Borrower: NTD

Lending String: *PGN,IOO,UIO,COA,CSU

Patron: O'Rourke, Michael

Journal Title: The handbook of group communication theory and research

Volume: Issue:
Month/Year: 1999Pages: 192-222

Article Author:

Article Title: J. Keyton; Relational communication in groups

Imprint: Thousand Oaks, Calif.; Sage Publication

ILL Number: 80340558

Call #: HM133 .H354 1999

Location:

Shipping Address:
University of Idaho Library ILL
PO Box 442357
850 Rayburn St
Moscow, ID 83844

Fax: 208/885-6817
Ariel: 129.101.79.150
Relational Communication in Groups

JOANN KEYTON
The University of Memphis

Anyone who has a close set of friends or has felt the camaraderie that developed while working in a team in an organization has experienced the importance of the relational dimension of group life. This chapter focuses on relational messages in groups and relationships among group members by presenting seminal and representative research about relational messages, processes, and outcomes in groups. To date, there has been no attempt to organize or summarize this literature. Perhaps this is due to the difficulty of completing a comprehensive review of relevant literature, as much of the research on relationships in groups is embedded in task or decision-making group research (titles do not reference relational issues, nor are articles indexed with respect to them). The material reviewed here includes research by communication scholars and draws on the work of scholars from other disciplines (e.g., Management and Social Psychology) who address relational issues in groups, as well as research reflecting a wide variety of groups, from task-oriented groups (e.g., organizational teams) to relationship-oriented groups (e.g., social support groups).

The review is restricted to interacting groups. Although the term relational communication often is substituted for interpersonal communication, that substitution is not satisfactory in the group context, for the relational dynamics of groups, where multiple relationships must simultaneously be developed and managed, are more complex than those in dyads. Hence, although the interpersonal literature may inform the study of relational interaction in groups, it alone cannot explain the group context. Given these contextual distinctions, relational communication in groups refers to the verbal and nonverbal messages that create the social fabric of a group by promoting relationships between and among group members. It is the affective or expressive dimension of group communication, as opposed to the instrumental, or task-oriented, dimension (see Hirokawa & Salazar, Chapter 7, this volume). Thus, relational communication in groups encompasses both the structures and processes of a group's social reality—that is, "the connections, relations, and communication among members of the group" (Scheerhorn & Geist, 1997, p. 83).

Kelley and Thibaut (1954) argue that a group is a social context in which social influence occurs. Thus, messages can maintain or alter relationships among group members, as well as create new ones. Group members engage in relational messages that vary widely in content. This chapter focuses on relational communication in groups, and the term "relational" implies favor relationship maintenance and development over relational conflict. Apart from relational issues, both task- and relationship-oriented groups are important, but they are by other scholars. The relational interaction perspective, however, is of interest to communication scholars. As the field of communication continues to grow, most communication scholars are now engaged in relational issues in groups. Therefore, is of interest to communication scholars.

POSITION:
RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION

As the field of communication continues to grow, most communication scholars are now engaged in relational issues in groups. Therefore, is of interest to communication scholars.

As the field of communication continues to grow, most communication scholars are now engaged in relational issues in groups. Therefore, is of interest to communication scholars.
well as create the climate within which group members accomplish their tasks. All groups engage in relational communication, but they vary widely in the quantity and quality of their relational messages. With respect to quantity, family and social support groups, for example, favor relational over task communication (in this volume, see, respectively, Socha [Chapter 17] and Cline [Chapter 19]), whereas decision-making groups, such as organizational teams and work groups (see Greenbaum & Query, Chapter 20, this volume), favor task over relational messages. With respect to quality, both relationship-oriented and task-oriented groups can generate positive (e.g., supportive) and negative (e.g., hurtful) relational messages.

Apart from affecting a group’s interaction environment, relational communication also affects individual group members. Relational messages help individuals identify where they fit within the network of intragroup relationships, the status and power other members attribute to them, and/or how well liked they are by other members. When group members communicate directly or indirectly about their relationships with one another, they provide cues about their own and other members’ worth and identities that, ultimately, affect their self-esteem. Understanding the role of relational communication in groups, therefore, is important for group members and scholars alike.

POSITIONING THE RELATIONAL IN GROUP COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

As the first scholar to focus on relational issues in groups from a communication perspective, R. Morgan (1934) argued that students should be taught principles of cooperation to guide their interactions during group discussions. Early on, Benne and Sheats’s (1948) functional role classification identified task roles as being distinct from group building, maintenance, and individual roles. Bales (1950) drew a similar distinction by classifying interaction as either task-related (that which focuses on achieving a group’s goal) or socio-emotional (that which focuses on interpersonal relationships among group members) (in this volume, see Chapters 2 [Poole] and 12 [Pavitt]). Subsequently, he observed that the two dimensions are interdependent, in that failure to respond to socioemotional (or relational) demands eventually impedes a group’s task performance. Later, Hare (1976) identified issues of control and affection as most representative of the socioemotional dimension of groups.

Although most group researchers focus on task-related messages, they readily acknowledge a relational component to messages generated within groups (see, for example, B. A. Fisher, 1979; Wheeless, Wheeless, & Dickson-Markman, 1982). Even when they are studied, however, relational messages are analyzed, for the most part, with respect to their impact on task messages or outcomes, rather than their impact on relationships among group members. Within such a framework, relational messages and relationships among members are seen as potentially facilitating, but more often as inhibiting, effective group performance (e.g., Collins & Guetzkow, 1964). Before turning to a review of the literature, I discuss why group researchers should be interested in relational communication and some possible reasons for the exclusion of relational issues in groups.

The focus of communication scholarship on groups, rooted initially in discussion (see Gouran, Chapter 1, this volume), now emphasizes decision-making tasks. In both streams of research, task issues are emphasized and relational issues are subordinated to them. Hirokawa and Gouran (1989), for example, discuss relational problems only with respect to how they impede group progress in performing decision-making tasks. Although scholars readily acknowledge the dual task/relational content of many messages, they have done little to explain how relationships among group members develop or how relational messages affect group processes or outcomes (such as group development and even decision making). Recently, however, some group com-
munication scholars (see Frey, 1994a, 1994c, 1996; Gouran, 1994; Keyton, 1994; Meyers & Brashers, 1994) have argued that relationships among group members matter on many levels, including their role in establishing the climate within which group tasks are accomplished.

Other disciplines interested in the group context also have not privileged relationships in groups. Early researchers in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, for example, acknowledged, but then skirted, relational issues. A case in point are the Hawthorne studies (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1946), a series of inquiries examining the effects of various environmental and social factors on worker performance that found that relational messages are powerful enough to shape on-the-job behavior. Even though the researchers acknowledged that “a social organization existed quite apart from the formal organization laid out on the organizational chart” and that work groups “provided an influential social context within which individuals acted” (Shea & Guzzo, 1987, p. 324), this research generally is regarded as studies of worker productivity, not relational issues in groups. Levine and Moreland’s (1990) review of group research in Psychology demonstrates that although group social environments are considered important, group members’ relationships with one another are not part of that consideration. Rather, the social environment of a group is said to consist of (a) intergroup relations, (b) the group’s relationship to its larger organization, (c) the influence of other groups that share the group’s members, and (d) influence by nongroup members. Consequently, little research has been conducted on members’ relationships within groups.

Ironically, Shea and Guzzo (1987) complained that fellow management scholars concerned with the socioemotional consequences of group action (e.g., satisfaction) as elements of group effectiveness have ignored the relevance of these effects on that outcome. More recently, however, management scholars have embraced Hackman’s (1990) position that one dimension of group effectiveness is the “degree to which the process of carrying out the work enhances the capability of members to work together interdependently in the future” (p. 6). The case studies in his edited collection suggest that this capability includes relational issues.

The focus on task rather than relational issues demonstrated across academic disciplines likely occurred, Seibold and Meyers (1988) explain, because

with few exceptions, “groups” have been operationalized as aggregates of fewer than six or seven teenage college students who do not know each other well, have had little experience interacting together, and are required or induced to collaborate—in artificial settings—on tasks that usually are contrived and/or have few valued consequences for the participants individually or collectively. (p. 8; italics added)

Operationalizing groups in this way severely limits opportunities for researchers to address relational issues, because relationships among group members are largely undeveloped as a result of how laboratory groups are created. With zero-history laboratory groups at the center of research, studying relational issues becomes difficult, if not impossible, for few, if any, substantive relational issues unfold within the constraints of that setting.

Another reason relational concerns have largely been ignored is that researchers too often focus on individual group members rather than on the group as a unit (Poole, 1990, 1994, 1998, also Chapter 2, this volume). Moreover, a number of scholars (e.g., Frey, 1994c, 1996; Meyers & Brashers, 1994; Wyatt, 1993) argue that relational issues in groups have been ignored because decision making reflects the domain of male (and, therefore, traditional research) interests, whereas relational issues reflect the domain of female interests. These scholars have called for group researchers to study more relationship-oriented groups, such as social support groups and women’s groups. By broadening the term group to include groups of all types
(see Propp & Kreps, 1994), researchers will widen their perspective from task groups to groups in which relational issues are primary. Despite the general lack of attention to relationships and relational messages within groups, some researchers have started to recognize and explore their significance. The relatively recent move from the laboratory to natural group contexts, in particular, has helped researchers to pay more attention to relational issues. Cluck and Cline (1986), for example, proposed a series of questions regarding relational aspects of communication in self-help groups for the bereaved (see also Cline, Chapter 19, this volume). Edited collections (e.g., Frey, 1994b, 1995, in press; Guzzo & Salas, 1995; Hackman, 1990) vividly demonstrate the extent to which relational messages matter in a variety of group contexts. An exemplar of this research is Adelman and Frey's (1994, 1997) investigation of how relational communication (such as social support messages) mediates tensions between individuals and the collective group as community is created and sustained in an AIDS residential facility. Another example is Conquergood's (1994) study of how gang communication celebrates interconnectedness and strong attachments among members and, thereby, helps to create a home and a family for these marginalized members of society.

Three arguments support the position that relationships and relational messages need to be studied in the group context. First, many groups exist primarily to satisfy relational needs (e.g., families, friendship groups, and social support groups). Our society's reliance on groups to meet personal and relational needs has become so great that it is estimated that about 15 million U.S. Americans attend 500,000 support group meetings per week ("Unite and Conquer," 1990). These numbers, of course, do not account for those who play softball, soccer, and other team sports on a regular basis, nor do they include interactions of families, friends, religious groups, musical or performing groups, community/civic groups, and volunteer groups, among others. In each of these groups, relational issues are of central importance and most certainly affect whatever tasks are performed. Clearly, then, in the grand landscape of groups, relational issues are not always subordinate to task issues.

Second, even within primarily task-oriented groups, relational issues are related to task issues in crucial ways. Groups cannot accomplish their objectives or maintain their groupness solely through task-related communication. Inherent in group settings is the presence of other individuals with whom members must interact to accomplish a goal or perform a task. In doing so, members create or negate relationships with fellow group members. Gouran and Hirokawa (1996) provide support for this argument when they note that decision making can be constrained when relationships among group members "are a dominant concern and . . . [members] fear either deterioration in such relationships or undue influence from one or more individuals" (p. 61). Thus, relational interaction results in positive, negative, or indifferent feelings and/or attitudes on the part of members about their group, its tasks, and/or one's self.

As Frey (1996) explains:

Ignoring relational issues in [decision-making] groups ignores the historical context of groups which constitutes and continually is reconstituted by their communication practices and decision-making outcomes. This shared history, constructed socially over time through language, arguments, stories, and symbols, represents a "deep structure" that influences the "surface structure" of a group's interactional patterns and decision making. (p. 19)

This argument receives additional support from research suggesting that interpersonal problems and poor communication skills are cited most frequently by those who work in groups as reasons why groups are ineffective (Di Salvo, Nikkel, & Monroe, 1989). Thus, problems arising from the relational dimension of group life create as much, if not more, difficulty for group members than problems arising from task concerns.
It is also important for scholars to realize that decision-making groups do more than just make decisions. In a study of standing policy groups embedded in organizations (representing executive meetings and policy task forces in health organizations, tenants' groups, sales meetings, and departmental head meetings), Scheerhorn, Geist, and Teboul (1994) found the primary functions of these meetings to be (in order of frequency) information dissemination, decision making, coordination, motivation, and affiliation. Their data indicate that "decision making is merely one type of predominant activity within real decision-making groups" (p. 256). Hackman's (1990) collection of case studies reinforces the finding.

Third, the interdependence among group members calls attention to the significance of members' relationships. Relational interdependence (e.g., power relationships and role conflicts) is present also by virtue of group members' connections to others outside the group. Putnam and Stohl (1990, 1996) argue for a theoretical approach that "treats a group as a social system linked to its context, shaped by fluid boundaries, and altering its environment" (1996, p. 148). They call for the study of bona fide groups, which are intended as models or prototypes of an ideal group (in this volume, see Chapters 1 [Gouran] and 2 [Poole]). Bona fide groups have permeable and fluid boundaries, have ambiguous and shifting borders, and are interdependent with their contexts or environments. This perspective acknowledges that the members of any given group are also members of other groups and that group membership and boundaries can and do fluctuate. As a result, relationships among group members are altered by the presence or absence of relational or role conflict stemming from people's multiple memberships. Additionally, relationships among group members change when members leave or when newcomers enter a group (see Anderson, Riddle, & Martin, Chapter 6, this volume, regarding socialization practices in groups). Most important to the study of relationships and relational messages within groups, the Bona Fide Group Perspective posits that the formation of group identity "centers on the degree to which members enact a sense of belongingness, loyalty, or commitment" to their group (Putnam & Stohl, 1996, p. 151).

As the discussion above reveals, few researchers have focused on how relational messages (a) are constructed, (b) function in group settings, (c) affect group tasks, and (d) influence relational outcomes. There are, however, good reasons for studying these processes and outcomes. Although there are few lines of clear, systematic research on relational communication in groups, and although the research that does exist has received uneven treatment, there is important information contained within existing studies that needs to be explicated both for the purpose of revealing what we currently know about relational communication in groups and for framing the agenda for future research in this area. Before turning to the existing research, I offer a framework for organizing this literature.

AN ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN GROUPS

Figure 8.1 proposes a model for how relational messages function in groups and is used as an organizing device for the remainder of this chapter. The model identifies and organizes relational communication in groups in three ways. First, the model draws attention to the relational elements of all messages exchanged in groups (both messages that traditionally are viewed as relational and those viewed as task-oriented). Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967) argue that content and relational information appears in all messages. The degree to which a message carries relational information varies on the basis of the message itself, as well as the verbal and nonverbal (see Ketro, Chapter 10, this volume, regarding nonverbal communication in groups) style of the message sender. For example, when a group member takes the floor at the start of a meeting and shares her expectations for the meeting, she not only provides content
information that helps set the agenda but also provides relational messages that signify status, control, and dominance. Obviously, the relational impact of any message varies as a function of the dynamics of sender and receiver characteristics, sender-receiver relationships, and the group context.

Second, the model draws attention to the relational processes that occur as a result of communication in groups, such as group development, relationship development, and the development of shared meaning. Although much of the interpersonal literature could be extrapolated to the group context to help explain some of these relational processes, as mentioned previously, given the dynamics of multiple and simultaneous relationships occurring in groups, it is unclear whether this material can effectively explain relational processes in groups. Equally problematic, much of the research that appears to address relational processes in groups (in particular, research on norms) actually addresses the consequences of relational outcomes (e.g., what happens in groups as a result of norms being developed), rather than the role of relational processes in creating the outcomes (e.g., how norms are developed). It is this area of the model that holds the most promise for future research.

Third, the model draws attention to traditional, positively valenced relational outcomes, such as group norms, cohesiveness, and member satisfaction, as well as negatively valenced relational outcomes, such as groupthink and stress, that have been studied more recently. Thus, the model provides for a holistic understanding of how relational messages and processes affect relational outcomes in groups.

The model is cyclical in that relational outcomes affect subsequent task and relational messages, which, in turn, affect subsequent relational processes, and so forth. More important, the model is not intended to be a representation of group development over time in which relational outcomes occur only at the conclusion of a group’s work. Rather, relational outcomes can be and are present throughout a group’s history. Thus, the model can represent relational processes of a group that interacts for 1 hour, over many weeks, or even over many years.

In the next few sections, I examine research relevant to relational messages, processes, and outcomes in groups. Following this, I review research on relatively new topics that affect relational life in groups, including humor in groups, multicultural group issues, and the use of new technology. The chapter concludes...
with an evaluative summary of extant research and an agenda for future research on issues in groups.

RELATIONAL MESSAGES IN GROUPS

All messages in groups, as previously explained, contain some relational information (Watzlawick et al., 1967). Several approaches have been advanced to identify and account for the relational content of messages. Three of the most popular approaches used by group communication scholars are Interaction Process Analysis (IPA), the System for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups (SYMLOG), and the Interact System Model (ISM).

IPA and SYMLOG

Bales's (1950, 1953) Interaction Process Analysis is the seminal work in distinguishing between a group's task and relational (or socioemotional, as he called it) communicative functions (in this volume, see Chapters 2 [Poole], 12 [Pavitt], and 17 [Socha]). As a theory, as well as an observational system, IPA describes the type of messages forwarded and patterns of interactions in groups. According to Bales, each communicative act can be categorized into 1 of 12 mutually exclusive categories. Six categories describe group members' socioemotional communicative acts: shows solidarity/seems friendly, dramatizes/releases tension, and agrees are acts that promote positive member relations; disagrees, shows tension, and shows antagonism/seems unfriendly are acts that promote negative member relations. Acts not coded into socioemotional categories are coded into one of six task categories: gives suggestion, gives opinion, gives orientation/information, asks for orientation/information, asks for opinion, and asks for suggestion.

According to Bales, group members strive to maintain equilibrium between task and relational efforts, which are in constant conflict. Too much attention to task concerns limits a group's attention to its relational issues, and vice versa. A group's emphasis on task or relational concerns, or its ability to maintain equilibrium between the two, should thus be evident in the talk that takes place in the group. Bales (1953) argued that groups need positive reinforcement (communicative acts of shows solidarity/seems friendly, dramatizes/releases tension, and agrees) to offset negative reactions (communicative acts of disagree, shows tension, and shows antagonism/seems unfriendly). In fact, "a group needs positive reactions in excess of negative ones in order to get its tasks successfully completed" (McGrath, 1984, p. 151). A larger positive-to-negative ratio facilitates and regulates the flow of interaction among and affects the motivations of group members. Groups with a higher positive-to-negative ratio, therefore, should have greater member satisfaction (Bales, 1953).

Moving from external observations to participants' ratings, Bales and Cohen (1979) introduced SYMLOG, a second-generation theory and methodology drawn from IPA dimensions. Theoretically more complex than IPA, SYMLOG explains a group's relational field with respect to three dimensions. Using SYMLOG, group participants retrospectively rate themselves and each other member's interactions (another version allows observers to rate group members) according to 26 adjective phrases representing each possible pairing of three bipolar behavioral dimensions: dominance/submissiveness, friendly/unfriendly, and instrumentally controlled/emotionally expressive. Although one aspect of relational communication is distinguished from task communication on the instrumentally controlled/emotionally expressive dimension, relational information related to control and power issues is also referenced on the dominance/submissiveness dimension, and general affective attitudes are reflected on the friendly/unfriendly dimension.

The SYMLOG system is particularly good for revealing polarizations or tensions among group members on the three dimensions. As a result, SYMLOG can detect relational similarity or differences among group members. It also provides information about relationship
development, as well as conflicts and tensions among group members and overall group development.

ISM

Rather than examining individual communicative acts like IPA does, B. A. Fisher and Hawes (1971) argued for the study of paired communicative acts from a General Systems Theory perspective in their Interact System Model (in this volume, see Chapters 2 [Poole], 3 [Mabry], and 12 [Pavitt]). An interact is the contiguous speaking act of one person followed by the act of another. B. A. Fisher (1971) first argued for and later demonstrated (1979) that communication consists of interdependent content and relationship dimensions. This finding directly contradicts Bales’s (1950) earlier view that the two dimensions are distinct and tension producing. Interacts, therefore, are conceived along content and relationship dimensions, and the unique contribution of the ISM is that interacts can be classified in either or both content and relationship dimensions. Unfortunately, most studies have focused on the task dimension and ignored the relational dimension (e.g., see DeStephen, 1983; Ellis, 1979).

As an example of research on interacts in the group context, Ellis and McCallister (1980) studied relational control as “the moment-to-moment messages which express dominance, submissiveness, symmetry, and complementarity” (p. 37) (e.g., one-up or one-down messages). Relational control is an attempt to direct relationship definitions (Ellis, 1979) in that “messages have implications for how the interactants should define their relationship” (Ellis & McCallister, 1980, p. 37). Analyzing frequency and then patterns of coded verbal behavior, Ellis and McCallister found support for sex-type stereotypes in that sex-typed male groups used significantly more relational control messages than other groups (e.g., androgynous groups composed of members who have a balance of male and female characteristics). Lag sequential analysis demonstrated that control bids were met with subsequent control bids, thereby establishing competitive symmetry as the pattern of sex-typed male group members.

Hewes (1979) criticized interact-based research for eliminating the identification of the speakers, as well as their individual and relational attributes, and, thereby, decreasing the strength of interpretation. He also criticized ISM’s use of sequence rather than length or clock time. He argued that clock time would provide a deeper understanding of relational development in groups because, for example, it provides some tangible index of members’ dominance behavior. Finally, Hewes questioned the system’s coding of contiguous pairs. He argued that this technique may describe dyadic interaction fairly well, but it fails to describe the complexity of group interaction, particularly when multiple members affect how the group conversation unfolds and changes over time. Despite these criticisms, ISM has potential for revealing relational dynamics; to date, however, studies have focused only on how relational control affects tasks like decision making, rather than investigating relational acts for their effects on group members’ relationships.

Alternative Explorations of Relational Messages

Other explorations of relational messages are few. One notable exploration is a study by Cawyer and Smith-Dupre’ (1995) of a social support group for people living with AIDS, family members, friends, lovers, and professional caregivers. They discovered at the microlevel a set of relationship messages not previously uncovered. Specifically, four types of messages generally fulfilling the function of providing support dominated this group’s talk: communicating to heal, preparing for life changes, venting emotion, and changing society. Families and friendship groups are also likely to exchange these types of relational messages. Findings by Cawyer and Smith-Dupre’ suggest that researchers’ traditional reliance on studying decision-making and
other task groups may be limiting discovery of other types of relational messages.

**RELATIONAL PROCESSES IN GROUPS**

Relational processes capture the dynamic capacity of group interaction and hold the greatest potential for revealing its relational intricacies. Several lines of theory and research can be classified under this component of the model. The first is the study of group development, which explores the stages through which groups progress over time. The second is relationship development in groups, that is, individuals' relationships with fellow group members, rather than the development of the group as a whole. The third deals with the development of shared meaning.

**Group Development**

There are many theories, perspectives, and studies of group development or maturation (in this volume, see Chapters 2 [Poole], 3 [Mabry], and 6 [Anderson et al.]), each of which shows varying levels of attention to relational processes in groups. Although most developmental models focus on how groups develop relative to decision making (see Poole & Baldwin, 1996), some of these models illuminate relational processes in groups. Models that focus solely on decision development or decision emergence in groups (e.g., B. A. Fisher, 1970) are excluded from this review.

Wheelan et al.'s (1994) review and synthesis of the group development literature shows that different approaches acknowledge that groups move through sequential stages or phases, although there is considerable disagreement about the number and order. Generally, group members focus attention initially on issues of *formation* (e.g., inclusion, identity, and role distinction). In the next general stage, members deal with *dependency issues* as revealed in power struggles, negative feelings, and competition among members. The third stage entails *resolution* of the conflicts generated in the previous stage. The fourth stage is almost exclusively one of *work or task inter-action*, and when the task is completed, groups move to a *termination* or *resolution* stage. Work contributing to this general pattern of group development, described in the following sections, includes IPA, Tuckman's theory of group development, Lacoursiere's Group Development Stage Theory, and the dialectical perspective.

**IPA**

Besides providing categories for identifying communicative functions, Bales (1950) also used IPA to study the phasic movements of groups in both single problem-solving sessions and in series of meetings over time. Bales described phases of group development on the basis of shifts in the relative rates demonstrated in the 12 categories of interaction. Three phases describe the instrumental or task orientation of a group: (a) *orientation*, or communication about the nature of the problem to be solved; (b) *evaluation*, or what to do and how to do it; and (c) *control*, or deciding what to do. Concentrating on these task activities, even when successful, produces relational strain among group members. Thus, a parallel cycle of three relational or socioemotional phases results: (a) *solidarity*, or agreement among members; (b) *tension reduction*; and (c) *group identification*. Throughout a group's development, Bales contends, members pursue a balance or equilibrium between task and socioemotional activity. Although most studies have focused on the task-orientation phases of ad hoc laboratory groups, "there seems to be a reasonable body of evidence supporting the proposed phase sequence" (McGrath, 1984, p. 153).

**Tuckman's Theory of Group Development**

Tuckman (1965) reviewed then-existing literature on therapy group development and identified four stages of development that cover group structure (patterns of interpersonal relationships) and task behavior (the nature of the work being done by a group).
The four stages of group structure are testing and dependence, intragroup conflict, development of group cohesion, and functional role-relatedness. These integrate with the four task stages of orientation and testing, emotional response to task demands, discussing oneself and other group members, and emergence of insight. The integrated stages are called forming, storming, norming, and performing. Later, a fifth stage, adjourning, was added (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Data supporting these stages was generated from studies of therapy, ad hoc laboratory, and training groups (Guzzo & Shea, 1992), which raises questions about the application of these stages to other types of groups, such as families and/or friendship groups.

**Lacoursiere's Group Development Stage Theory**

Lacoursiere's (1980) Group Development Stage Theory consists of five stages of psychological and social processes that blend into one another. Identifying both task and social-emotional characteristics of each stage, the positive and negative aspects of the latter are most relevant to this discussion. The first stage, orientation, reflects the positive expectations members have about participating in a group. At the same time, members may experience anxiety about their place, purpose, and goal in the group. This stage is followed by a dissatisfaction stage, during which group members discover that what they had hoped for and what actually is occurring do not coincide. Consequently, feelings of frustration and anger develop. The third stage, resolution, occurs as a transition from dissatisfaction to production. Discrepancies between expectations and actual experiences are narrowed, and new skills may be gained. Animosity among group members decreases, and group cohesion may start to develop. The fourth stage of production is characterized by members' positive feelings of being a part of a unique group experience. Members now work well together, which increases their task efficiency and effectiveness, although fatigue may hamper group efforts. Finally, the termination stage takes place when members realize they have accomplished their task and start to deal with the impending dissolution of the group. Feelings of loss or sadness may surface simultaneously with feelings of enhanced self-esteem. Lacoursiere argues that these stages are part of the natural development of groups, and that all groups adhere to this developmental process, with some variations, of course.

Cissna (1984), on the basis of a review of group development studies, observes that although developmental changes, such as those identified by Lacoursiere, are broad enough to apply to most groups, not every group exhibits these stages of development. He notes that the generalizability of theories of group development is questionable given that they are based primarily on research on self-analytic or training groups. Cissna suggests that the following questions need to be addressed:

What does and does not change about groups over time? How do different groups, and different types of groups, differ in their development? What external constraints and internal structures and processes are associated with what changes in group development? In what ways are the developments of different groups unique? (p. 28)

Answers to these questions are not, of course, limited to task groups. In fact, knowing if and how, for example, friendship groups differ from organizational teams in their development would be helpful in assisting reticent individuals to assimilate into different types of groups (in this volume, see Haslett & Ruebush, Chapter 5, regarding the effects of communication apprehension in groups, and Anderson et al., Chapter 6, regarding communication apprehension and group socialization processes). Knowing if and how relationship structures internal to a group facilitate and/or inhibit group development could provide substantial training or coaching benefits. Partial answers to these questions can be found in nonlinear approaches to group development, such as a dialectical explanation.
Dialectical Perspective

Although certainly not the first to promote the value of a dialectical perspective, K. K. Smith and Berg (1987) were the first to use it to provide an alternative explanation of group development. According to them, group members are particularly prone to viewing group interaction as “a struggle with opposites, especially the attempt to create meaning and coherence out of what seems to lack them” (p. 9). Starting from the premise that “group life is inherently paradoxical” (p. 11), Smith and Berg argue that group members inevitably experience conflict based on underlying emotional and psychological processes. These conflicts, or tensions, can be described as paradoxes of belonging (issues of identity, involvement, individuality, and boundaries), engaging (issues of disclosure, trust, intimacy, and regression), and speaking (issues of authority, dependency, creativity, and courage). As an example, family members experience many paradoxes of engagement. Children may trust their parents but also know that disclosing overly sensitive or controversial information, such as their drug and alcohol use, may, in effect, weaken the trust their parents have in them.

How members manage these tensions determines whether a group becomes stuck or develops. Stuckness refers to the “repetitive, often unconscious tensions that prevent a group from even doing the work of problem solving on scarce resources or compromising about conflicting needs” (K. K. Smith & Berg, 1987, p. 207). Alternatively, a group achieves movement, or the exploration of new ground, by immersing itself in, rather than removing itself from, the opposing forces. Thus, groups develop when members leave old patterns behind. As Smith and Berg explain, “Progress or development can be measured in terms of the group’s ability to (1) define and understand the opposing forces active in the group and (2) find the links between them, the framework in which both are embedded” (p. 229).

Guzzo and Shea (1992) point out that Smith and Berg’s perspective is in opposition to other frameworks suggesting that group development occurs when conflicts are resolved. Instead, according to a dialectical view of group development, change within a group is more indicative of other changes than it is of resolution. Guzzo and Shea note the similarities between this aspect of the dialectical view of group development and Bales’s (1985; Bales & Cohen, 1979) more recent work, in which groups and individuals are presumed to move and develop along the three SYMLOG vectors that compose a group’s field. The dialectical perspective also acknowledges the unique developmental needs of each group and assumes that group development does not happen uniformly or automatically.

Evidence that not all groups progress through linear stages of development can also be seen in Krueger’s (1979) microscopic approach. Using Systems Information Processing Analysis (SIPA), which codes each utterance along four dimensions of information processing, Krueger found that approach-avoidance patterns were predominant. Although SIPA does not address relational issues specifically, the study supports Krueger’s claim that “groups may develop through more stages than has been claimed in previous macro-models” (p. 322). This study raises important questions about the presumptions of models that propose linearly progressive group development.

Relationship Development in Groups

At least two theories provide perspective about how relationships develop among members in groups. Bion’s Interaction Theory describes the emotional responses of group members that result in dependency, pairing, or fight-flight relationships, while Schütz’s Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientations (FIRO) hypothesizes that relationships in groups are created and sustained on the basis of members’ expressed and desired needs for inclusion, affection, and control. Another area of research related to relationship devel-
opment in groups is that of leadership emergence.

Bion’s Interaction Theory

Although Bion was fundamentally concerned with group work/tasks, he recognized that members have emotional or relational reactions to task activities, especially when those activities do not go well. Bion’s (1961) work on group development stemmed from his facilitation of therapy groups with neurotic patients and, later, with training groups (T-groups) at the National Training Laboratory in Bethel, Maine (in this volume, see Chapters 1 [Gouran] and 14 [Schultz]). Bion believed that groups had to progress through three emotional states: dependency (group members depend on a leader, someone external to the group, or preestablished procedures), pairing (members turn to one other member for support and intimacy), and fight-flight (members deal with conflict and threat by fighting or turning away from it). The three states describe stages of group development that are referenced by the relationships of group members (Rioch, 1970). Thus, the stage of development of a group is determined by the demonstrated relationships among group members.

Wheelan et al. (1994) empirically tested Bion’s theory through content analysis of group discussions using the Group Development Observation System (Verdi & Wheelan, 1992; Wheelan & Verdi, 1992), a methodology grounded in the work of Bion (1961) and Stock and Thelen (1958). The focus of this observational system is on how relationships develop in a group. Of the seven coding categories it comprises, only one, work statements, is void of relational or social indicators. Dependency statements show an inclination to conform, follow, or receive direction from others, whereas counterdependency statements are those that assert independence from others. Fight statements capture conflict or struggle, whereas flight statements reference conflict avoidance. Pairing statements express positive affective feelings toward another group member, and counterpairing statements express the avoidance of intimacy or connection. Wheelan and colleagues also classified these messages as reflecting the emotional themes of acceptance, belonging, control, and feelings and found that emotional themes dominated group conversations. Findings also revealed that groups mirror one another, or develop similarly, if they are part of the same larger system. Moreover, they also mirror the developmental patterns established by that larger system. Wheelan and colleagues concluded that there may be dimensions to a group’s social world of which we are not aware, such as a collective unconscious or some type of social ecosystem.

Schutz’s FIRO

FIRO (Schutz, 1958) describes three basic interpersonal needs that can influence people’s communicative behavior in group settings (see Anderson et al., Chapter 6, this volume). Inclusion is the need to establish and maintain satisfactory relations with others, control is the need to establish and share power with others, and affection is the need to establish psychologically close relationships with others. Each of these needs varies with regard to the extent to which an individual expresses them and the extent to which he or she wants others to express them toward him or her. Expressed needs emphasize the group member as a sender, whereas wanted needs emphasize the member as a receiver. Although used more frequently in research to assess group composition, FIRO’s premises of expressed and wanted needs can be extrapolated to examine ongoing group interaction.

FIRO provides a framework for analyzing the compatibility of relationships among group members and why certain types of relationships develop. Each member brings to a group setting a unique three-dimensional profile that is a mixture of expressed and wanted inclusion, control, and affection needs. The similarities of or differences in these needs among group members can be evaluated in terms of their compatibility. Not to be con-
fused with liking, compatibility refers to how complementary group members are to one another. Relationally, ease, or compatibility, in communication occurs when there is a balance of group members who want to express a given need and members who want to receive it (see Frey, 1997). When members express and desire reciprocal levels of needs, they are more satisfied, and the group is more effective (Reddy & Byrnes, 1972), although the consistency of this conclusion has been challenged (Downs & Pickett, 1977). When incompatibility exists, group members need to spend substantial time resolving their relational differences. Thus, FIRO provides one explanation for why group communication climates can be positively or negatively valenced (Schutz, 1961). Recent research on needs reveals that relational needs of group members are related to their communicative abilities (for example, lonely group members are likely to be less responsive to others) and that members are more satisfied when their needs are met (e.g., Anderson & Martin, 1995).

Leadership Emergence

Although leadership is seen almost exclusively as a task-role function (see Pavitt, Chapter 12, this volume), it also can be viewed as a relationship one (or more) group member develops with other members. Theories of leadership emergence and transformational leadership examine relationship development specific to this group role. For example, using a rhetorical approach, Sharf (1978) examined the divisions and identifications that underlie struggles for leadership emergence in groups. She found that five steps occurred during these leadership struggles: (a) locating sources of division, (b) organizing hierarchy within the group, (c) identifying bonds of identification within the group, (d) inducing cooperation through rhetorical strategies, and (e) comparatively explaining and evaluating rhetorical attempts for their success at transcending divisions or engaging support. Fielding and Hogg (1997) have also explored how leadership emergence and support for the leadership role develop through members' identification with leaders. Although focused narrowly on one type of group role, studies like these describe the development of leader-member relationships that often are fundamental to other relational issues in groups, such as group conflict and the development of a communication climate.

More recently, leadership has been examined as a function of relationship, rather than task, concerns. Bass (1985, 1990), citing the work of Burns (1978), conceives of a transformational leader as one who uses rhetorical skills to build a vision with which group members can identify. Transformational leaders do not rely solely on position power or use of organizational rewards; they create power and sustain relationships with group members through the use of dramatic and inspirational messages. Thus, group leadership, and other constructs traditionally explored from a task-oriented perspective, may find a new spirit when viewed from a relational perspective.

Development of Shared Meaning

Another type of relational process in groups is the development of shared meaning among members. Two theories that are especially helpful for explaining how group members create agreement, primarily through the use of stories, significant symbols, and rituals, are Symbolic Convergence Theory and Narrative Theory (see Cline's application of these theories to explain communication processes in social support groups, Chapter 19, this volume).

Symbolic Convergence Theory

Bormann's (1972, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1996) Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) describes and explains how group members come to share a common social reality (in this volume, see Chapters 1 [Gouran] and 2 [Poole]). Agreeing with Bales's (1950) account of how dramatizing communication—a message containing "one or more of the following: a pun or other wordplay, a double
entendré, a figure of speech, an analogy, or an anecdote, allegory, fable, or narrative" (Bormann, 1996, p. 92)—helps create a common social reality for a group, Bormann (1972) notes that “when group members respond emotionally to the dramatic situation they publicly proclaim some commitment to an attitude” (p. 397). Symbolic convergence, the overlapping of group members' symbolic worlds, occurs when group members create and share fantasies—interpretations of events that meet members’ emotional, psychological, and/or rhetorical needs. When group members’ interpretations converge through interaction, a shared group consciousness emerges. This signals the transition from a collection of individuals to an identified group unit, and the transformation creates new relational dynamics for members’ future interactions. The extent to which fantasies are shared, symbolic convergence occurs, and group consciousness is developed is, thus, a powerful indicator of the relational status of a group.

SCT consists of three parts (see Bormann, 1985, 1996). The first part concerns the discovery and arrangement of recurring forms of communication in a group. Patterns of communication developed and adhered to by members indicate the presence of a shared group consciousness. The second part of the theory describes and explains the dynamic capabilities of fantasies with respect to how a shared symbolic reality develops, is maintained, and/or declines. The third part explains why group members share fantasies. Of most promise to the study of relationships within groups is the notion that members share fantasy as a way of expressing common, but until then uncommunicated, concerns, particularly those related to group roles and member relationships.

SCT is a theory of relational processes in groups because when symbolic convergence occurs, it “creates a symbolic climate and culture that allow people to achieve empathic communication as well as a ‘meeting of the minds’ ” (Bormann, 1996, p. 89). To achieve symbolic convergence, group members must share (a) enough symbolic ground to negotiate the shared reality and (b) a common sentiment or emotional involvement with the symbols. For these types of sharing to occur, relationships must be of sufficient strength and quality to support emotional attachments among group members (Bormann, 1985).

Although SCT explains some important relational processes in groups, its application “in group research has focused primarily on explaining how group members come to make decisions and how they make sense of the decision-making process” (Propp & Kreps, 1994, pp. 7-8). One exception is Lesch’s (1994) demonstration of how symbolic convergence achieved through the sharing of fantasy themes helps a group develop strategies for sustaining consciousness and membership in the presence of antagonistic forces. Her study of a coven of witches revealed several symbolic strategies—including keeping the group attractive, channeling energies toward surviving change, focusing on long-term survivability and stability, and bonding among members—that served to stabilize relational issues during periods of membership change. The theory, thus, has considerable potential for helping to understand how and why relational processes unfold in groups.

Narrative Theory

An often overlooked theory of how groups create and sustain shared meaning is W. R. Fisher’s (1984) Narrative Theory. Fisher sees human beings essentially as storytellers, homo narrans who organize experiences into stories with plots, central characters, and action sequences. Group interaction, therefore, produces experiences from which people create stories and an audience to whom stories can be told; these stories, in turn, help create a shared reality and meaningful relationships among group members.

Hollihan and Riley (1987) used Narrative Theory to analyze Toughlove, a network of parental support groups designed to aid families with delinquent children. The degree to which the Toughlove story, a narrative that persuades parents to respond to child delin-
quency with discipline, became a repeatable and believable story for parents affected their acceptance of this interpretation of child rearing over other alternatives. Just as fantasies help group members create a shared reality from an SCT perspective, stories, within Narrative Theory, help collectively structure experiences for group members and, thus, serve as a foundation on which members form a common bond. Although storytelling and narrative perspectives have proved valuable for explaining phenomena in a wide variety of disciplines and fields of study, few scholars have employed them to study groups and group communication.

RELATIONAL OUTCOMES IN GROUPS

Traditionally, scholars have identified positive relational outcomes in groups, such as norms, cohesiveness, and member satisfaction. Relational outcomes can also be negative, however, as evidenced by groupthink, group stress, and group deviance. A third type of group relational outcome is communication climate, which spans the positive-negative continuum. The following sections describe each of these.

Positive Relational Outcomes in Groups

Norms

One of the first outcomes of group interaction often is the development of group norms, "recurrent patterns of behavior or thinking that come to be accepted in a group as the 'usual' way of doing things" (Scheerhorn & Geist, 1997, p. 92). Such expectations often become articulated as rules that are adopted by a group to regulate its members' behavior (Feldman, 1984). As the least visible, yet most powerful, form of social control that can be exerted in a group (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985), norms shape members' beliefs, attitudes, and interactions. Most important, they provide clues about appropriate behaviors in group settings (Jackson, 1965). Although explicit, or formalized, norms also can develop, it is the implicit, or informal, norms that most direct relational behavior in groups.

Norms emerge from relational interaction in groups and are a result of the psychological closeness and communicative linkages among members (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1968). With respect to their effect on group interaction, norms are "structural characteristics of groups that summarize and simplify group influence processes" (Hackman, 1992, p. 235). These powerful regulators of group members' behavior generally develop slowly, often implicitly, and typically unconsciously from social pressures exerted in group interaction.

Norms are more often researched as an outcome, rather than a process, variable. Feldman's (1984) review of the literature on norms identifies four ways they develop. First, norms can develop from explicit statements made by group leaders, especially about group survival or task success. Second, critical events in a group's history can establish a group precedent. For example, members may find that their interaction when faced with a pressing deadline is better than their more typical leisurely interaction. As a result, when the group is having difficulty coming to a decision, its members impose a 30-minute time limit on deliberations. Third, norms can develop simply from repetitive behavioral patterns that emerge in a group. This type of primacy effect is particularly strong for group seating arrangements (see Ketrow, Chapter 10, this volume) and meeting procedures (see Sunwolf & Seibold, Chapter 15, this volume). Finally, norms can be imported into groups from members' other group experiences (see Anderson et al., Chapter 6, this volume). This type of carryover norm assumes that expectations in different group situations will be the same. Research has not demonstrated which of these developmental processes results in the strongest group norms.

Although, on face value, norms appear to apply to all group members, member status within a group may affect their uniform application, which further emphasizes the rela-
tional nature of norms. High-status members may be exempt from norm expectations that other members are expected to follow. In general, however, when a member deviates from a group norm, the other members typically have one of three reactions (Hackman, 1992). First, they may try to correct the deviant member’s behavior. Correction usually occurs outside the group and takes the form of advice, which generally is accepted by the deviant if he or she wants to maintain positive relationships with the other members. Second, if a deviant persists in nonnormative behavior, members may exert psychological and communicative pressure to form an in-group, and thereby distance themselves from the person, who now is “outside” the group (see Haslett & Ruebush, Chapter 5, this volume, regarding in-group/out-group perceptions). Outright rejection of a deviant is rare and usually occurs only when members believe that all other attempts to bring his or her behavior back in line with the group’s norms have failed. At this point, the amount of communication with the deviant decreases substantially and effectively eliminates him or her from group discussions, along with eliminating opportunities to exert influence. As a result, realignment of group members’ relationships occurs. Third, if a deviant presents a clear, credible alternative to the group norm and maintains that position over time, he or she sometimes can influence the group to accommodate him or her from group discussions, along with eliminating opportunities to exert influence. As a result, realignment of group members’ relationships occurs. Third, if a deviant presents a clear, credible alternative to the group norm and maintains that position over time, he or she sometimes can influence the group to accommodate him or her from group discussions, along with eliminating opportunities to exert influence. As a result, realignment of group members’ relationships occurs.

Cohesiveness

Cohesiveness, the degree to which members desire to remain in a group (Cartwright, 1968), is one of the outcome variables discussed most extensively in the group literature (see Bettenhausen, 1991). Cohesiveness has been described as an attitude or feeling members have about their group, its task, or other members. Cohesiveness thus can be based on task or relational components, or both. This dual aspect of the cohesiveness construct requires specificity as to what makes a group attractive to an individual. For example, a person may join a group to practice a hobby (task) but continue to be a member long after that need is satisfied because he or she values the relationships developed within the group. Of course, the opposite can also be true in that when one’s desire to be a group member is strong, he or she is more likely to be committed to the group and its task. Thus, depending on how cohesiveness is conceptualized and operationalized, it may or may not be a relational construct.

Thibaut and Kelley (1986) suggest that attraction to a group is based on the perceived rewards and costs an individual accrues as a result of membership. A person is more likely to be attracted to a group that offers rewards that outweigh any perceived membership costs. Thus, expecting to be a member of a tightly cohesive group is a reward; expecting to be a member of a group whose members are distant from one another is a perceived cost. Embedded in this position is the presumption that a person’s attraction to a group is determined by needs and values, especially the expected value of the outcomes linked to membership as compared to other group membership opportunities.

Cartwright (1968) identified five major approaches to measuring group cohesiveness from members’ perspective: interpersonal attraction among group members, evaluation of a group as a whole, closeness or identification with a group, expressed desire to remain a group member, and composite indices of the first four types of measurements. Drescher, Burlingame, and Fuhriman (1985) identified six means of measuring cohesiveness: physical or nonverbal indices, verbal style (emphasizing form over content), verbal content (topics or content of interaction), overt behavior (nonverbal behavior), covert behavior (subjec-
tive elements coded by expert raters, such as genuineness or empathy), and therapeutic intervention (assessment of techniques used by facilitators). The confusion that results from competing operationalizations of cohesion is compounded by the view that some types of cohesion are more important for certain types of groups (Stokes, 1983). For example, task cohesion is more important than relational cohesion for a short-term organizational team.

Methodological problems dominate the study of cohesiveness. As Evans and Jarvis (1980) explain:

Cohesion is uniformly recognized as a group phenomenon, yet its measurement generally involves measuring the levels of attraction of individual group members and averaging them. . . . This method at least fails to take into account both variability in attraction among group members and the differential influence of group members. (p. 359)

Levine and Moreland (1990) identify three additional problems. First, cohesion has been studied as numerous concepts, including solidarity, morale, climate, and sense of community. Second, cohesion is a complex construct composed of a number of factors, yet it is often treated as being unidimensional. Third, confusion exists because cohesion can be a cause or an effect for something that happened in a group. Although these and other problems have been identified consistently (see Bednar & Kaul, 1978; Drescher et al., 1985; Evans & Jarvis, 1980; Mudrack, 1989), little advancement has occurred in the measurement of cohesion. These problems suggest that cohesion needs to be measured in more complex ways. Indeed, using multiple operationalizations of cohesion, Keyton and Springston (1990) found that a unification index (similarity of field positions) of group members' self-report ratings on the friendly/unfriendly and instrumentally controlled/emotionally expressive SYMLOG dimensions was a better predictor of cohesiveness than more traditional unidimensional questionnaire indices.

When examined as a process variable, as opposed to an outcome variable, cohesion can serve as an indicator of relational development within a group; that is, cohesiveness among group members is likely to change over time. Failure to consider this aspect of cohesiveness may, in part, be partially responsible for conflicting results obtained from different studies. Measuring cohesion at one point in time of a group's history as an outcome variable or consequence is different from treating it as a phenomenon that develops and changes over time through members' interactions.

Few studies have directly linked communication, and, in particular, relational messages, to the development or maintenance of group cohesion (see the review by Drescher et al., 1985). One reason, according to Weinberg (1979), is that cohesion emerged from the study of group dynamics in Social Psychology; therefore, its measurement was more often psychologically oriented, rather than communication based. To alleviate this deficiency, Weinberg developed the Group Cohesion Checklist based on the notion that a group's level of cohesion is directly related to members' usage of slang, or in-group speech. Thus, members' self-reports of these types of messages indicate their level of cooperation and maintenance.

Other studies examining communication and cohesiveness demonstrate that there is greater equality in participation in cohesive groups because members want to express their membership and identification with the group (Cartwright, 1968). Members who have the opportunity to share information and their feelings about the group's task and performance with other group members are more likely to have enhanced feelings of cooperation (Elias, Johnson, & Fortman, 1989). Alternatively, groups that promote task over relationship-building structures can inhibit or prevent cohesiveness from developing (Fuehrer & Keys, 1988). If too much structure is imposed on a group early in its history, members may become overly concerned with meeting structural requirements rather than
building relationships with other group members. Group membership issues also affect the occurrence of cohesiveness, in that a group in which members complement one another's needs for interpersonal dominance (e.g., some members are high and others are low) is more likely to be cohesive than a group in which all members display high or low interpersonal dominance (Dyce & O'Connor, 1992).

Research also has demonstrated a dynamic relationship between group cohesiveness and task performance, such that the more cohesive a group is, the more likely it will perform more effectively (Evans & Dion, 1991; Mullen & Cooper, 1994). This relationship is often reciprocal (Greene, 1989), in that members of groups with high task cohesiveness put more energy into working with and for the group (Prapavessis & Carron, 1997). Members of cohesive groups are more likely to stick with the group throughout the duration of its task (Spink & Carron, 1994). This, in turn, creates more opportunities for norms to develop and be followed (Shaw, 1981). The relationship between cohesion and group performance is not straightforward, however; rather, it is substantially determined by the nature of the task (Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 1995; Langfred, 1998). When a group's task requires coordination, high levels of interaction, and joint performances from members, the cohesion-performance relationship is strong; however, when task interdependence is low, the relationship is much weaker. One could hypothesize that in the former condition, relational communication would be positive and strong, whereas relational communication in the latter case is negative and tenuous.

Finally, Evans and Jarvis (1980) recommend that researchers challenge the widely held assumption that cohesion consistently has positive effects. As they explain, "Too cohesive a group may cause members to be more concerned with the group itself than with the purpose for which the group exists" (p. 367). This issue has been studied as an aspect of groupthink (Janis, 1972), a relational outcome examined below.

**Satisfaction**

Initially contextualized in the interpersonal context (Hecht, 1978a, 1984), satisfaction, "commonly perceived of as the affect experienced when expectation-type standards are fulfilled" (Hecht, 1978b, p. 357), has been studied in both interpersonal and group contexts, but with few conclusive findings. Although certainly wide-ranging in terms of its potential application, in the group context, satisfaction often refers only to the positive feelings or attitudes group members have toward a group's decision (e.g., Green & Taber, 1980).

Hecht's (1978c) review of the literature on satisfaction identifies various and competing conceptualizations. First, satisfaction has been conceptualized as communication that gratifies such needs as achievement, affiliation, and dominance. A second approach is related to expectation fulfillment. Here, an individual develops a standard against which to compare outcomes. If the expectation is fulfilled, satisfaction occurs. From a third perspective, equivocal reduction, satisfaction occurs when uncertainty is reduced or eliminated at the same time that knowledge or control increases. From a fourth perspective, constraint-reinforcement, satisfaction is achieved when positive reinforcements are received as opposed to the constraints of punishment. A fifth perspective draws on Herzberg's (1970) two-factor theory, which utilizes a content-context dichotomy to discriminate between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, rather than assume that one is dissatisfied if satisfaction is absent.

To address the limited focus on communicative aspects of satisfaction, Hecht (1978c) offered the discrimination-fulfillment approach as an alternative. Conceptualized as an internal behavior, Hecht argues that communication satisfaction must be grounded in observable behavior, such as self-disclosure. Thus, the discrimination-fulfillment approach views communication satisfaction as an internal reinforcer following response behaviors to a stimulus. Within a group context, this means
that each member develops standards by which to judge his or her interactive world; satisfaction, consequently, is "the reaction to encountering the world one has been conditioned to 'expect'" (Hecht, 1978c, p. 59). Such an approach grounds satisfaction in communicative behavior rather than viewing it solely as the fulfillment of mental states.

Heslin and Dunphy (1964) reviewed more than 450 studies of how member satisfaction has been articulated in the group literature. They found three primary dimensions of the construct. The first dimension, status consensus, conceptualizes satisfaction as consensus about the relative status of a group member, particularly a group's leader. Generally, when status consensus among members is high, member satisfaction is high, with the converse also being true. Moreover, members with high status are more likely to be active participators in a group. The second dimension, perception of progress toward group goals, refers to members' judgments of their group's progress rather than actual progress. Perceived progress toward group goals is associated with higher member satisfaction; conversely, failure to maintain goal progress reduces member satisfaction. The third dimension of group member satisfaction, perceived freedom to participate, relates to one's sense of opportunity to speak. Although all members may not have equal needs to participate, satisfaction depends on the view that one has the freedom to participate to the extent he or she wishes.

Considerable variability exists in how group member satisfaction is integrated with and explained by other variables. Group members' satisfaction may be influenced by their position of power in a group's communication network (Hrycenko & Minton, 1974), the quality of other group members' contributions (Gouran, 1973), the amount of conflict or how conflict is managed in a group (Wall, Galanes, & Love, 1987; Wall & Nolan, 1986, 1987), group decision outcomes (DeStephen & Hirokawa, 1988), maturity level or stage of group development (Krayer, 1988), their degree of participation (Cooper & Wood, 1974), and the proportion of group members who are unwilling to communicate (Burgoon, 1977). Thus, a variety of relational inputs, processes, and outcomes contribute to group members' levels of satisfaction.

Hecht's (1978b) review of the literature revealed many methodological problems in studying group satisfaction. For example, researchers frequently use a single item or a few items to measure the degree to which a participant is satisfied with a group experience. These one-item (see Gouran, 1973) or short group satisfaction measures, constructed by researchers for their own studies, virtually preclude any systematic pursuit of the construct. Another criticism stems from how dissatisfaction is viewed with respect to satisfaction. Traditionally, dissatisfaction is treated the same as zero satisfaction, but Hecht argues that these are not the same affect. Keyton (1991) provided evidence for this argument by distinguishing between behaviors that contributed to group members' satisfaction and dissatisfaction. For example, behaviors that increased satisfaction were global in nature, whereas dissatisfaction seemed to emanate from issues of equity and equality. She also found that satisfaction and dissatisfaction constructs could be distinguished by their universal or situational categories. For example, making suggestions to keep a group conversation on track was reported as contributing to members' satisfaction across a variety of group contexts; however, having a diversity of ideas was reported as contributing to members' satisfaction in some, but not other, group contexts. Finally, because satisfaction is studied almost exclusively as a dependent or outcome variable, little is known about it as a relational interactive process.

Negative Relational Outcomes in Groups

Just as interpersonal communication scholars have incorporated the negative or "dark side" of interpersonal communication and relationships (see Cupach & Spitzberg, 1994) into their research programs, so too should group researchers. Expanding the study of group deviants, norm breakers, and other
aberrant group members and their behavior would enhance understanding of people's group experiences. As an example, Stohl and Schell (1991) vividly paint a portrait of a "farrago," a group member who acts as a catalyst for a group's dysfunction. Important to their conceptualization is the notion that a deviant does not act alone. Rather, a farrago is part of a dysfunctional group dynamic that "cannot be located within any one individual or a particular group meeting" (Stohl & Schell, 1991, p. 93). Thus, the dysfunction, and resulting deviance, is relational. As Stohl and Schell argue, a farrago (the dysfunction of both the individual and the group) "is developed and maintained in the continuing challenge and reinforcement of individuals' conceptions of the roles of others" (p. 96).

Examples of negative relationship outcomes in groups include groupthink and group stress, both of which are discussed below.

**Groupthink**

One negative relational outcome of group interaction is groupthink, which Janis (1982) conceptualized as the tendency of highly cohesive groups to adopt faulty solutions when members fail to examine and analyze options critically. Most commonly associated with faulty group decision making, groupthink is most likely to arise when a group develops an extraordinarily high sense of cohesiveness, often as a reaction to pressures from the external environment. Contributing to this level of cohesiveness are language and interactional patterns that serve both to isolate the group from outsiders who possess critical information and to reduce members' attention to ethical and moral concerns. As a result, group members are not vigilant in their thinking, which can serve to narrow artificially what counts as an acceptable solution to a problem. Believing that the group has discovered the best solution, members develop feelings of invincibility and infallibility, which further insulate them from criticisms or new knowledge that could demonstrate that the group is wrong.

Janis (1982) argued that groupthink is likely to occur when three conditions are present. First, when group members overestimate their power and invulnerability, opportunities for questioning what they are doing or why are diminished. Under such circumstances, maintaining harmony or enhancing shared identity is perceived by members to be more important than considering information that may temporarily decrease group cohesiveness. Second, group members become closed-minded and reject information that is contrary to their preferred course of action. By insulating themselves from external influences and threats, members generate rationalizations that discount what they perceive to be potentially valuable information. Third, group members experience high pressure to conform because of strong leader-member relationships or because of the role the group plays relative to its environment. Pressure and stress are heightened when stakes are high or when the leader recommends a solution and members see no viable alternative. This pressure to conform induces self-censorship, which, in turn, causes members to believe that consensus exists in the group, even when it does not. In these cases, pleasing the leader becomes more important than considering the merits of discussion options. These conditions, which often result from the presence of affiliative constraints (Janis, 1989), create a working climate that rewards cohesiveness and conformity and punishes members for being different. Time pressures and high-risk or high-consequence decision making amplify these tendencies (Neck & Moorhead, 1995).

Janis and Mann (1977) specify some of the relational components of groupthink. When cohesiveness is high, group members are more psychologically dependent on one another and less willing to challenge ideas. Groupthink is also more likely to occur in groups in which members have a long and shared work history, are deeply embedded in their macro-organizational environments, and are insulated from the views of others. These conditions lead to full-blown groupthink. Not all these conditions need to exist, however, for
groups to make faulty decisions or to develop groupthink problems; one or two of them may be sufficient.

The absence of disagreement (Courtright, 1978) or discounting of minority views (Alderton & Frey, 1983, 1986) may be primary contributors to groupthink. Groups that are too cohesive are less likely to allow discussion that criticizes the group, its activity, or the ideas its members generate. As a result, members develop premature concurrence, which shelters them from critical thinking. This type of interaction encourages members to believe that they have arrived at a unanimous decision and to terminate deliberations prematurely (Cline, 1994).

Recently, Mullen, Anthony, Salas, and Driskell (1994) challenged the presumed link between group cohesiveness and faulty decision making. Their meta-analysis revealed that only the interpersonal attraction component of cohesiveness (as opposed to the task attraction component) contributed to groupthink in the way that Janis first described.

Other methodological approaches reveal different findings regarding groupthink. Cline's (1994) content analysis of President Richard Nixon's Watergate transcripts, for example, showed that "to the degree that members 'successfully' protect intergroup relationships, they are subject to self-deception regarding their vulnerabilities as a group" (p. 222). Thus, members create negative group consequences when the protection of member relationships results in self-entrainment.

Group Stress

There are various types of stress—psychological, cognitive, environmental, occupational, organizational, physiological, and social. Both Bales (1950; Bales & Cohen, 1979) and K. K. Smith and Berg (1987) have noted that stress creates tensions in relationships among group members, which eventually is revealed in their communication. Unfortunately, little research has documented the effects of stress in groups. B. B. Morgan and Bowers (1995) define teamwork stress as "those stimuli or conditions that (1) directly affect the team members' ability to interact interdependently or (2) alter the team's interactive capacity for obtaining its desired objectives" (p. 267). In their review of the literature on stress, Morgan and Bowers acknowledge that internal factors, such as team size, composition, structure, and membership change, can create stress. In working with bona fide groups, a potential area of future research is to investigate the stress that occurs when group membership changes. Not only may the change process cause stress, as Morgan and Bowers suggest, but it seems likely that who the replacement or addition is, and how well the new member fits into the present group (see Anderson et al., Chapter 6, this volume), would also contribute to group stress.

Vachon's (1987) interviews of hospice workers, including physicians, nurses, social workers, clergy, volunteers, and others, demonstrate how stress is associated with work group relationships. Interviewees reported stress as being caused, in descending order, by communication problems within their work system, role ambiguity, and communication problems with team members and administrators. Interviewees also reported that some stress was attributable to lack of positive feedback from others in their work system. Others noted that their teams experienced high levels of internal conflict that often centered on issues of control. Thus, the lack of relationship or role congruency appears to stimulate the presence of group stress.

Group Communication Climate

The seminal perspective on group communication climate, the relative acceptance or rejection a member feels from group interactions, is that of Gibb (1961), who describes communication climates as being either defensive or supportive. A defensive climate exists "when an individual perceives threat or anticipates threat in the group" (p. 141). The use of defensive communication by one group member tends to create similar defensive reactions in others. The more defensive the communi-
cation in a group, the more likely it is that members will misperceive the motives, values, and emotions of other members. Conversely, a supportive climate reduces this type of defensive distortion through positive interaction and is also contagious. Gibb identified six categories of behaviors that contribute to the creation of a defensive climate—evaluation, control, strategy, neutrality, superiority, and certainty—and six categories that contribute to the creation of a supportive climate—description, problem orientation, spontaneity, empathy, equality, and provisionalism.

Recently, Broome and Fulbright (1995) generated a model of barriers to group problem solving and found that participants viewed both communication climate and various communicative behaviors as barriers to productive group work. Participants frequently mentioned dominance issues (in terms of power and in relationships), interpersonal conflict, and personal fears of criticism and reprisal as barriers to developing a positive, or supportive, group communication climate. The relational import of these barriers is explicit. They also mentioned other relational concerns, such as trust, respect, cohesiveness, and supportiveness. Listening was identified as a separate communication barrier, although how group members listen to one another is indicative of a group's communication climate (Gibb, 1961). Broome and Fulbright's analysis suggests that how well a group succeeds at solving problems is influenced by the relational nature of the group's communication climate.

Alternative Explorations of Relational Outcomes

The research focus on task, decision-making, and problem-solving groups may have biased the view of relational outcomes. An alternative way of viewing relational outcomes could be provided by studying groups in which relational development is the primary goal. For example, Wuthnow (1994) argues that social support groups exist to respond to some need in the lives of individuals or in the lives of people they know and to give people a chance to talk about their problems or interests (see Cline, Chapter 19, this volume, on communication in social support groups). As a result, group outcomes shift from completing tasks to, for example, fighting addiction, providing words of encouragement or prayer, and meeting other such needs. Such outcomes as these are measured not at the group level but primarily at the individual level, where dealing with the concerns of daily life, emotions, and understanding one's identity are the desired results. These outcomes are less likely to occur in a group that cannot provide satisfying relationships and supportive relational communication for its members. Although primarily descriptive rather than explanatory, Wuthnow's survey data and short case studies reflect a growing trend in research on social support and other types of relationally oriented groups and how relational messages and opportunities to build relationships can serve as impetuses for group membership.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN RELATIONAL GROUP COMMUNICATION

Recently, scholars have started investigating new topics that contribute to understanding relational issues in groups. These include humor in groups, the impact of diversity on groups, the impact of group technology, and intimacy in groups.

Humor in Groups

The use of humor as a relational device in groups has received scant research attention. This is unfortunate because humor is an important source of information about relationships in groups and occurs frequently in work, social, and therapy groups, as well as in the groups of both children and adults. In one of the few studies to date, C. M. Smith and Powell (1988) found that group leaders who used self-disparaging humor were perceived to be more effective at relieving tension, better at encouraging member participation, and more willing to share opinions than leaders.
who used superior-targeted or subordinate-targeted disparaging humor. The findings are consistent with theories of facilitation suggesting that humor benefits the group process by promoting cohesiveness and reducing tension (see Block, Browning, & McGrath, 1983).

Two studies show that humor can fulfill important relational functions in groups. In a field study of operating room nurses, Denison and Sutton (1990) found that humor served two functions. First, it reduced tensions among surgical team members. Second, it provided variety when standard operating procedures were perceived as boring to surgical team members. Hierarchy among team members reinforced how and to what degree members laughed and joked. Nurses joked and laughed less than doctors, and doctors appeared to determine when humor could occur. Moreover, nurses initiating humor against doctors’ wishes frequently were sanctioned. In another study, Vinton (1989) reported that humor served three relational-specific purposes in one work group. First, self-ridiculing jokes signaled to coworkers that one was willing to participate in a friendly, informal relationship. Second, teasing eased working relationships when members worked in cramped quarters. Third, bantering “helped lessen the status differentials that existed among the employees” (p. 164). Thus, for work groups, humor signified that informal relationships were being sought by members, helped to avoid work-induced stress, and lessened hierarchical effects.

**Group Diversity**

Much of the literature on group diversity focuses on how various types of group members work together on tasks (see Haslett & Ruebush, Chapter 5, this volume). Diversity research typically focuses on differences in values, beliefs, and work styles that are likely to result in differences in members’ relational expectations. On the basis of participating in a long-term, culturally diverse work group, Bantz (1993) recommended that similar groups give some attention to building social cohesion, in addition to task cohesion, especially when cultural differences exist with respect to individualism versus collectivism orientations (see Hofstede, 1980).

Research on the effects of group diversity on relational issues in groups could perhaps provide new ways to facilitate the performance of task groups. A promising start in this direction is the Group Development Questionnaire (GDQ), which captures group members’ perceptions about four stages of group development and is available in English, Japanese, and Spanish versions (Wheelan, Buzaglo, & Tsumura, 1998).

**Group Technology**

The use of computer technology (e.g., group decision support systems; see Scott, Chapter 16, this volume) can help groups achieve greater decision-making efficiency and effectiveness; however, technology can also overpower the relationship-building advantages groups develop from working face to face. Despite this potential problem, relational development can be accomplished through electronic channels, especially when group members expect to have long-term electronic interaction with one another (Walther, 1994; Walther & Burgoon, 1992). Taking time to develop electronic skills and social relationships is a key component in fostering group identity and rapport among electronically linked group members and can further increase the productivity groups accrue when using computer technology (Walther, 1997).

**Intimacy in Groups**

Only one study was located that investigated verbal intimacy, or the direct expression of feelings among group members. Studying therapy groups, Kavanaugh and Bollet (1983) identified 10 levels of verbal intimacy in groups, ranging from Level 1, no group-focused verbal interaction, to Level 10, direct expression of feeling about the group or group members. Level 1 interaction was characterized, in part, by two or more conversations
going on in the group at the same time or long periods of silence. Level 10 interaction was characterized by "(1) here-and-now expression of feeling, (2) clear ownership of the feeling, and (3) use of a feeling-related word" (p. 47). Intimacy issues are central to relational messages, processes, and outcomes and should first be explored in groups that are primarily relationally oriented.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

As this review of the extant literature suggests, there are many research challenges to those interested in studying relational aspects of groups. In the final section, I raise issues of context and recommend a theoretical perspective that can guide this research. The section ends with three specific conclusions.

Rethinking Group Context

Researchers need to rethink their interests in the groups they study. Too often, researchers rely on task or decision-making groups and ignore other groups that feature social engagement more prominently. For example, families seldom are considered by group researchers. In families, relational rather than task concerns are paramount, and "family communication brings the inter­relationship among people to the forefront of inquiry" (Petronio & Braithwaite, 1993, p. 103; see Socha, Chapter 17, this volume). Families provide an important opportunity for studying stress in groups, as they often are havens of acceptance and support or can inflict emotional conflict and damage (Pearlin, 1982). Within this group context, researchers could examine how relational messages inhibit or facilitate stressful group interactions. Children's social groups also provide opportunities to examine how relational messages create expectations (and, perhaps, fear and anxieties) about group interaction. Researchers are beginning to suggest ways in which children's group relationships affect their acceptance and rejection of group interaction as adults (see, for example, Hart, Olsen, Robinson, & Mandleco, 1997; Keyton, 1994; Socha, 1997; Socha & Socha, 1994).

Another important context to study is leaderless groups (see Counselman, 1991). Many self-help and support groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous), as well as many friendship and social groups, are examples of leaderless groups. Few of these groups designate one member to serve in the formal role of leader. Sullivan's (1989) study of home parties (combined sales and socializing events held in private homes and attended almost exclusively by women) demonstrates the multifunctionality (e.g., learning about new products, visiting with friends, and developing new relationships) of such group events, which generally have been ignored by other scholars. In these and other group contexts, researchers may find that relational messages, processes, and outcomes are different from those demonstrated in decision-making task groups.

Need for Theoretical Perspectives

The study of relational dynamics in groups has been largely atheoretical. Even in those areas that have received a great deal of attention, such as cohesiveness, it is unlikely that researchers will develop a comprehensive theory in the near future. Some theoretical perspectives, however, do have potential to inform and guide communication research on relationships in groups. Structuration Theory, for example (in this volume, see Chapters 1 [Gouran], 2 [Poole], and 3 [Mabry]), provides researchers with rich theoretical ground for exploring relational messages, processes, and outcomes in groups. Although this theory has been employed primarily to explain group decision making, it has much potential for exploring relational issues, for it recognizes that groups possess and develop both a system (the social entity observable through patterns of relations) and a structure (rules and resources group members use to generate, sustain, and reproduce the system). Because of its focus on group interactional processes, Structuration Theory can provide insight into how groups provide opportunities for and then
help maintain group member relationships, as well as how group norms, cohesiveness, member satisfaction, and communication climate are created and sustained. Structuration Theory, as Poole, Seibold, and McPhee (1996) contend, "provides a theory of group interaction commensurate with the complexities of the phenomenon" (p. 116). This or other theoretical perspectives (e.g., Self-Organizing Systems Theory; see Mabry, chapter 3, this volume) may help advance our knowledge of relational communication in groups.

Future Research Recommendations

Given the secondary consideration to relational issues in traditional group research, an approach grounded in the study of more relationally oriented groups may help researchers view relational communication in a new light. Thus, the first recommendation is to rethink the term relational in group communication. This is necessary because the constructs and methods traditionally associated with relational messages, processes, and outcomes were formed in response to the study of group task concerns. Studying relationally oriented groups would add to the current understanding of relationship development and relationship maintenance, and perhaps uncover additional relational issues. All groups, even decision-making task groups, involve relationships among group members, although the scope of relational elements could vary significantly based on group type. Thus, conceptualizing relational communication as the foundation, rather than as a subset, of group communication is one way to reframe the study of relational communication in groups. Currently, we must accept that our understanding of relational group communication is tentative and incomplete.

At the same time, although communication scholars studying task groups acknowledge the presence of relational messages, processes, and outcomes, their link to task outcomes is still not clear. Kaplan (1979) found that work group members who used high levels of maintenance expression (socioemotional content verbally expressed in the group) were more satisfied but did not achieve greater task performance than groups whose members suppressed maintenance expression. To what degree this conclusion holds true for other types of task groups is not known. Thus, the second recommendation is to revisit the relational/task linkage in task groups once relational issues in groups have been reconceptualized, confirmed, and expanded. The relational/task linkage is particularly worthy of attention because so many relational issues seem to surface when bona fide groups are studied. For example, Glaser's (1994) field study of a troubled team reveals useful information about relationships in groups, despite the fact that she was called in to help the team accomplish its task. By raising relational issues and managing conflict without threatening relationships, and increasing the use of sincere mutual praise, support, and cooperation, team members were able to identify their roles and responsibilities more clearly and develop commitment to teamwork and innovation.

The third recommendation is to reorient the study of some traditional relational outcomes, particularly norms, cohesiveness, and satisfaction, so as to focus on them as processes. For example, although cohesiveness is often studied as a dependent variable, we lack a detailed understanding of how group cohesiveness forms, develops, and persists. Likewise, attention should be paid to developmental processes that lead to negative relationships. We need to know how group deviance develops, as well as ways in which stress is generated and dealt with by group members.

CONCLUSION

Group communication scholars have acknowledged the presence of relational messages and processes, but primarily insofar as they affect the task aspects of groups. Moreover, when scholars have had a relational focus, it has centered on positive aspects of group member relationships, and even then on only a few such aspects—specifically, symbol sharing, development of group cohesiveness,
and group member satisfaction. Other positive relational consequences, such as trust or communication climate, have received less attention. There is, thus, much that we still need to discover about positive relational messages, processes, and outcomes in groups. In addition, negative relational messages, processes, and outcomes in groups (e.g., deviance and mistrust) have been virtually ignored. Focusing on this dark side of relational life in groups opens a wealth of questions to address. For example, why do some groups have such great difficulty developing positive relationships among group members? How do groups reject members, stigmatize them, or make them scapegoats for the rest of the group? To what extent can one member create and sustain stress for a group?

Researchers also often assume that group members' relationships are uniform and unvarying. It is more likely, however, that a member will form positive relationships with some members and antagonistic relationships with others. It is important, therefore, to assess how members construct their relational network within a group. Are group members trying to build positive and uniform relationships with all other members, or are some members selected because of an increased likelihood that they will provide support and positive feedback? Such a question encourages scholars, once again, to consider how subgroups develop and are maintained in group systems. Subgroup formation and other relational components of group interaction are expected to have strong influences on pressures to conform, provide pathways for influence, create opportunities for functional group roles to develop, and, yes, help groups accomplish tasks (of all kinds) with less stress and strain. Alternatively, it is just as important to know how task components of group interaction facilitate or inhibit the development of group members' relationships.

Although some studies on relational influence in groups have been conducted, Gouran (1994) argues that these studies "have revealed little concerning how the characteristics of interaction are affected by emergent or established relationships of the message producer and those to whom his or her comments are directed" (p. 34). He concludes that "relational factors presumably have an impact on what group members say. To ignore this is either to overestimate the importance of other determinants or to offer accounts of group interaction that are unnecessarily incomplete" (p. 34).

The most important challenge facing those who wish to study relational communication in groups is to examine how interaction creates, sustains, and changes the positive and negative relationships that develop among members. From my perspective, this challenge can best be addressed by longitudinal field and case studies. Relational messages, processes, and outcomes develop over time, and scholars must be "there" to see "these" happen. Many relational issues are likely to be out of the conscious attention of most group members unless relationships in the group are so negative that they require most of the group's energies, or so positive that members marvel at how well they get along. If group communication scholars broaden their conceptions of task and, thereby, allow for the study all types of groups, and if they adopt alternative methodologies, then the challenges identified here can more easily be addressed. I believe that these efforts will reveal that relational processes among group members are the foundation of the study of group communication.

REFERENCES


