition crises (see Wheelan 1990). Conflicts can arise simply because perceptions and wishes differ. 'What phase are we in now - and in which direction do we want to develop in the near future? Which actions are necessary now, and which are perhaps premature? Must a certain phase be perfected and completed before we can move on to the next phase?'

V. Team Development and Conflict Resolution

Our description of the potential for conflict that can arise at the five levels of teamwork and during the four development phases of a team has shown a wide variety of potential conflict sources. If appropriate methods of team development are properly applied at each of these individual points of conflict, team problems can be dealt with effectively both before and after they arise. Methods of team development can serve, at the same time, as methods of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

For each specific situation, practitioners must initially reflect on the development status of the team:

- Who, if anyone, is having difficulties in the group?
- What topics in a dispute are perceived by which members?
- In what phase does the team appear to find itself at the present moment?
- Are the apparent tensions indicative of a development crisis in the team?
- Or are the problems of an individual group member exported into the group? Moreover, if that is the case, what responsibility does the team then have to tackle these problems?

Effective practitioners should also survey and analyse the desires and goals of the individual team members:

- How much energy is each member prepared to invest in team development?
- What are each person's ideas as to how the team should further develop?
- Are these individual ideas and objectives mutually compatible? Are they contradictory? Do they perhaps reveal divergent assessments of the development status of the team?

Team development should not be regarded simply as an 'off-the-job' activity which takes place only at special times and in special places, as an interruption of routine work. Rather, both 'near-the-job' and 'on-the-job' measures are conceivable, as work is linked to reflection and 'learning moments'. Impulses for team development may even be produced 'on-the-job' if implemented teamwork processes are regularly reviewed in the light of the five different levels of team activities. As a support to this kind of analysis, moderator and / or observer roles may be allocated on a rotating basis. This will allow each team member to serve as both observer and actor at various times during the life of the team. It is clear that a team can only become a learning system once it succeeds in closely linking work and learning.

Such team development can commence at any of the levels mentioned.

V.1 At the Level of the Individual Group Member

Practitioners can work to address each of the intra-psychological factors:

- freeing distorted individual perceptions by collecting individual pictures of the team, of its organisational surroundings etc.;
- surveying existing thought patterns by means of questionnaires and then analysing these in the group or in partnerships, with an aim to breaking them down;
- raising feelings and attitudes to the conscious level by means of imaginative and artistic interventions;
- raising the sphere of volition from the sub and semi-conscious to the reflectively conscious level, paying special attention to personal ideal and value concepts, and above all probing to see to what extent these are compatible with the team's overall objectives;
- using feedback methods to expose and reflect on individual behaviour patterns.

Usually, practitioners will find that they can conduct these experiments in conjunction with group interventions, whether that is within the complete group, in sub-groups or in learning partnerships. After all, an overall development of the team will only be possible to the extent that the team members themselves show development as well. Ideally, team development should lead to an overall enhancement of individual *perception and diagnosis skill*, *conflict resolution capability* and *social competence*. Active listening, the ability to empathise with others and to accept the validity of their opinions, is just as important as is the ability to express one's own feelings, intentions and opinions.

Effective conflict capability will also be conducive to cooperative behaviour and promote a willingness to enter into compromises. This is critical, as the performance-capability of a team will in the end depend on the (overall) qualifications of its individual members. This must include not only technical skills, but also social capabilities and a competency for autonomy. Team members must develop the ability to consciously review their own thinking, feeling and volition, accepting responsibility for their experiencing of this, as well as for providing appropriate inputs into the group in line with particular situation requirements ('be your own chairperson!'). This will require realistic self-assessment, accurate reflection on one's own capabilities, circumspection in conflict situations and a high level of frustration tolerance.

All this will in turn further team development. As we have shown, this development will move from one-sided dependence to interdependence, from extrinsically controlled behavior to effective self-determination and autonomy, from self-assertion in simple environments to the ability to master highly complex situations.

Depending on the particular team situation, the polarity between the individual and the team can be handled differently. If there are indications that various forms of group pressure have constrained individual scope for development, proper therapy will require more activities which promote individual self-determination and -definition. This will certainly be the case if the rational surface current in the group has dominated in the 'norming' phase, to the point of oppression of the individual team members.

V.2 At the Content-Specific Level – Issue Level

Here, practitioners are only likely to have success with methods that recognise the need for a multi-faceted and thorough discussion of the various points in dispute, in order to process issue topics constructively. As others have done, Eiseman (1978) has also developed highly effective techniques for this context. By 'dimensionalising points in dispute', practitioners can break down major themes into smaller sub-topics, revealing elements that can be discussed better and more concretely than could the large-scale generalisations. The 'Harvard School' (Fisher / Ury / Patton 1991) offers some tried and tested methods for deliberating such objective differences.

Individual team members should further work to complement one another's technical skills and expertise, continually learning from each other. Ideally, each member of the team will occupy several spheres of expertise. Finally, team members will find that consulting industry experts and specialists can be a good way of resolving issue-related differences.

V.3 At the Interaction Level – Psychosocial Level

This is the typical point of leverage for most team development interventions. It is likely to include one or all of the following possible lines of approach:

- Survey, reflect and deliberate on the *general group climate*, using, for instance, card surveys, questionnaires, painting and movement exercises. All these methods depend on the proper practice of feedback, which is just as important at the interpersonal level as it was for the team and the overall organisation;

- Survey the *development status of the group*, as described above. Temporary retraction of the authority of the leader and effective clarification of team decision-making processes can bring problems and conflicts to the surface more quickly, so that the group can begin to gain a greater understanding.

These conflicts must, however, not be allowed to drag on to a point of escalation at which constructive conflict processing becomes very difficult. It can be helpful to apply the rule: ‘any disturbance of personal work capability must take precedence over continuation of issue-related work!’ If the group culture properly respects this rule, blockages and ‘disturbances’ will be the driving force for eliminating any difficulties in work performance, or with the methods and procedures applied, or in dealings with one another. In this way, conflicts become constructive helpmates and actually assist in bringing about the necessary improvements;

- Make explicit and consciously structure the development of the *group culture*. Help groups to critically review their values and norms, to identify any inhibiting behavioural patterns and to implement specific measures designed to overcome these. If the group succeeds in jointly elaborating upon rules that are helpful for achieving the work goal and for cooperation within the group, this will represent an important step.

It must be possible to express these new guiding principles in meaningful terms. They will not materialise automatically, but rather only take hold when behavioural habits change, including accustomed roles and ‘natural’ privileges. Some ways to accomplish this have been suggested by the ‘U-Procedure’ developed in 1970 by Glasl and Lemson (Glasl 1999, pp. 155 f), upon which are based the more recent methods of Scott-Morgan / Little (1994) for explaining the “secret rules of the game”;

- Depict the *group relations and roles* within the team, for example, through the application of ‘systemic lists’, and the processing of problematic relation patterns using psychodrama methods and the like. In order that groups may succeed in developing internal cohesion between the team members, ‘unwritten role contracts’ which have developed subconsciously will need to be clarified, and relations reviewed.

Many tensions and conflicts will need to be overcome, as a healthy group dynamic can only develop from frank and respectful interchanges. Initially, these more emotional processes will be of greater importance for the group’s development than the issue-

related themes. Furthermore, mastering this part of the picture is an essential precondition for effective issue-related work;

- The “role-negotiation” put forward by Roger Harrison (1971) has proved particularly helpful in this regard, and is also relatively easy to apply (see also Glasl 1999, p. 139 ff). This approach encourages team members to openly voice wishes about how they would like to see changes in their team colleagues behaviour. These requests are then presented mutually, explained and negotiated in a fair give and take process. Later, the resulting agreements are reviewed in detail and amended.

We have already drawn attention to the various ways of describing the potentials for conflict, focusing especially on the need to clarify and overcome mutual stereotypical images. The methods of “perception clarification” of Blake / Shepard / Mouton (1964) are particularly useful in this regard (see Glasl 1999, pp. 146 ff). The concept is to ask the conflicting parties (individuals or sub-groups) to first record just how they have perceived the other party subjectively. They are then asked to present these views to one another. If they then find that their self-image deviates significantly from the picture presented to them by the other side, they must subsequently ask: ‘What can we have done to contribute to such a perception from the others? And what might we do ourselves to avoid causing such a negative image in future?’ Explanations offered and conclusions drawn from this are then exchanged and discussed between the parties.

These descriptions of methodology can only serve as a very general indication of what can be done. Their proper application presupposes commensurate knowledge and experience and in most cases should be left to practitioners with adequate experience in team and organisational development.

V.4 At the Procedure / Method Level

Here many different kinds of intervention can be applied, as outlined in Section 2 (4). In general, it is advisable to link the work at the psychosocial level with method training for the procedural level.

V.5 At the External Relations Level

The following methods are recommended: clarifying the tasks, areas of competence and scope of responsibility of the team vis-à-vis the rest of the organisation. Project management techniques have proven to be the best way of conducting this:

- developing methods for interactive design for the exchange of information within the team, and between the team and the rest of the organisation;
- drawing 'pictures' of oneself and comparing these to the pictures offered by others, especially if relations in the team are marked by antagonism. A good approach is the perception clarification method of Blake / Shepard / Mouton (1964) discussed above.

Teams should also regularly review their work and find ways of improvement, in an ongoing effort to raise the quality of both cooperation and work results. This can be done after each team meeting, as well as after the completion of projects. Closed team sessions can be effective for purposes of diagnosis and basic reflection.

If this type of review process is conducted systematically, team members will enter into the habit of observing their work even as they do it: they will observe these factors while at the same time working actively on their projects. Moreover, once team members have formed this observing and self-reflecting habit, they will also develop a different feeling of responsibility concerning issue-oriented work, method-related and psycho-process dynamics. All of which are an essential precondition for the self-development of teams.

VI. The Embodiment of Team Development Within the Larger Organisation

Since the teamwork we have been discussing usually takes place in the context of a larger organisation, the success of team development can only be sustained if it is embedded in a more comprehensive process of organisational development. Normally, organisational staff will participate actively to develop **seven fundamental processes within their organisation** (Glasl 1985):

- **Diagnostic processes:** The internal and external situation of the organisation is analysed and diagnosed; usually teams will be better advised to employ self-diagnosis methods, since these tend to motivate the team whereas outside 'expert' diagnoses are more likely to provoke resistance from the parties affected;
- **Target design processes:** Visions, goals, strategies and ideas for future management and organisation are jointly delineated and elaborated;

- **Psychosocial processes:** In conjunction with diagnosis and target design, teams will also examine their roles and relations as described above;
- **Learning processes:** Since future forms of management and cooperation may well require new kinds of knowledge and skills, this knowledge is gained and transferred through pilot projects, training sessions and on-the-job activities. Skill-building is provided through training and coaching;
- **Information processes:** Since not everyone in a large organisation will be able to participate actively in all activities, the results of, and plans for, these must be communicated systematically to the organisation at large, so that rumours and false fears do not develop;
- **Implementation processes:** All development activities must of course be implemented; symbolic actions by management staff will set clear signals, proving that they are indeed serious about making the changes;
- **Management of the basic processes:** All of the above must be designed, planned and coordinated; binding decisions must be taken as to just how quickly or slowly, how widely or narrowly the changes are to take place within the organisation. This must include the provision of human and material resources.

If change is undertaken in this way, team development processes will be seen as a fundamental and effective prerequisite for autonomous development of organisations. In addition, this will not only serve to prevent conflict in teams and organisations, but also enable practitioners to make an important contribution to the effort of conflict resolution in the wider working world.

VII. Conclusions and Open Questions

Work in teams can be significantly enhanced if teams and their leaders will participate actively in the process of recognising and naming team dynamics. To help them do this, practitioners (and team leaders) have put forward a number of basic tools that allow for rapid diagnostic of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the five key levels of team interaction, as well as of their influences on each other. These are the levels of the individual team member: of content or issues, of interaction, of methodologies, and of external relations.

Unfortunately, most training sessions and experiments in this domain neglect Levels 1 (the individual team member) and Level 4 (methodologies). Teams are then faced with and attempt to deal with conflicts at the level of interaction; problems that would have been better addressed at levels 1, 4 or 5. The result is an illegitimate 'interactionisation' or 'personification' of the conflict.

Recognising and dealing effectively with this is a primary challenge for practitioners, and they must be provided with user-friendly and reliable tools to accomplish the task. On the other hand, complicated, time / cost intensive instruments that can only realistically be employed by expertly trained psychologists, will be of little use.

It is also critical that team members learn to use these user-friendly tools to properly assess the development status of their teams, as well as to make recommendations for future development. Unfortunately, many experts in varying schools of thought within this field of group dynamics continue to persist in performing this diagnostic work in an unstructured manner, relying mainly on specific experiences of the participants to anchor their recommendations. This may be conducive to the development of good empirical perceptions, but is, once again, of little use to everyday practitioners faced with conflict problems in teams. The result is a 'mystification' effect, as the analysis of team development becomes a secret and inaccessible science for active team members, and is therefore never even undertaken.

To help, we must now work to systematically further develop existing self-diagnostic tools such as that of Goetz (1998). Especially the interdependencies between teams and their related organisations must be examined and, in some cases, restructured. For this, analysts must come to understand not only the psychosocial dynamics of teams and organisations (the primary focus of most of the received systematic approaches), but also the mutually interdependent effects of the social subsystems of an organisation with its related cultural and techno-instrumental networks. Failing this, we will be left with a reductionistic and, at best, an ineffective psychosocial approach.

The work to be done is by nature interdisciplinary, and must effectively integrate psychological, sociological, organisational and technical methods and insights.

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