

Psychodynamics and Regression of Social Groups

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses some aspects of psychodynamics and regression of social groups. The aims of the study are: 1. to promote the understanding of group processes which point out the presence of complex phenomena within social group and should help group members and a group leader to function on the higher level of sensitivity, capability and effectiveness; 2. to stimulate the knowledge implementation in problem resolving among social groups (organizations). The group psychodynamic, group regression and mechanisms against it, are theoretically based on aspects of psychoanalytic group psychology, using the method of descriptive literature overlook. Conclusion: the permanent evaluation of group functioning, group situation and group processes by some group members and by the whole group are conditions for preservation of regressive group phenomena on rather low level, or successful functioning on more mature level, creating the feeling of satisfaction in group and among its members.

Introduction

The paper studies the aspects of group life that exist to some extent in every group, regardless of its structure or tasks of specific groups. The group is a dynamic social structure, consisting of group members (individuals). According to the number of its members, groups can be classified as small or big ones. We would focus on small, so called »face to face« groups, that exist in most organized or therapeutic environment. The understanding of group processes means being aware of

the group phenomena, but it is also a request for group members and group leaders to function on higher level of sensitivity, capability and effectiveness¹⁻³.

The paper's topic is inspired by group functioning problems, based on personal experience, but also on observing the group problems. The paper describes practical experiences with its theoretical explanations and experiences from group psychoanalytic psychodynamics as a part of psychodynamic psychiatry. The purpose of the paper is to initiate an analysis of per-

sonal functioning in social groups and group functioning as whole. Therefore it is important that every group member and group as a whole try permanently to evaluate the following questions: 1. WHY (motive)?; 2. HOW (method)?; 3. WHAT FOR (purpose)?

The Theory of Group Psychodynamics

The group psychodynamics is based on the interaction of the group, its leader and its individual members, as well as relation toward a group task, its development and it is a structure. An individual enters a group and at the same time a situation that provokes anxiety, threatening the personality borders while mobilizing different needs that become obvious². The dominant need of group members is at the same time to keep the feeling of autonomy and to become an integrated group member. While some of the needs are met by establishing roles, settling the relations among group members, group cohesiveness (including the border around the group) and creating mutual mentality within the group, other needs might not be satisfied, especially those deriving from fundamental sources of anxiety for group members – an ambivalent relation toward the authority (leader), who is needed but at the same time perceived as threatening. In the case when the group has no leader, the role differentiation and status consent stimulate some group members to take a leading role in different sectors of group functioning (completing tasks, emotional support and leading)^{2,4,5}.

The basic questions of group dynamics are: 1. How an individual behaves within a group? 2. How the group functions as one? What are the relations between an individual towards the group and group idem individual? It is important to say that every group member joins a group with different abilities to create relations

among people. The preferred relations in the group would include a high level of compatibility between satisfying the needs and the goal achievement, either of an individual or of a group. The group members very often wonder what determines group behavior. One of the crucial things is a conflict dependency – independency. So, we can say that a group member has two goals: 1. a wish to be separated, an individual; 2. a wish to be one in the group – member of group. Both of these goals are present all the times, but with the different intensity, provoking ambivalence in every group member, what would be projected undoubtedly on relation dynamics within the group. It is of great importance to satisfy these goals and needs of group members. Every group member according to his personality features would have different attitudes toward the goals, meaning that every individual has his specific characteristics of intrapsychic conflict of dependency and independency, which would influence the interpersonal relations within the group^{2,4,6}. Some members are strong individuals, with a social intelligence that is also strong, that offering more creative initiatives, whereas some other members can have more characteristics of an individual from back rows, being passive, socially frightened and not expressing their initiatives openly, but still contributing successfully to task completion. In a certain time period both goals and needs are in constant dynamics within a group. Exposure of an individual may to a certain extent stimulate a group cohesive process, while a strong wish to satisfy a need for an autonomy can be counterproductive. An important ability of every group leader is to balance the satisfaction of these two crucial needs of the group members and also of the group. Therefore it is important to observe the dynamics of change, in order to see a group functioning, as well as its every member. We can say that the group

functions when a need for separation can be met in the group, and when at the same time the cohesive group processes can overcome the need for separation.

A group as a medium enables a corrective emotional experience, meaning that every group member can re-experience an individual's crucial intrapsychic conflict, for (e.g.) a member who failed to achieve satisfaction or could not resolve his conflicts successfully in previous groups and wishes to try to do it again in a supportive group atmosphere^{2,4,7}.

Group, as a whole can be understood as a net, consisting of verbal and non-verbal communication or interactions within the group. Group is a transpersonal net since it talks and reacts as one unit. The phenomenon of condensation can be activated when the group addresses emotionally loaded issues. If this group process is not interpreted appropriately and on time, it could cause a chain of affective reactions that might result in »acting out« reactions (aggressive abreactions) and destructive behavior^{1,8}.

Some group members can restore a typical situation, which would be a compulsive repetition of previous object relations (primary object relation refers to relations with parental figures). Group members join the group with certain, through life, developed behavioral patterns and with abilities to establish object relations⁸. The object relations stand for a group transfer phenomenon, since the transfer describes a process when a group member transfers the qualities of object past figures on other group members, but it can also describe all the relations in group situations (there-then and here-now). This means that every relation in a group is a combination of a real life relations and is a transfer phenomenon, so that every group member provides an information about his relations with important figures from his past⁹.

Every members' effort to satisfy his need creates a tension and a total of all individual tensions makes up a group tension. Tension is a normal group phenomenon and is closely linked to basic group conflicts of dependency – independency^{2,10}. The expressed discussion content in the group turns into a mutual problem and behind it is a group tension that the group is oblivious of, although it can be one of the determinators of group members' behavior. Every member has an individual unconscious tension that remained after an unresolved psychic conflict. Therefore an individual would try to ease the tension creating relations within the group, meaning that he tries to make other group members behave so that he can satisfy his unconscious needs. Individual unconscious needs in a group create a mutual group tension^{2,11}.

Every group after some time develops its specific atmosphere that helps us to predict behavior of some group members. So, in the case of an authoritarian atmosphere we would have extremely aggressive and submissive reactions, but in the groups with a predominantly democratic atmosphere these reactions are less frequent and less intensive. Democratic group atmospheres enable every group member to talk openly, to express themselves, their problems, suggestions, initiatives and develop critiques without a threat or punishment of what has been said remaining within formally set rules of group functioning. The leader's activity is one of the most important determinators of a group atmosphere¹².

Every group member strives for relations bringing gratification and tries to avoid the ones causing frustration and pain. The perception of the progress toward goal achievement and free participation of group members are the key elements of members' satisfaction in small groups. High level of consensus among members contributes to group satisfac-

tion. Groups with a dominating principle of cooperation (instead of a principle of competitiveness) are groups of higher qualities and fast in task completion, while at the same time group members are more satisfied^{2,4,13,14}.

A group situation is always an ego learning action, meaning that a group member constantly changes his/her attitudes toward the group, following the change of group situation. At the same time a total group process is a reflection of its social context^{1,2,4}. We witness today that in a process of society democratization, the group situation can experience certain repercussions, as well as can an atmosphere of all social groups that strive to strengthen and respect democratic forms of behavior instead of authoritarian ones.

The group develops a phenomenon of mirrors, meaning that every member can »see« himself through an interaction with other members and gets an insight in his own behavior (motive, method, goal)¹⁵.

The group process recognizes two universal problems, those of: authority and aggression, whereas the group existence and its functioning would depend on how members and group can cope with these two problems².

The positive factors of group dynamics are: hope awakening, universality, getting informed, education, altruism, corrective emotional experience, developing techniques of socialization, group cohesion and a feeling of belonging to a group^{2,16,17}.

Every new group must go through all developing phases of a group process. There are three basic developing phases. The first phase of joining a group is characterized by overcoming the dependency conflict, whereas some members are mostly self-oriented and trying to meet their needs, they are aggressively ambivalent toward a group leader and other members. The second phase is a phase of

cohesion, dominated by a conflict between a group and a leader. The third phase is a phase of a separation, when a group can act out without fear of jeopardizing group identity^{2,3,15}.

The group stands for a reality experience since a group process is dominated by a situation »here and now« and the situation is a reflection of an individual and group situation of »there and then«, whereas a group process has its future as a result of group continuous existence^{2,4}.

Regression of Group Dynamics and Group Dysfunction

Group culture

According to Bion, ambivalent processes among group members and group members towards a leader is a reflection of ambivalent conflicts between an individual need for autonomy and a need to be an integral member of a group, which results in distress. These processes can be tolerated if a certain group mentality (culture) is formed. The processes are a reflection of a group regression (group members, but also a group itself do not satisfy their needs and do not complete a group task). They are never oriented toward adaptation, nor are group tasks considered as priority. The group mentalities are: dependency, fight-flight, pairing. None of these mentalities are present isolated, but they are constantly interfering with each other. In the case when a dominant group mentality is a dependency process, group members act upon an expectation that a leader should provide protection and safety for group members, creating a dependency as a group goal. The group members allow an omnipotent leader to look after them and idealize him reaching religious proportions. They are passive in thinking and action and it is their prime life style. This group mentality stimulates disappointment, hostility and other forms of dependency in some

group members. The dominant emotions in this group are guilt, anger, jealousy, rivalry and inadequacy. Health institutions, especially hospitals are examples of social organizations where the culture of group dependency culture is strongly present. The other process is fight-flight, with action as a prime of group functioning form and the purpose to survive, while for a group to prevail under any circumstances. The leader of this group is perceived as the most courageous and the smartest and he is the one who mobilizes a group either to fight or to run. Army is a perfect example of this type of functioning. The third regressive group mentality is pairing. The purpose of this group is to reproduce itself, while the leader is less important. The dominant emotions in this model are: hope, optimism and sexual investments. Pairing is an antidote for a group development aspect based on separation and termination¹⁸.

Organization paranoiagenesis

According to Jacques, there are two types of social organizations. The first type, *requisite organizations*, includes the organizations with the right number of people to perform the tasks in an appropriate time period. These are organizations with clear functional structures that stimulate relations among people based on trust, solidarity and altruism. The second type of social organizations are *paranoiagenic organizations* that prevent development of normal trustful relations, and are dominated by social interactions among organization members, whose behavior is characterized by mistrust, suspicion, hostile, rivalry, envy, fear and break up of social relations, regardless how good each member in the organization might be¹⁹.

The theory of open systems in observing the organization functioning, considers regression in group processes (individual and group paranoid behavior, as

well as parallel pathological idealization) as a consequence of an absent clear administrative structure. This theory perceives institutional paranoid reactions as the symptoms of institutional malfunctioning, since it induces regression in group members, but also in group and can not be considered as a simple consequence of sum or of psychopathologies of some group (organization) members^{20,21}.

The central aspects of institutional paranoiagenesis include: 1. diversity of individual behavior: dishonesty, suspicion, mistrust, fear of self-depreciation, immorality, depressive reactions; 2. members who within the organization show untruthfulness, dishonesty, proness to cheating and shrewdness and have antisocial qualities, but do not have to express them in private, or every day life; 3. organization members who are well intended and are pushed aside²².

The paranoiagenesis symptoms present in organizations vary from psychopathic to depressive ones. In the case of paranoiagenesis regression, there is a whole spectrum of behavior going from psychopathic and paranoiagenetic to depressive reactions. The psychopathic spectrum is characterized by members who are privileged, cheating, dishonest and have antisocial behavior. They can show this type of behavior also in every day life or only within the institution. The behavior of the members dominated by paranoiagenesis is widely accepted and is stimulated in its further development. An average member of the organization led by these type of people would show some paranoid patterns of behavior within the institution, what is in strong contrast to their normal personality characteristics out of the institutionalized life. Paranoid behavior is the main spectrum of paranoiagenic regression and is very often the manifestation of an organization regressive nature. The group (organization) members typical behavior

toward a supervisor or a leader is full of fear, mistrust, suspicion, anger, caution, trying to discover secret meanings and messages and to establish a bond with other members in order to defend themselves against common threat. We can simply describe it as a pervasive atmosphere of mistrust. The depressive spectrum of group paranoiagenetic regression includes some members who feel lonely, isolated, unaccepted, with hypercritical attitude toward their own mistakes and achievements. These members perceive their exaggerated self-criticism as a threat to their positions and stay in a group. Their strong self-criticism inhibits their working abilities, by creating self-initiating cycles that interfere with task performance and their working satisfaction in a group. Surprisingly, the most mature or most integrated organization members (those with most integrated superego) dominate among the members with depressive reactions. Normal people become the most alienated members in paranoiagenetic institutions. Some members can be protected by schizoid avoiding of painful deterioration of institutionalized human condition at group level^{22–24}.

Simply, we can say that a cause of paranoiagenic group regression are: 1. the collapse of the organization task system when the prime task gets irrelevant, overwhelming or paralyzing, invisible, undefined or wrongly led; 2. regressive group processes get activated due to the conditions of institutional malfunctioning; 3. latent predisposition for paranoid regression which is a universal characteristic of an individual psychology. One of the main causes for a task performance failure can be that the organization or group leadership fails and it can even happen if the outside reality supports the task performance, meaning there are no objective obstacles out of group environment to perform the task successfully. The failure of leadership can be explained

with an inadequate diagnosis of prime tasks, or failing to obtain an optimal compromise between task and power, as well as with wrongly organized structure that does not meet the functional demands and is of no help in successful task performance. The malfunction of leadership can be caused by the leader's personal characteristics, especially if he has some key administrative positions. However, the total collapse of organization functioning, with regression in group process as its consequence, might seem as a result of the leader's problematic personality. A careful organization analysis would distinguish the collapses caused by the leaders personality pathology from the reflected regression in leadership which is secondary to the organization collapse²². Jacques summarizes the relationship among structural features of social organizations, individual psychology and psychopathology in the following way: »There is a constant threat that social institutions will become so regressive and so alienated that they will have a descendent spiral made: these institutions provoke objective suspicion with resonant persecutor anxiety; anxiety affects individual functioning and social relations so that it deteriorates the functioning of social institution.«¹⁹.

The most frequent cause of paranoiagenesis in social organizations (groups) are limited or insufficient resources (for e.g. finances, personnel and etc.) to perform the organization tasks. The personnel reduction can be a consequence of promotions within the organization or competitiveness for limited key positions in the administration. When a process of competition among organization members includes research commissions, comparative evaluation of some members of the group (organization) and furthermore when politics starts influencing the processes, it is not any more a simple issue of resource distribution, but it adds to it a fundamentally new dimension – politics.

This contributes to a favourizing of paranoiagenetic regression in organizations (groups)²².

The political processes highly influence the decision making and are the next most important factor that strengthens the paranoiagenetic group (organization) regression. Speaking of organization functioning, the politics can be defined as an individual or group conduct in order to influence other members or groups out of institutions, trying to satisfy their interests or goals^{22,25}. When we talk about group processes within an institution, the political processes would always implicate high dependency among members. Every organization member has a political power to make a decision but this would be maximized only if the decisions can be made in democratic circumstances. If a member is strongly depended on other organization members (or on other social groups) in circumstances which are not objectively regulated by organization structure, it would imminently activate the group to function at the level of a bigger group. The bigger group functioning would have an unstructured interaction among group members as its consequence, without stable status roles in the group process. All interpersonal relations become unstable and insecure and defense mechanisms which should stabilize the group conflicts at the level of a small group remain ineffective. The political processes activate the psychology of a big group regression directly, having following consequences: loss of personal identity, feeling threatened by aggression, incapability, a need to form a subgroup in order to project aggression on other groups, an effort to impose power of own subgroup on the others, a fear of becoming a victim of the same process, a wish to run away from this situation, the feeling of being paralyzed and impotent. The elections in social organizations can emphasize the mentioned group phenomena^{22–26}.

The projective processes within social groups are the next factor of paranoiagenesis. The activation of primitive aggression in group member functioning reflects latent disposition of regression on the pre-Oedipal levels of intrapsychic organization. At these very levels we can see aggression projection on parental figures. The re-introjection of these parental figures, under the pressure of distortion as a consequence of projected aggression and circular reaction of introjection and aggression projection, is closely linked to a massive mechanism of splitting. The mechanism of splitting leads to idealization on one side, but to paranoid and persecutor tendencies on the other side. These psychic operations have diad pre-the Oedipal relations to a mother as its origin and they resonate with the late triangular problem that reflects Oedipal situation and the transformation of multiple pre-Oedipal transfers into typical triangular Oedipal transfer. We can conclude that the group members' relation toward an authority is based on typical Oedipal relationship. Due to the projective processes, there is a distortion of rational authority, leading to a defensive activation of narcissistic affirmation and regressive relationships with »parental« group leaders, who are either idealized or frightening.

The process is completed with a general reprojection tendency of stimulating superego functioning toward the institution (organization, group) as a whole. This projection of superego functioning towards the total institution increases subjective dependency on an institutional evaluation of social group members and decreases the capacity of some members to find a support in internalized value system, which can result in the contamination of group members with ideological contents and regression into primitive depressive and persecutor anxiety, due to a lack of objective feedback and resettling down in a group (organization). Under

these conditions there is a threat of emotional and character regression, but also moral dimensions of individual member functioning can be affected, what might have a paranoid »urge for a betrayal« as a logical consequence of this regression. If a group (organization) is controlled by an extremely narcissistic leader, massive paranoid and psychopathic regression spreads fast in this group^{22–25}.

The other cause of paranoiogenesis in social organization can be a discrepancy between organization goals and administrative structure²².

Incompetent leaders have a devastating influence on organization functioning, but at the same time this influence can be enormously paranoiagenetic. These leaders in order to protect themselves from competent subordinate members become mistrustful, defensive, prone to lying and cheating, with an authoritarian attitude toward subordinate members and humble toward their superiors. The mentioned leader qualities trigger the paranoiagenetic group regression, especially its paranoid and psychopathic characteristics. The bad influence of leader immorality and dishonesty stimulates a psychopathic response in social organizations. The paranoid potential can be hidden behind a superficial balance of general immorality. There are five preferable personality characteristics of a rational leader: highly intelligent, honest, resisting political processes, ability to establish and preserve object relations, healthy narcissism, healthy and justified paranoid attitude in contrast to being naive. Surprisingly, the last two characteristics are also the most demanding ones for a leader. The healthy narcissism should protect leaders from being too dependent on the others and strength autonomic functioning. Moderate paranoid attitudes keeps leaders alert on dishonesty dangers, perversion and paranoiagenetic regression, as well as on acting – out diffuse aggres-

sion, which is unconsciously activated in all organization (group) processes. This paranoid attitude protects a leader from being naive (unconscious denial of aggressive and sadistic intentions in some members' functioning and a group), enabling him to perform a deep analysis of conflict aspects, that are surfacing in an institution. In the case of organization regression, the narcissistic and paranoid leader characteristics are heightened and are strong regressive factors that would trigger further regression in a group, that would take narcissistic-dependent and paranoid-sadistic direction. The situations, like the one just described, can witness the paradox of institutionalized leadership, based on one personal characteristic that, if it is moderate can either increase leader stability, or speed up regression, with the devastating paranoiagenetic effects on the whole organization^{22,27,28}. Speaking of leaders and their relation with a group, Astrachan has as an interesting theory, suggesting that a group have a potential power to rebel and take a certain degree of a control over its destiny. He describes this group power as universal for all groups.² The leaders moral dimension is threatened by narcissistic and paranoid regression of a leader and a group and this mechanism connects paranoiogenesis with its psychopathic consequences. The group members' moral deterioration, as well as that of the leader and group is manifested with rottenness and dishonesty (for e.g. corruption)^{22,28}. Moral deterioration affects also the group members whose conduct is not immoral, so they turn into passive observers and their personal and group moral, including their human values become questionable. This moral situation is extremely dangerous for newcomers in the group. A passive attitude toward moral decline can be a reflection of some group members or a group inability to change it (connected with moral deterioration in a social group con-

text). However, their inability can be caused by fear of possible social ruptures in the group and the loss of group status, due to the responsibility for this behavior (cases of group leaders)^{23,28,29}.

Aggression expressed through projective identification in institutionalized conflicts affects administrative personnel, but in the case of regression in a big group processes, the projective identification is ineffective, due to the behavioral aspect of projective identification. In this situation aggression can not be clearly projected on one person, especially if ones who the aggression might be directed against and projected on, can not be controlled, what can heighten the fear of superior enemies and increase the diffuse projected aggression as a its consequence^{30,31}.

When a fear of being hurt reaches certain intensity level, the paranoid mechanism, so called »urge for betrayal« gets activated, excluding all moral limitations and turning into a survival fight. These situations would make a person do anything in order to protect himself from a dangerous attack (direction, form, intensity)²⁷.

Mechanisms to Fight Organization (Group) Regression

The fighting mechanisms against organization regression include bureaucracy, humanity, democracy and altruism^{19,32}.

In order to protect a social organization against paranoiogenesis it is most important to establish a bureaucracy system. The effective bureaucracy system can ensure rationally oriented bureaucracy, meaning that it is publicly responsible, with stable authority, and general responsibility of an organization to its social environment, respecting legal and political aspects, as well as the founding of parallel labor and union organizations. The successful bureaucracy means that the institutions are either responsible or

controlled by the state or law. Masters describes the most important features of bureaucracy³². Bureaucracy guarantees an element of correction, necessary when we talk about big group functioning with conflicting interests, so that all group members can be benefited. The bureaucracy system enables new ways of cooperation among constitutive groups, in order to make them more efficient. Nevertheless, the bureaucratic organization can have strong internal conflicts, that can be controlled and rationally resolved with standard mechanisms of bureaucratic functioning. The bureaucratic structure and its functioning decrease regression in big group processes within a social organization, so that paranoiagenetic regression occurs at lower levels in normal circumstances. The effective bureaucratic functioning can enable optimal task performance in a social group, preserve normal social interaction and changes in an institution, in order to see that the group process contributes to everyone's benefit. The limitation of bureaucratic functioning can be explained with an unavoidable infiltration of dissociate sadism in all group processes. This infiltration would include all institutional functioning, as well as all functioning tasks performance. All members of social organizations (group) experience narcissistic challenges, Oedipal rivalry and frustration of pre-Oedipal needs for dependency and autonomy control. All mentioned would generate aggression. If aggression can not be expressed in social interactions or sublimated in task performance, it gets projected on group formation (leading to rupture and idealization and persecution occurrence), or on leadership, in the form of Oedipal and pre-Oedipal conflict combination, what results in leader idealization and fear of leadership persecution. Incompetent leaders of bureaucratic systems (especially those with strong narcissistic or paranoid tendencies) can transform regressive

bureaucratic systems into a social nightmare. These leaders expect and stimulate servile behavior of their subordinates and reward if they idealized by them, but harshly punish members of social groups who dare to criticize them^{19,25}. The biggest disadvantage of bureaucracy is its tendency to grow and conduct operations that surpass the functional needs of social organization, what leads to a gradual system deterioration as its consequence and makes an individual feel impersonal, dehumanized and neglected^{32,33}.

The activation of humanistic ideology would serve as a protective shield against paranoiogenesis in social institutions, since humanism emphasizes justice, equal opportunities and law guarantees the same rights for all. This ideology is incorporated in state democracy system and can support social controls, which protect requisiteness of organization structure. The control systems can also protect organization from leader's rottenness and paranoiagenetic deterioration, caused by leadership misconduct. The concept of law guaranteeing equality and equal opportunities for everyone in social organization can be suppressed by a regressive atmosphere, created in a context of big group processes. Once when a diffuse identity syndrome gets activated, together with primitive aggression in the context of big group processes, it leads to unconscious collective envy of those who avoid regression and are creative. The collective unconscious envy, generalized under the influence of equality ideology can be destructive for leaders of social groups and can trigger a selection of grandiose leaders with narcissistic personality²².

The democratic principle, respected in decision making is an important control mechanism of paranoia genesis in social organization. This democratic principle consists of: open discussion about issues concerning everyone, ensuring equal rights for everyone to participate in an

open communication at all hierarchical levels, public, stable and socially sanctioned power distribution on functional basis, total participation of all social organization members in choosing their leaders. If the democratic principle is not respected, it might stimulate the paranoiagenetic regression in social organization and it can have two causes: the nature of political processes and confusion between democratic and functional mechanisms in decision making^{22,34}.

Members' altruism in social groups helps reduction of paranoiagenetic regression. Some individuals with a strong motivation and well developed integrating personality functioning can take care about social organization (group) functioning, but also about human values of organization members. These group members, when out of groups and task systems, help people in trouble. Individuals with strong altruism are characterized by their courage and felling for values^{22,35,36}.

Bringing together two enemies to straighten out their conflicts; talking extensively with one person caught up in a paranoid, self-perpetuating web of misconceptions; gathering a significant group of peers to present to their superiors the problems that they are ignoring or mismanaging – all, under the right circumstances, can be helpful. Individual courage, the normal sense of commitment to values, and altruistic drive can move individual members to transcend paranoiagenetic regression²².

Cohen defined altruism as a progressive identification with ever-increasing populations and encompassing aspect of humanity. It is not sufficient merely to bring representative primary groups (or primary group representatives) together, transposing them from a state of independent isolation into polarized and often conflicting subgroups under political pressure. New groups, those that further

lasting accommodations, are won by transforming similarities and differences into novel configurations through a process that requires creative synthesis. The new reference group seeks to incorporate diverse societal factors^{37,38}.

Groups can be convened or set off in the mind and in the spaces for interaction in the real world. Drawing a boundary around one's affiliations is both a private matter and a public affair. Internal and external constituencies reflect various parts of the self and a compilation of real and imagined outside influences. Self and other (intrapsychic and interpersonal processes) and internal and external affairs (domestic and foreign policies) cannot be separated into non-interactive domains. Fixed ideas about in-groups and out-groups bear the influence of multiple identifications, both personal and collective. All the groups, both within and without, require mediation between opposing forces^{39–44}.

Is the world coming together or splitting apart? The dynamic balance created by the polarization of Cold World ideologies is breaking down. What will come in its place is yet to be determined. There are signals of new and holistic sociopolitical and socioeconomic configurations. The United Nations has been given a renewed mandate and an operational mission consistent with its character. At the same time, peoples heretofore held together by powerful external forces are splitting apart. Does the fragmentation evident in the former Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia constitute a move toward subgroup integrity or a regressive breakdown in world order that promises chaos, rather than containment? The world of sociopolitical groupings remains interdependent, albeit with many diverse parts resistant to any form of reconciliation³⁹. The development of new groups freed from the bounded constraints of nation

states and politics as usual may further postmodern aims and thereby represent a sociocultural advance^{39,45–47}.

Discussion

The theory of group dynamics is an interdisciplinary field including separated disciplines like: psychology of an individual, social psychology, sociology and group psychology. Each of these disciplines has its theory and different terminology, describing phenomena and processes. The literature about an interpsychic interaction, group therapy and contextual social factors is huge, but unsophisticated⁴⁸. Our study is based on theoretical assumptions of psychoanalytical group psychology, though we addressed also other disciplinary theories. We described the group and organization regression according to Kernberg and Bion's theories, since they show examples of psychoanalytical group psychology, following the tradition of Melanie Klein's psychoanalytical work in group and organization functioning^{18,22–24,48}. Klein's psychoanalytical assumptions point out to the importance of early internationalized object relations in determining the nature of intrapsychic conflict in case of normal and pathological ego conditions. She also stresses out the role of pregenital development factors in pathological behavior development, but also in mature human relations. Speaking from an instinctual perspective, we can say that all human relations are significantly contaminated with pregenital aggression and from ego perspective, human relations are a result of primitive defensive mechanism influences⁴⁹. According to Bion's hypothesis the group members are in constant fight to prevent reoccurrence of primitive internal conditions. In the case when the group mentality (culture) is marked with dependency, fight-flight and pairing, the group functioning is characterized by the

use of primitive defensive mechanisms (rupture and projective identification), opposite to mature functioning of a working group or of a group whose priority is a task performance⁴. Kernberg applied his object relation theory to the psychology of an organization, hypothetically saying that there is a universal but latent disposition of all groups for regression on pre-Oedipal levels of intrapsychic organization with group dys-functioning its consequence. Based on the works of Bion, Rice and Turquet, Kernberg hypothetically states that dysfunctional social organizations induce regression of big group processes, threatening group identity and causing psychotic processes, what makes group members misinterpret their reality and create wrong judgments and function differently from their personal style⁴⁸.

The topics like group psychodynamics, group functioning and group regression raise a lot of questions for individuals and social groups. The tendency toward group regressive behavior is a universal group phenomenon, therefore learning more about group psychodynamics is important for person's life experience through his psychosocial development. In order to have a successful group functioning and to satisfy the group and its members needs, the evaluation of group functioning, group situation and group processes by group members and group itself is essential. Therefore the group, as well as its members should continuously try to address the questions and problems dealing with group psychodynamics.

The purpose of this paper is to provoke creative unrest in an individual, stimulating him to evaluate group dynamics

and personal conduct in a group, whose member he is. The paper mentions some of these questions, problems and dilemmas. What happens with a group that an individual is a member of? What role plays an individual in group conduct and group functioning? What is the relation between an individual and societies interest, satisfaction and well-being? What are the relation and the social context of interaction between a group and an individual? To what extent does a social context with present political process influence a group and an individual and what is the power of an interaction in an opposite direction? What freedom of speech does an individual enjoy, expressing his needs and interests? What are the possibilities for an individual, belonging to certain social groups to express his potential abilities and creative initiatives? What degree of freedom and individual participation is there in making decisions in social groups? What is a leader role in group functioning and how to ensure that personal potentials are the leading criteria in appointing individuals in social groups? What can and cannot a person do in order to guarantee that his and the groups conduct, as well as their functioning reflects the universal human and democratic values, which should promote individual, group and society development? These questions are universal for all groups and individuals and they are of special importance due to the situation in Croatian society and the state, since it demands numerous psychological, social, and moral changes in order to ensure a benefit not only for the state, but also for its citizens.

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PSIHODINAMIKA I REGRESIJA SOCIJALNIH GRUPA

S A Ž E T A K

Predmet istraživanja ovog preglednog rada je psihodinamika i regresija socijalne grupe. Cilj istraživanja je: 1. potaknuti razumijevanje grupnih procesa koji facilitiraju svijest o prisutnosti složenih fenomena u socijalnoj grupi i preduvjet su da članovi grupe i vođa grupe mogu funkcionirati na višoj razini osjetljivosti, sposobnosti i djelotvornosti, odnosno, onemogućavaju jačanje regresivnih grupnih fenomena; 2. potaknuti praktičnu primjenu znanja o ovom problemu u socijalnim grupama (organizacijama). Teorijske postavke grupne psihodinamike, grupne regresije i mehanizmi borbe protiv regresije dani su s aspekta psihoanalitičke grupne psihologije metodom deskriptivnog pregleda znanstvene literature. Zaključak: kontinuirana procjena razine funkcioniranja grupe, grupne situacije i grupnih procesa od strane pojedinih članova grupe i grupe kao cjeline preduvjet su održavanja regresivnih fenomena grupe na niskoj razini, odnosno, uspješnog funkcioniranja na zrelijoj razini, te stvaranja osjećaja zadovoljstva grupe i njenih članova.