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Final Report on ONR Contract N00014-79-C-0626

METHOD AND THEORY ON INTERGROUPS IN ORGANIZATIONS

August 31, 1979 to August 30, 1980

Clayton P. Alderfer

This report reviews and integrates the research produced during the year when the present contract was in effect, a period that coincided with a leave of absence provided to the principal investigator by Yale University. Although all of the work originally proposed was not completed, the total output was six technical reports.

→ The major purpose of the contract was to carry out a series of empirical, methodological, and theoretical analyses of intergroup relations in organizations based on data that were already collected.

Empirical Products

Empirically, the technical reports concentrated on data from race relations and from task group relations along a workflow. Three of the documents contained major empirical analyses. *One report* —

~~"Diagnosing Race Relations in Management" (T.R. #1)~~ showed the range of similarities and differences in the perception of racial dynamics by black and white managers of particular significance was the level of analysis used to conceptualize the black-white intergroup relationship. The understanding available through attending to both individual and group level phenomena is quite different than focussing on only one level of analysis alone. *A second report* →

"Measuring Black and White Perceptions of Managerial Dynamics" (T.R. #6)

3 showed by means of simultaneous factor analysis from different populations that the pattern of correlations between invariant factors was different for black and white groups of managers. These results provide support for the notion that black and white managers have different relations among the concepts they use to understand racial dynamics. *A third report*

"Studying Intergroup Relations Embedded in Organizations" (T.R. #2) showed the empirical basis for elaborating the concept of how intergroup relations are embedded in organizations. Data from a study of task group relations and from the study of race relations were analyzed to show the simultaneous intergroup effects on interpersonal dynamics, special interest group relations, and supragroup influence. Parallel phenomena were found in both the task and race studies.

Data analyzed in this research but not incorporated into a seventh technical report due to lack of time showed that perceptions of racial dynamics were explained by interactions between individual and group level variables.

Taken together the empirical findings from this research support the concept of intergroup dynamics guiding the original proposal. Intergroup dynamics are themselves multilevel phenomena that influence the experience of individuals, the dynamics of small groups, and the pattern of relations among groups in complex multigroup systems.

Methodological Advances

Methodologically, the research program provided two kinds of products: (1) theoretical analyses of methodological procedures and (2) application of advanced multivariate techniques to the intergroup data.

"The Methodology of Diagnosing Group and Intergroup Relations in Organizations" (T.R. #5) provided a theory of method for how investigators of intergroup dynamics should proceed to gather data in field studies of organizations as a function of the conditions they encounter in the systems being studied. "Studying Intergroup Relations Embedded in Organizations" (T.R. #2) specified a series of conditions regarding when it would be appropriate to use a variety of standard techniques in studying intergroup relations (e.g., observations, interviews) as well as when it would be useful to employ specifically intergroup methods (e.g., empathic questionnaires and microcosm groups.)

"Measuring Black and White Perceptions of Managerial Dynamics" (T.R. #6) showed the benefits of combining organic intergroup data collection procedures (i.e., microcosm group and empathic questionnaire) with sophisticated statistical procedures to reveal new insights about how black and white managers organize their perceptions.

Theoretical Developments

Intergroup theory does not arise from a vacuum, nor is it independent from other bodies of social theory. Two primarily theoretical reports were aimed to: (1) establish the philosophical and historical bases of intergroup methods, and (2) present the major concepts required for analyzing organizations from an intergroup perspective.

"Introduction to Group Relations and Organizational Diagnosis" (T.R. #3) identified the philosophical formulations of clinical methods for studying organizations, reviewed the earliest clinical studies of organizations that

took a group and intergroup perspective, and critiqued existing approaches to organizational diagnosis. This review showed that the earliest researchers behaved in accord with a more complex theory of intergroup dynamics than they were able to articulate and that more recent approaches to organizational research tended to omit or de-emphasize intergroup theory.

"Group and Intergroup Relations in Living Human Systems" (T.R. #4) presented a series of concepts and propositions for understanding organizational behavior in terms of intergroup relations. This theory integrated concepts from general living systems, human systems, and group dynamics theory.

Taken together the empirical, methodological and theoretical work are part of a whole. Intergroup theory suggests not only what to study but how to study it. Investigators who recognize and utilize their own place in the intergroup dynamics of the research process obtain different kinds of data with alternative implications for action than researchers who prefer to behave as if they were immune to the behavioral processes they study. Data obtained from using intergroup methods has implications for confirming or disconfirming theoretical concepts and propositions and also for revising how social scientists should behave when they conduct research. A clinically oriented intergroup perspective on research with organizations says as much to social researchers as it does to their respondents.

Incomplete Work

In the original proposal there was an objective to complete and report analyses of intergroup data based upon age. Time limitations simply prohibited

the completion of that work. Two forces were operating. It took substantially longer to master the multivariate procedures for factor analyzing the race data than was originally anticipated, and the choice to spend time reading and thinking about theoretical issues prohibited additional data analysis.

From the investigator's perspective the opportunity to complete the work described here is deeply appreciated. Special thanks go to Robert Hayles for his uniquely supportive role in making this project possible. ONR organization also merits appreciation for making unconventional research of the kind reported here feasible.

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