LDR 813 Organizational Dynamics

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Professor

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Assignment

### *Developmental Readings*

Review Assignment #3, the course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

* Refer to the “[Student Guide to Developmental Readings](https://drive.google.com/file/d/161V_FaYR2BnNGCSFUlWPjUSIQzcH04Hq/view?usp=share_link)” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Source One:** Banerjee, S. B. (2022). Decolonizing management theory: A critical perspective. *Journal of Management Studies*, *59*(4), 1074-1087. doi:10.1111/joms.12756

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “There is a form of epistemic blindness in most accounts of management because histories of racism and colonialism are excluded or glossed over. For instance, principles of ‘scientific management’ that regulate productivity of today’s workers are directly derived from the labor extractive techniques of slavery (Cooke, 2003). To increase productivity of their slaves, plantation owners held contests where slaves who picked the most cotton received small cash prizes. This amount then became the minimum output expected from each slave and was also used to calculate how many lashes of the whip slaves would receive if they did not meet their targets (Rosenthal, 2018). Slavery and racism were enabling conditions of industrial capitalism whose legacies persist in contemporary practices of modern slavery” (p. 1080).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to essential elements of management theory and practices.

**Variant Analysis:** This quotation is variant. Banerjee (2022) seems to be arguing for discounting the “principles of ‘scientific management’” based on their alleged foundation in “labor extractive techniques of slavery” (p. 1080). Even if this historical argument is correct, it is logically fallacious because it commits the genetic fallacy (arguing that a proposition is false based on its origin). The principles of “scientific management” should be evaluated based on the effectiveness and ethical virtue of the principles themselves, not on their historical background (p. 1080). All this being said, it may very well be that scientific management’s “labor extractive techniques” that are applied in much of industrial capitalism may contribute to the high rate of burnout that is evident in society (p. 1080).

**Contextualization:** Even though I disagree with Banerjee’s (2022) critical, approach to deconstructing management theory, I do think that there is value in evaluating the history of the ideas that we take for granted. It may be helpful to understand if the idea came from a racist or colonial past when trying to apply the principles in a non-western context. Understanding this past may help the manager contextualize the principles to the different culture in a more effective way. As I am evaluating different management theories to adopt, I will apply this quote by looking at the developmental history of each idea so that I understand it in context.

**Source Two:** Burnes, B. (2020). The origins of Lewin’s three-step model of change. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *56*(10), 32-59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886319892685

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**For Lewin (1936a), the stability of human behavior was based on a quasi-stationary equilibrium of driving and restraining forces within a life space. Consequently, “the determination of the position of the person within the life space is the first prerequisite for understanding behavior” (Lewin, 1946b, p. 248). These forces are usually difficult to change, as people find when they try to change their behavior (Buchanan & Sheffield, 2017; Hawkes, 2016). Thus, Lewin (1947c) saw unfreezing as a challenging process of reeducation (Lewin & Grabbe, 1945), whereby, as Benne (1976) notes, “Men and women alter, replace, or transcend patterns of thinking, valuation, volition, or overt behavior” (p. 29). Unfreezing allows “the fluidity necessary for change” (Lewin, 1943d, pp. 47-48). Lewin also believed that the learning gained better equips people for future change (Coghlan & Jacobs, 2005; Lewin, 1946a)” (p. 49).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. It is so easy for employees (and leaders) in organizations to get stuck in patterns of thought and action because it is “the way we have always done it.” Getting out of this pattern is difficult and requires team buy-in to the need for reeducation. But, if employees are open to learning new, more effective ways of achieving goals, this sets the stage for exponential growth.

**Contextualization:** I witnessed this “unfreezing” process in my own organization. In April of 2023, after OGS had achieved a renewal of accreditation status with TRACS, OGS President, Dr. Reichard, hosted a multi-day team meeting in which we re-evaluated the way that we were running Core classes. Each 6-month semester for 40 years, OGS had run Core classes in week-long residencies. Students would attend on campus or over Zoom (since 2020) from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. These classes would run for 6 consecutive weeks. While effective, this led to burnout for faculty and staff. Dr. Reichard knew that we needed to change our approach if we were going to start pursuing sustainable growth. During the April meetings, he brought in an outside evaluator who helped the OGS staff understand what some other universities were doing to adapt to the post-pandemic society. This reeducation helped us unfreeze enough to brainstorm what would become constructive change within our organization.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “This describes the changes necessary ‘to bring about the permanence of the new situation’ (Lewin, 1943d, p. 48). Freezing seeks to stabilize behavior at a new quasi-stationary equilibrium in order to ensure that it is relatively safe from regression. Freezing requires the new behavior to be congruent with and reinforced by the rest of the behavior, personality, and environment of those concerned in order to prevent regression (Lewin, 1936a, 1941; Schein, 1996). Lewin saw social change as a group activity because, unless group norms and routines are also transformed, changes to individual behavior will not be sustained (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b). In organizational terms, freezing can require changes to culture, norms, policies, and practices (Armenakis et al., 2000; T. G. Cummings & Huse, 1989). However, as discussed, Lewin (1947a, 1947b) also saw freezing as arising from the nature of the change process itself, especially the degree of participation (Burnes, 2017b; Lewin, 1942b, 1943b, 1947a, 1947b)” (p. 50).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. When trying to cauterize organizational changes, it makes sense that it takes the whole group to change their “culture, norms, policies, and practices” to support the change (p. 50). If only a couple individuals agree to adapt to the change, with the rest of the team returning to old norms, then the transformation of the organization will regress or proceed so slowly, and unevenly, that the benefits the changes were implemented to produce will not be realized. This is consistent with a Christian worldview. The Apostle Paul recognized that unless all the parts of the body of Christ were working together, they would not embody Christ to the world in his fullness (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4)

**Contextualization:** In the April meetings discussed in Comment 2, it was decided that OGS would offer residencies over two weekends per term. This greatly cut down on faculty teaching time and administrative load. This change required all faculty and staff to change the way they operate. Faculty had to adjust their course PowerPoints to fit a 2-hour session instead of 8 hours, as was in the previous system. Staff had to adjust the preparatory materials they sent to students and faculty. Thankfully, we have all been able to work in sync and readjust when necessary to attempt to implement these changes. Because of this, the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 terms have been largely successful. As a leader, Dr. Reichard checks in with each staff member every month asking how the changes are going and if there is anything he can do to support. This leadership continually galvanizes the group in our mission.

**Source Three:** Khushk, A., Zengtian, Z., Hui, Y., & Atamba, C. (2022). Understanding group dynamics: Theories, practices, and future directions. *Malaysian E-Commerce Journal*, *6*(1), 1-8. doi.org/10/26480/mecj.01.2022.01.08

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “What exactly is ‘group dynamics’? It is derived from a Greek term that means ‘force.’ It refers to the influences that operate within groups. The functional implementation of group interaction lies in the use of information about these forces to accomplish a goal (Adams and Sydie, 2014). A group is a collection of at least two members who join together for a certain reason, interact with one another, influence one another, and are reliant on one another (Robbins and Judge, 2015)” (p. 1).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. The authors provide operational definitions of a “group” and “group dynamics” (p. 1). One point of note is that, on this definition, a group is different from a crowd in that they are “joined together” for a purpose *and* are “reliant on one another” (p. 1). A crowd attending a concert may be united in purpose (to enjoy the music), but one cannot say that they are necessarily reliant on each other. However, with a team in an organization, reliance is necessary for the team to function well. Understanding the “influences that operate” within a team enables team leaders to implement needed motivation and change.

**Contextualization:** Of course, I intend to utilize these operational definitions in my assignment #3 essay. But, practically speaking, I think that one thing that has been missing in my leadership is conscious, intentional, use of scholarly literature that explains the different types of group interactions that exist within teams. While playing college tennis and interacting with different teams at work, I have indirectly picked up on some patterns within groups but have not studied it enough to be able to implement them functionally to lead a group. I will be utilizing my assignment #3 essay to intentionally learn about group dynamics.

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Sherif proposed the most well-known theory of intergroup conflict. One of the key causes of the dispute, he claims, is the inability to obtain scarce resources. In other terms, the consistency of ties between two parties is determined by the presence or absence of a potential disagreement. Where resources are limited, rivalry contributes to group prejudices. As a first consequence of the rivalry between group members, the groups’ contact networks are hampered. The opposing party is then thrown into a pessimistic pattern as a result of the competing parties (Je and Britt, 2011)…However intergroup disputes can be mitigated by preventing and managing the source of the problem, growing contact among individuals and groups within these groups and, most importantly, removing the success and failure pattern” (p. 3).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to group and teamwork dynamics, and people problems in organizations.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive.It makes sense that low resource levels would contribute to conflict. If one team member thinks that team resources should be used to fund one project and another team member has their own project competing for these resources, they are likely to come into conflict. Leaders of teams with scarce resources must be mindful that this reality is the case and utilize the mitigation strategies discussed in the quote. Open communication and dialogue can help bring the issue to light so that the whole team can give input on the allocation of resources.

**Contextualization:** Currently, in one of my jobs, I am working for a team that is experiencing a scarcity of resources. And it just so happens that one of the resources is me. I am an administrative assistant in the healthcare division at a local community college. In my role, I assist the nursing, EMS, Medical Assisting, and Health and Wellness departments. My supervisor has told me that, since the Nursing program is the most complicated and involved program at the college, I am to allocate 80% of my time to nursing and 20% of my time to EMS, Medical Assisting, and Health and Wellness. In my experience thus far, Nursing needs an administrative assistant who can devote 100% of their time to that department. However, the lack of funds makes the time breakdown of my position necessary.

One minor conflict has already arisen in this arrangement. One day per week, on Tuesdays, I work in an office on the EMS, Medical Assisting, and Health and Wellness floor. My time is to be devoted strictly to these departments on this day. However, the Nursing department faculty has its weekly meetings on Tuesdays and keeps asking my supervisor if I can be spared to take minutes during the meetings. I have been instructed to take minutes for them once on Tuesdays. But I can tell that the EMS, Medical Assisting, and Health and Wellness departments do not like me going up to the Nursing floor on Tuesdays. I believe that my supervisor is managing the situation well because she is making sure that the directors of each department know my time breakdown and communicate with each other about utilizing my assistance.

**Source Four:** Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable*. Jossey-Bass. [Seminal]

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The first dysfunction is an absence of trust among team members. Essentially, this stems from their unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group. Team members who are not genuinely open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses make it impossible to build a foundation for trust. (p. 169). This failure to build trust is damaging because it sets the tone for the second dysfunction: fear of conflict. Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Instead, they resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments” (p. 170).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. It is so easy for people to want to put on a front of perfection in order to impress their teammates, and most often their supervisors. If the individual’s goal is to climb the corporate ladder, then it makes sense why any sign of weakness would be avoided. However, on a healthy team, the individual’s goal should be to accomplish the mission of the team. If this is the goal, then team members’ weaknesses should be out in the open so that the team can adapt and cover them.

**Contextualization:** I have been on a team where there was no trust between two departments. Weaknesses were not discussed, people were blamed for things that were not their fault, and there were a plethora of “veiled discussions and guarded comments” during team meetings (p. 170). Because the departments were reliant on each other to operate effectively, this lack of trust lead to several important deadlines not being met, which only increased the tension further. I am, by nature, reticent to ask for help because I like doing things myself and do not like being completely open about my weaknesses. However, this quote has reminded me how vital it is to share weaknesses and areas where assistance is needed with my team. I must be willing to do the uncomfortable for the greater good of the team.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**One of the most difficult challenges that a leader faces in promoting healthy conflict is the desire to protect members from harm. This leads to premature interruption of disagreements, and prevents team members from developing coping skills for dealing with conflict themselves. This is not unlike parents who overprotect their children from quarrels or altercations with siblings. In many cases, it serves only to strain the relationships by depriving the participants of an opportunity to develop conflict management skills. It also leaves them hungry for resolution that never occurs. Therefore, it is key that leaders demonstrate restraint when their people engage in conflict, and allow resolution to occur naturally, as messy as it can sometimes be. This can be a challenge because many leaders feel that they are somehow failing in their jobs by losing control of their teams during conflict” (p. 188).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to people problems in organizations.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. Leaders must be willing to undergo—and willing to let their employees undergo—temporary psychological discomfort in order to achieve much greater team success. Avoiding conflict results in reinforcing a lack of trust between team members with disagreements. Even if resolution of the conflict is complicated and time-intensive, it is worth it to get team members’ thoughts into the open and help work through disagreements.

**Contextualization:** One of my top five strengths on the StrengthsFindertm test is harmony. I am generally an agreeable person who wants everyone to get along. I am willing to sacrifice my preferences for the group and I get impatient with people who are not willing to do the same. Because I want everyone to be happy, I am naturally a conflict-avoider. On the other hand, Dr. Reichard has implemented direct, respectful conflict resolution on the OGS team. When two teammates have a problem, he calls a meeting where they can hash it out. He is not willing to let the root of the disagreement grow into a complete lack of trust. It is uncomfortable, but I have seen many team members reconcile because of some of these meetings. In my leadership, I need to be willing to overcome the weakness of my harmony strength in order to have a healthy team.

**Source Five:** Lencioni, P. (2022). *The 6 types of working genius: A better way to understand your gifts, your frustrations, and your team*. Matt Holt Books.

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Lack of Wonder can lead to a team failing to take time to step back and ponder what is going on around them. Cultural issues, market opportunities, and looming problems might get overlooked in the pursuit of more pressing issues. Lack of Invention on a team presents obvious problems. In many cases, teams start to feel a bit crazy because they know their old ways of doing things aren’t working but they find themselves stuck trying the same approaches again and again to no avail” (p. 197).

**Essential Element:** This quote relates to group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. Teams that have been together for a long time can get stuck in inefficient patterns because they are the habits that the team has had since its inception. Without a person who is willing to objectively think outside the box and point out the inefficiencies, these teams may continue in these inefficient patterns indefinitely. Likewise, even if a team knows that they need to change, they will not be able to unless there is a creative individual on the team who can propose new processes and solutions, the team will also remain stuck.

**Contextualization:** Personally, my working geniuses are “Wonder” and Tenacity (p. 197). This means that I am able to take a step back from the situation and ask, “Could we be doing things better?” I can see problems in the status quo and dream about different realities. My problem is that I lack Invention. I am not able to craft a detailed plan on how to get to the ideal reality. Once the plan is in place, I can carry it out, but without someone on the team with Invention, I would be stuck in a cycle of wishful thinking. So, I must seek to identify someone on my team with “Invention” and build a close relationship with this person so that we can use our respective skill sets to help each other (p. 197).

**Source Six:** Sartori, R., Tommasi, F., Ceschi, A., Zene, M., Morandini, S., Monti, M., & Gostimir, M. (2023). Living together in the company: Operational efficiency as a function of social and relational dynamics in organizations. *Italian Sociological Review*, *13*(2), 163-178. doi:10.13136/isr.v13i2.666

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Organizations, on the other hand, or rather those who have the responsibility of a company or a business, such as entrepreneurs and managers (Ceschi et al., 2017b; Sartori et al., 2014), should grasp the message that, given the concept of organizational coexistence from which this article has started, it is necessary to invest in the so-called human resources, for example in training and team building actions (Costantini & Sartori, 2018; Sartori & Costantini, 2020), so that people at work develop the collaborative and participatory attitude exemplified by the third answer of the story” (p. 170).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to essential elements of management theory and practice, and group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. Suppose a company’s resources are constantly poured into infrastructure, marketing, etc. but the human resources are neglected. In that case, the team will ultimately fail, or at least have a high turnover rate. Sometimes it is difficult to devote time to team-building because time is seen as so scarce. But, building team morale and collaboration will save time and money in the long run by avoiding unresolved conflict and building trust among team members.

**Contextualization:** At the beginning of our President’s Council meetings,Dr. Reichard always starts with a devotion and then asks for each team member's thoughts. These devotion sessions normally last for an hour, which seems like a long time. However, Dr. Reichard is firm in his belief that these times of sharing draw the team closer together and help get our minds above our to-do lists so that we can creatively explore the problems that we are facing at OGS. When I first joined the President’s Council, I thought that we were wasting valuable time by letting these sessions go for an hour, but now they are my favorite times of the month. I always walk away with a renewed sense of the school’s mission and a sense that I am not alone in my long list of to-dos. When I lead a team, I will make sure to focus on team-building and put systems in place so that these times do not get overshadowed by my responsibilities.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**As we have seen throughout the article, operational efficiency in the company depends on interactive efficiency, and this is characterized by collaborative and non-conflictual relationships between the so-called human resources, whose needs and desires are as well satisfied in the workplace and not only those of the company (Tommasi, Perini et al., 2022)”

(p. 173)

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. The idea that employees’ “needs and desires” should be “satisfied in the workplace and not only those of the company” goes against the grain of modern industrial capitalism (p. 173). After the industrial revolution, employees were seen as replaceable tools that the company would use to accomplish its goal. However, what Sartori et al. (2023) argue is that companies that make sure their employees’ “needs and desires” are met increase their “interactive efficiency”, which benefits “operational efficiency” (p. 173).

**Contextualization:** This quote is consistent with my academic research on calling and vocation. People are constantly trying to make meaning in their lives. Many people see their work as giving them identity, which makes sense since most of their time awake will be spent at their job. If they are not finding their work meaningful or not helping them accomplish their life goals, then their motivation to perform excellent work will be diminished. If employers use strategies for helping employees see the meaning and value of their work, personally, then they will want to aid the company. When I am in leadership, I should not view my employees as tools to accomplish my ends. Instead, I should view them as growing human beings and seek to help them on their personal development journey.

**Source Seven:** Stewart, V. R., Snyder, D. G., & Kou, C. (2023). We hold ourselves accountable: A relational view of team accountability. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *183*, 691-712. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04969-z

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**A relational understanding of accountability proceeds from the assumption that the most meaningful normative duties and responsibilities resist legalistic formulation and codification and originates with the premise that we are primarily social creatures and that social relationships shape accountability (Painter-Morland, 2006, 2007, 2011). Being in a relationship and wanting to maintain it—i.e., relational responsiveness—is fundamental to the mindset of expecting to give an account. Relational approaches to accountability inquire how people experience accountability and how the quality of social relationships shapes accountability outcomes” (p. 693).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive.Accountability should be based on quality relationships. If people try to hold another person accountable or call out a mistake without first building a relationship with them, then their efforts will most likely not be effective. This is because the person being held accountable will not feel a responsibility toward those seeking to hold them accountable. This reality is why the term, “accountability partner” is so often used. This language implies a close relationship and mutuality among the members holding each other accountable.

**Contextualization:** Being an introvert, sometimes it is difficult for me to go out of my way to build relationships with my co-workers. I realize that this is not the best practice because if I keep myself guarded against my co-workers, then there will never be a high enough level of relationship between us that enables us to hold each other accountable. This month, I intend to take the first step to getting to know some of my co-workers better by respectfully asking them about themselves.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Applying these concepts to team accountability suggests that ongoing meaningful interactions between team members give rise to team accountability practices beyond any formal accountability mechanisms or individual attributes (Moncrieffe, 2011). From an ethics perspective, team accountability can be viewed as group members interpreting formal policies, introducing felt obligations, shaping interaction patterns, and providing the context within which team behaviors are supported or curbed. Such internal team interactions may be more demanding than external sources of accountability in terms of providing meaningful guidance, in part because members themselves contribute to the emergence of mutual accountability and to the rewarding or sanctioning of team members” (p. 693).

**Essential Element:** This quote is related to group and teamwork dynamics.

**Additive Analysis:** This quote is additive. Particularly, the idea that team accountability includes the interpretation of policy and voicing of “felt obligations” is very informative. If team members are to hold each other accountable, they must know where each other stands on the company policies. Mutual understanding provides a foundation by which the members can be held accountable. Also, knowing where each other feels obligated is important for prioritizing initiatives and avoiding conflict because the level to which people feel obligated to a certain task may differ from team member to team member.

**Contextualization:** As Registrar at OGS, many of my conversations with colleagues concern the interpretation of institutional policy because I am responsible for making sure that registration and enrollment policies conform to accreditation standards. I can concur with Steward et al. (2023) that mutual understanding about policy helps with team accountability. I can do a much better job, however, at asking my co-workers what their “felt obligations” are and sharing mine with them (p. 693). I need to know where they feel obligated so that I can better understand their priorities and how my priorities intersect with theirs.

**Works Cited**

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