The history of thinking on group development is a complicated and fragmented one because both research and theory construction occurred in two distinctly different intellectual traditions: academic and clinical. These traditions were at times independent and at other times mutually influential. One originated in the group dynamics academic arena and often entailed the study of work groups occurring in both natural and laboratory settings. Social psychology took the lead in this effort, later followed by education and political science (MacKenzie, 1994a). The second major tradition was clinical; it involved a focus on the psychotherapy group and was connected to disciplines that address psychological difficulties such as clinical psychology, psychiatry, and social work. Certain group explorations borrowed from both branches. For example, the sensitivity group movement, which sprung up in the 1960s, drew on elements of both group dynamics and psychotherapy groups (Yalom, 1995). In this chapter we describe the history of scholarly thinking on group development, a history that serves as a foundation for examining the developmental characteristics of psychotherapy groups.
First, we look at the forerunners of the group as a construct and system. Second, we describe how later theorists characterized change processes occurring during group life, which led to the early group developmental models. Many of these models, which were termed progressive, came to be applied to psychotherapy groups in the late 1950s and culminated in Tuckman's (1965) seminal article that first captured the interactional patterns and themes of the stages as they unfolded in therapy groups. These continue to dominate the literature to this day, albeit with refinements and individual variation depending on variables such as the setting of the group.

We describe how models of group development are similar and how they are different in ways that include number of stages, units of analysis, the role of leadership, and tasks versus conflict emphasis, to name a few. We conclude the chapter by reviewing new paradigms for considering group development, such as complexity and chaos theory, the punctuated equilibrium approach, and the social entrainment model.

THE GROUP AS A CONSTRUCT: THEORETICAL FORERUNNERS

The roots of scholarly writings on group development go back to antiquity. Greek and Roman philosophers introduced into their works elements that presaged contemporary group development theory. For example, the Greek scholar Heraclitus's works contained three principles (described by Durant, 1939) that were the intellectual forerunners to contemporary group developmental thinking. The first principle is the ubiquity of change, the idea that whatever exists within the universe is in a constant state of transformation; inherent in the notion of group development is the notion that such transformations occur over time and group developmental theory attempts to describe their character. The second principle is that within all of the seeming fragments of existence, a force unifies all phenomena, a notion that antedated the idea of the group as a whole. The third principle was the coexistence of opposites, the view that no pole of a continuum can exist without its opposite also being present, although possibly less apparently so. Heraclitus saw the tension between these opposites as creating a matrix for change. In fact, the existence of opposites has been regarded as a major mechanism catapulting a group from one phase of development to the next (e.g., Bennis & Shepard, 1956).

THE ORIGINS OF THE GROUP AS A CONCEPT

Between antiquity and modern times, many philosophers have touched on ideas that achieved full flowering in the 20th century. However, not until the early 1900s did the sociocultural events unfold that led scholars to ar-
ticulate views on group life that foreran group developmental theory. The sociocultural events were those international conflicts that escalated to World War I. The anticipation and ultimate outbreak of war was on a scale that was unprecedented because of not only the multiplicity of peoples and nations clashing but also the large-scale lethality of the weapons made possible by the industrial revolution. As the power of the group became evident to the intellectual community (Anthony, 1972), a group of writers attempted to characterize the psychological features of group life.\(^1\) Members of the intellectual community through the phenomena of war could clearly see that groups could exhibit properties that were other than what could be observed by members considered individually. These writers posited features compatible with groups having the necessary power to perform acts of large-scale human annihilation.

**Contributions of Le Bon**

One scholar who secured attention to group phenomena primarily because of the radical character of his conception of group life was the sociologist Gustave Le Bon. Writing about exceedingly large groups such as those formed during the French Revolution, Le Bon (1895/1960) posited the existence of a group mind, which had all of the behavioral features of an undisciplined child. Thought processes activated by the large group situation were seen by Le Bon as those characteristic of early childhood. Individuals operating under the influence of the group mind experience a “sentiment of invincible power” that leads them to be selfish, uncontrolled, wrathful, and interested in the unbridled pursuit of pleasure.

Governing the behavior of group members is the phenomenon of contagion wherein group members show a hypnotic level of submissiveness to the direction of others and put the welfare of the group before their own. For example, why are so many individuals willing to fight in wars? As part of their membership in the large group, Le Bon (1895/1960) answered, individuals forfeit their ability to reason the merits of such an action to their individual lives and simply submit to the direction of authority figures for the sake of a group goal they uncritically embrace.

**Contributions of McDougall**

McDougall (1920, 1923), like Le Bon, saw the activities of individuals formed as an unorganized crowd as “excessively emotional, impulsive, violent, fickle, inconsistent, irresolute and extreme in action,” and at its worst, the crowd’s behavior was “like that of a wild beast” (McDougall, 1923, p. 64).

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\(^1\)Wheelan (2005) pointed out that recent terrorist events have renewed scholarly interest in the distinctive and sometimes malignant features of group life.
He too gave as an example of such a crowd some of the activities of large groups of people during the French Revolution. Yet, he also recognized that groups, even exceedingly large groups, can achieve a higher level of organization in which they are not driven by their impulses and are capable of greater productivity than could be achieved by individuals acting independently. Although McDougall had a good deal to say about groups, pertinent to our purpose is his asseveration that the primary feature that leads a group to a more sophisticated form of "collective life" is "continuity of existence" (1923, p. 69). In other words, no group, regardless of its composition or other structural features, can realize its potential for constructive action if it has not had the opportunity to develop over time.

Contributions of Freud

In Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, Freud (1921/1955) argued that although Le Bon's description of the group mind was "brilliantly executed" (p. 13), particularly in its assertion that the group mind is ruled largely by unconscious mental activity, his formulation was limited insofar as it was based on groups (such as revolutionary groups) that appear quickly and last briefly. Somewhat different, Freud believed, are the dynamics pertaining to groups that have a more stable existence. Here Freud introduced the notion, important for our purposes, that the factor of time in a group makes a difference in how a group can operate. A group, he noted, becomes established as an entity through members' development of emotional ties with one another through a process of identification. The basis of members' identification with one another is their common relationship to the leader. In this regard, he wrote,

The uncanny and coercive characteristics of group formations . . . may therefore with justice be traced back to the fact of their origin from the primal horde. The leader of the group is still the dreaded primal father; the group still wishes to be governed with unrestricted force; it has an extreme passion for authority . . . in Le Bon's phrase, it has a thirst for obedience. (Freud, 1921/1955, p. 59)

Freud's view that groups form through members' shared relationship to the leader as a parental figure has been resident in most contemporary group developmental theories: They hold that members can address their relationships with one another only once they have addressed their thoughts, feelings, and impulses in relation to the leader. Freud also emphasized empathy as a vehicle by which members forge connections with other members; the role of empathy, too, came to figure prominently in members' work in groups that have gone beyond the formative stages, that is, mature groups.

In their writings, Le Bon, McDougall, and Freud made clear their belief in the existence of group level phenomena. However, it was Triggant Burrow
(1927) who actually introduced the term *group as a whole*, conveying that this layer of group life has properties related to but separable from individual phenomena, and emphasized that it is worthy of exploration.

**Opposition to Group-as-a-Whole Thinking**

The early decades of the 20th century also saw the contributions of thinkers such as Floyd Allport (1924, 1961) who argued a different point of view. They held that group phenomena consist of the activities of individual group members and nothing more. They maintained that neither a transcendent group as a whole nor a set of group dynamics occur beyond the summed behaviors of individual group members. For such writers, although individuals in the group may develop, the group does not develop. The critique of both group-as-a-whole and group developmental thinking continues to this day and, as O'Leary and Wright (2005) noted, supports the notion of the human mind as an encapsulated, separate entity. O'Leary and Wright attributed the relative emphasis of individual therapy over group and family therapy in many training settings to be a manifestation of the persuasiveness of this critique.

**Contributions of Lewin**

Despite the critiques, thinking about the group as a whole or as a system continued to advance. Among the pioneers on group life, no one played a more significant role than the social scientist Kurt Lewin (1948, 1951). Lewin posited that individual behavior can only be understood through a grasp of his or her psychological field or life space, which "consists of the person and the psychological environment as it exists for him" (Lewin, 1951, p. xi). Groups too have life spaces, which encompass the group itself and the environment in which it resides. To understand either the behavior of the members of the group or the group as a whole, one must achieve cognizance of the distribution forces across the social field, a distribution that will drive or inhibit any given individual or group behavior. The driving and inhibiting forces create conflict that propels development. As the distribution of forces changes, the social field (the group, its subgroups, individual members, and the group's context) is altered. In characterizing these forces, Lewin (1951) wrote,

> The concept of the psychological field as a determinant of behavior implies that everything which affects behavior at a given time should be

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2Another type of criticism of group-as-a-whole thinking has been of its utility. As group historian Scheidlinger (2006) noted, in a follow-up study (Malan, Balfour, Hood, & Shooter, 1976) on a group that was conducted according to Bion's and Eriët's theoretical frameworks, group members reported that the group experience was extremely unhelpful. They indicated that the therapist appeared indifferent to their well-being. This well-publicized study dampened enthusiasm for the group-as-a-whole approach to treatment. Yet, theory development within this framework continued.

THEORETICAL HISTORY OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT 31
represented in the field existing at that time, and that only those facts can affect behavior which are part of the present field. (p. 241)

This principle of contemporaneity departed sharply from Freud’s emphasis on motives rooted in early experience.

The second principle Lewin emphasized, interdependence, established the reciprocal influence of all elements of the life space. Hence, changes in the group beget changes in its members. Changes in individual members influence other members and the group as a whole. Embedded in this principle of interdependence is a conceptual framework for understanding the relationship of the individual to the group; it provides an explanation for how it can be that individuals in a psychotherapy group may benefit from the developmental changes in the group as a whole. The emphasis on contemporaneous determinants of experience, the interdependence of properties, the importance of the group in relation to its context, and conflict as a basis of change are all notions that have achieved residency in developmental approaches.

Another paradigm emerging from the physical sciences that has had a profound effect on developmental approaches was general systems theory (GST), a framework proposed by von Bertalanffy (1950) that accounts for the interrelationships among systems and their subsystems. Like field theory, GST entails the view that to understand a system, one must grasp not merely the working of its parts but also the dynamics of the whole. von Bertalanffy identified a property of all systems and subsystems that reside within a hierarchy of systems, the property of isomorphy. Isomorphism is the repetition of structural and functional features within a system and subsystems in a hierarchy of systems. This feature suggests that those tensions manifesting at the level of the group also exist at the level of the individual member. The GST paradigm is developmentally focused in that it recognizes that development is an inherent aspect of open systems, that is, systems whose boundaries are permeable to the environment. GST shaped the writings of the Durkins (H. E. Durkin, 1964; J. E. Durkin, 1981), who drew the implications of systems thinking for the psychotherapy group. GST later influenced the conceptualizations of Agazarian and colleagues (Agazarian, 1997; Agazarian & Gantt, 2005), who proposed the theory of living human systems, a developmental approach integrating many of the theoretical ideas of GST with Lewinian concepts of group life.

EARLY CONCEPTIONS OF GROUP LIFE

The theoreticians we have considered established the group as an entity separate from its individual members. However, it was for later theorists to provide a more detailed conception of change processes occurring during group life. Prominent among those theorists who had a particularly great
influence on group developmental theory are Bales, Bion, Ezriel, and Foulkes. Although none of these theorists sought to characterize comprehensively the changes that a group undergoes across its life span, each theorist addressed the issue of how groups change. Whereas Bales’s contributions were in the group dynamics tradition, the conceptualizations of Bion, Ezriel, and Foulkes were based at least in part on their work with psychotherapy group.

**Bales**

Robert Bales and colleagues (Bales, 1950; Bales & Strodtbeck, 1951) studied problem-solving groups to understand the processes activated as members work on a problem. Their research suggested that two different types of processes are engaged as members work together. The first is a set of *task functions* that pertain to the specifics of the problem at hand. Examples of behaviors associated with these functions are asking questions and giving opinions. The second set of functions is *socioemotional* and concerns the regulation of group tension. A natural rhythm of group life, Bales and colleagues observed, is that as a group works on a problem, tension builds. Continued progress requires the release of tension so that the group can achieve equilibrium. Groups vary in terms of how the socioemotional functions are performed. For some, it may be joking with one another, for others complaining, and for still others, focusing on irrelevant topics. Bales saw change in the group as the alternation between a task focus and a socioemotional focus, between an increasing disequilibrium and a return of equilibrium.

Bales viewed the ability of a group to undergo changes leading to the restoration of equilibrium as contingent on the leadership of the group. Bales believed that a group requires individuals with expertise in the socioemotional and task functions and that often this expertise does not reside within the same individual. The notion of distributed leadership, leadership that is shared across various members and dependent for deployment on the dynamic needs of the group, came to be a familiar one among group developmental thinkers.

**Bion**

Wilfred Bion (1959, 1962) was a military psychiatrist responsible for establishing programs of care in a military hospital in London. He recognized that the psychotherapy group provided a means of efficient treatment and conducted groups in London’s Tavistock Clinic. On the basis of these experiences seen through the lens of Melanie Klein’s (1948) psychoanalytic thinking, Bion described group life as being constituted of two contrasting psychological frameworks: basic assumption and work group. Within the basic assumption framework, three assumption states occur: basic dependency, fight-flight, and pairing. The *basic assumption* state is an archaic or primitive mode of relating in which group members attenuate the anxiety stimulated by group
membership by creating a fantasy about it. The group behaves as if an imaginary construction of the group were indeed true.

The basic assumption dependency group is one in which members share a fantasy that their needs will be gratified magically and completely by an omniscient, omnipotent leader. The hallmark of the basic assumption fight-flight group is members’ shared belief that their survival as a group is in jeopardy. Their group preservation, they believe, can only be met by being led in fight by a powerful figure or by fleeing. The basic assumption pairing group is a framework in which members act as if they believe that the union of a pair of members will bring about salvation for all members of the group.

When groups are operating within any of these basic assumption frameworks, cognition is childlike, impulses and urges press for discharge, and affects are intense. Bion contrasted the basic assumption modes with the work group mode. In the work group, members manifest a dramatically greater ability to maintain a task focus. This ability entails the capacities to use mature thinking and to harness impulses and feelings. Whereas in the basic assumption modes, the individual who gains leadership is the person who enables the group to maintain the fantasy associated with the particular basic assumption state, in the work group, the leader will be the one who is best qualified to help the group perform its task. Bion also accounted for individual members’ relationships with the group through the notion of valency. He believed that different members resonated to the themes of the moment at different levels of intensity based on their own history, personality proclivities, and so on.

Bion’s model of group change was, like Bales’s model, cyclical: He believed that groups oscillated between the basic assumption modes and the work group modes. Despite the nondevelopmental character of the psychological states that Bion saw as characterizing group life, his thinking was highly influential on later theory in that the patterns he identified provided the rudiments of the developmental stages of those models that depicted groups as progressing. Bion, like Bales, also contributed the notion that leadership in a group is a function that changes depending on the psychological state of the group. Who will become leader rests on the group needs within the moment. Later developmental theorists such as Ariadne Beck (1974) proposed models that built on this notion of dynamic leadership.

Ezriel

H. Ezriel was also a group-as-a-whole object relationist who integrated the group as a whole with the intrapsychic life of the individual group member (Horwitz, 1993). Ezriel saw the group situation as inviting unconscious wishes and longings to press for fulfillment in members’ interactions with one another and the therapist. For example, members may each aspire to have all of the therapist’s love, attention, and aid. Yet, Ezriel also saw that
these wishes were associated, unconsciously, with fantasies of calamitous events that would occur if such wishes were gratified ("If I am the exclusive beneficiary of the therapist's resources, then I will be killed by the other members").

According to Ezriel, the group-as-a-whole conflict between the wish and the fear of the calamity gives rise to a common group tension. To keep these wishes repressed, a repression needed by the danger attached to them, members enter into a required relationship, which by its very structure prevents the wish from directly asserting itself. Each member may satisfy the requirement to keep the wishes at bay in a different fashion. One member may intellectualize, another may complain incessantly, and still another may simply withdraw. All of these maneuvers limit the satisfaction members can derive from their relationships with one other and with people outside the group. The task of the therapist then is to interpret both the conflict giving rise to the common group tension and each member's individual way of responding to the conflict. Ezriel's emphasis on the individual in the context of the group as a whole provides a clear view of how members can have their treatment needs addressed even as the therapist maintains a focus on the dynamics of the group as a whole.

Foulkes

The British analyst S. H. Foulkes (1964) contributed the concept of the group matrix to describe the communication network a group builds as members interact; the matrix captures the history of the group (Pines & Hutchinson, 1993). Foulkes provided a bridge between the group-as-a-whole perspective, developmental thinking, and psychopathology as he described how the group matrix changes over time. According to Foulkes, early in group life, communications are not direct: Members communicate through symptoms rather than through the direct expression of thoughts and feelings. Yet, the matrix develops, and as it does, members identify blocks to clear communications with one another. With the removal of such blocks, members' reliance on symptoms to reveal themselves to the social world diminishes. An interpersonal shift can be observed as well: Whereas members begin the group with a primary focus on the leader, they gradually emancipate themselves from this dependent tie through a movement that Foulkes (1964) referred to as a crescendo of the group's authority and a decrescendo of the leader's (or therapist's) authority. Foulkes identified the mechanism of mirroring as one critical to the group's maturation. Mirroring occurs when members recognize different facets of themselves in the other members. Through mirroring,

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3Foulkes did not use the terms leader or therapist but rather conductor to emphasize the nondirectiveness of this role and the importance of the group leading itself.
members build the matrix that increasingly gains in complexity and coherency and provides individual members the environment for growth.

**Scheidlinger**

Significant contributions to group-as-a-whole theory continue to be made and, as they are, provide enrichment for group developmental models. We mention here two especially important contributions. Scheidlinger (1982) proposed the concept of the “mother group” to describe members’ perception of the group as a nurturing supportive entity. Scheidlinger's work is significant for group developmentalists because it entails a shift from a father-oriented characterization of early group life to one in which the mother is the central figure in members’ thoughts and feelings. He also captured the phenomenology of members’ internal lives in the early phases of the group.

Harkening back to some of Le Bon’s and McDowell’s conceptions of the destructive potential of group life, Nitsun (1996) identified the phenomenon of the *antigroup*, in which members by their behavior attempt to ensure the group’s destruction. This position is starkly at odds with Foulkes’s view of the group continually moving to more mature levels of developmental organization (Schermer, 2005). Nitsun’s conceptions are important for developmental theorists because they suggest that groups can, at times, operate in a way that is at odds with the developmental needs of its members and hence can exert a pathogenic influence on their well-being.

**EARLY GROUP DEVELOPMENTAL MODELS**

Understanding current group developmental thinking requires a knowledge of the contributions of the following seminal thinkers.

**Bennis and Shepard**

After Bion (1961) outlined the basic assumption states and the work group mode, the question of when these different formations appear was an inevitable one. Bennis and Shepard (1956) answered it by proposing a model of development in which the basic assumptions represent different levels of maturity of group life. They wrote, “The very word development implies not only movement through time but also a definite order of progression” (p. 426). They saw the group as moving through phases during each of which the group is confronted with a series of conflicts. Resolving conflicts entails removing obstacles to clear communication. Hence, like Foulkes, Bennis and Shepard saw group development as a progression toward increasingly direct communication. The chief obstacles to direct communication, they held, lay in members’ orientations toward authority and intimacy.
On the basis of their observations of experiential groups that they led over a 5-year period for graduate students, Bennis and Shepard (1956) posited that two broad phases characterize group life, with the first phase entailing members’ engagement with authority issues and the second, their pursuit of conflicts related to the establishment of intimacy. Each phase involves three subphases, characterized by its own distinctive themes. Because of the historical importance of the Bennis and Shepard model, the phases and subphases are described in some detail in this chapter.

Dependence Phase

During the dependence phase, the group grapples with its conflictual stances toward authority figures. In the dependence-flight subphase, members confront the ambiguity of early group life; uncertainties abound. For example, members often become preoccupied with the issue of what should be their common goal. Yet, no uncertainty is more salient or important than uncertainty about the leader. On the one hand, members expect that this individual possesses the omnipotent capacity to care for their needs completely. Given his or her power, following the leader’s directives and securing the leader’s approval are crucial to members. On the other hand, the leader appears to withhold his or her talents and gifts. Members show two trends in relation to this predicament. They engage in the behaviors that in the past have led to authority figures’ approbation. However, even more conspicuously, they engage in a repertoire of flight behaviors, including focusing on issues external to the group. Members flee from the ambiguity of the situation, their sense of helplessness in relation to the leader, their worries about the future of the group, and other aspects of their immediate experience.

The group shifts into the counterdependence-fight subphase as dissatisfaction with the leader foments. For a period, members sustain the hope that the leader is simply waiting to summon his or her magic on behalf of the group. As it becomes increasingly apparent that the stance the leader has adopted is not going to change, members more openly express their anger toward the leader. Members respond to the ineffectual leader problem by developing two subgroups. One subgroup attempts to fill the void established by the leader by engaging in the activities that are attributed to leaders (e.g., setting agendas). Another subgroup takes on the task of interfering with any new structure that others seek to construct. This group adopts a more clearly antiauthority position in which opposition is given to any authority figure who emerges whether that authority is manifested by the designated leader or another member or subgroup of members. Within this subphase, members’ fearfulness prevents them from having anything more than a covert expression of discontent with the leader. However, their manifestations of disagreement with one another will be much more direct.

In the resolution-catharsis subphase, the independents, or members who have been identified with neither of the emerging subgroups, come to the
foreground in helping the members to approach more directly their feelings toward the leader. That is, in a matter-of-fact way they help the group to realize that the question of whether the group actually needs the leader must be addressed. As members allow themselves to recognize directly the depth of their questioning of the leader’s contribution, they proceed to the barometric event, a symbolic gesture in which one or more members representing the group challenges the therapist’s authority. Through this challenge, members shift to a view of the group that is not reliant on the presumed magical powers of the leader to satisfy their needs. As they lessen their reliance on the leader to obtain benefits from group participation, they increasingly assume responsibility for their own progress. Bennis and Shepard also described the jubilation and triumph that accompanies this emancipation from members’ perceived subjugation by the leader.

Interdependence Phase

The resolution–catharsis subphase tends to move quickly into the first subphase of the second phase of group development, the phase of interdependence. The name of this phase conveys that members now recognize their dependency on one another for their forward movement in the group. During this phase, members address the range of their reactions to establishing intimate relations with other members. The onset of the first subphase of this period, labeled enchantment–flight, is distinguishable by a very noticeable emotional tone in the sessions. As Bennis and Shepard (1956) noted, “The group is happy, cohesive, relaxed” (p. 429). In establishing this blissful atmosphere, members are responding to both their success in challenging the leader and their eagerness to distance themselves from the acrimony of the preceding subphase. A hallmark of this subphase is members’ insistence on having total agreement among themselves. Of course, the achievement of genuine and constant unanimity is impossible, so this criterion can be met only by denying differences. However, because the evidence for differences among members will build, the group’s use of denial cannot sustain itself; members increasingly chafe at the pressure to be in accord with one another. Consequently, this subphase typically is short lived.

In the disenchantment–flight subphase, the members bifurcate into subgroups representing two stances toward intimacy. The members who were most in harmony with the ethos of the last subphase, the overpersonals, band together to defend the preceding subphase’s spirit of unity. Those who had felt the greatest internal tension in being called on to deny their differences from other members, the counterpersonals, organize into a subgroup. This subgroup’s position is, “We each are autonomous beings whose right to be individuals is under siege by other group members.” Bennis and Shepard (1956) noted that both subgroups see intimacy as fraught with danger. For the overpersonals, unless all differences among members are eliminated, the self-esteem of each member is imperiled because attunement to differences in-
vites rejection. For the counterpersonals, the sheer act of committing to a group ravages one's personal identity and the self-esteem derived from it.

Bennis and Shepard (1956) saw the specter of the group ending as ushering in the final subphase, consensual validation. Because Bennis and Shepard were working within the framework of a course, the ending coincides with the need for an evaluation. They observed that both the counterpersonals and overpersonals resist evaluation because for the former, it means a violation of privacy and for the latter, the acknowledgment of differences among members. Once again, however, the independents, the individuals unfettered by conflicts about intimacy, are able to assist others in tolerating the anxiety associated with this task. The work of the independents can take various forms (e.g., an independent may ask the group for an evaluation of him- or herself), but the consequence of their interventions is that the group can seriously pursue the task of taking stock. As Bennis and Shepard noted, the group’s capacity to do this work entails the group’s acceptance of a set of values:

1. Members can accept one another’s differences without associating “good” and “bad” with the differences. 2. Conflict exists but is over substantive issues rather than emotional issues. 3. Consensus is reached as a result of rational discussion rather than through a compulsive attempt at unanimity. 4. Members are aware of their own involvement, and of other aspects of group process, without being overwhelmed or alarmed. 5. Through the evaluation process, members take on greater personal meaning to each other. (p. 433)

Members’ achievement of these values enables a directness of communication that has not been possible at any earlier point in the group. Bennis and Shepard saw this achievement as well as the continued work in the evaluation task as creating, for at least some members (depending on their level of participation in the group’s development), the potential for “valid communication” (p. 435) and diminished autism in relationships outside of the group.

Rather than seeing this kind of progression as being in any way guaranteed, Bennis and Shepard (1956) recognized that a range of factors affects the group’s ability to progress. Events external to the group can affect group development as can group composition. The presence of independents can be critical to the group’s ability to move to the next subphase. Traumatic events can lead the group not only to fail to progress but also to regress to an earlier point of development.

Group development from Bennis and Shepard’s (1956) perspective has elements of both conflict resolution and task accomplishment. Within each broad phase, the group addresses and resolves conflicts related to authority and intimacy. However, the group must also accomplish a series of tasks to engage in conflict resolution. For example, individuals must achieve a diminishment in their felt helplessness by becoming ensconced in the support-
ive structure of a subgroup. The greater confidence that this affiliation brings enables members to become more courageous in their communications. Later developmental models emphasize the conflict aspect, task aspect, or both.

Schutz

In the same period in which Bennis and Shepard (1956) were writing, Schutz (1958) provided an alternative to the progressive model: He posited that groups, even two-person groups, cycle through three stages emphasizing themes of inclusion, control, and affection, successively. Individual members, he qualified, may be so consumed with an alternate theme that they may not resonate to the current group theme. Schutz believed that a group's recycling through the phases is a common phenomenon:

When a person changes a tire and replaces the wheel, he first sets the wheel in place and secures it by sequentially tightening each bolt, but just enough to keep the wheel in place and make the next step possible. Then the bolts are tightened farther, usually in the same sequence, until the wheel is firmly in place. And, finally, the bolt is gone over separately to secure it fast. In a way similar to the bolts, the need areas are worked on until they are handled satisfactorily enough to continue with the work at hand. Later on they are returned to and worked over to a more satisfactory degree. (pp. 171–172)

This recycling allowed for individual differences in members' abilities to work within the developmental phases: What any member did not achieve in the first go-around could be remedied later (Schutz, 1958).

Mann

A variation on the cycle model is one that postulates some progression among the various periods of group life but also specifies a final deteriorative period that is akin to dying and death in the lives of individuals. An example of the life cycle model is that of Mann and colleagues (Mann, 1966; Mann, Gibbard, & Hartman, 1967), who studied groups of students over 32 meetings. Appraisal, the initial stage, is characterized by a high level of flight and apprehension. In the second stage, confrontation, members challenge authority. Internationalization, the third stage, involves a diminishment of resistance and a greater investment in work and cooperative relations. In the separation stage, the group returns to the avoidant mode of functioning seen in the initial stage, although members continue to be engaged with one another. Only a subset of the models that propose a termination stage are life cycle models. A life cycle model is one in which the dissolutive character of the final stage is its central feature. For example, in Mann's model, the group is unable to maintain its higher level of functioning achieved in prior stages.
Shortly after Bennis and Shepard (1956) proposed their model, clinicians began to consider the relevance of developmental concepts to group treatment situations. In the next several decades, psychologists (e.g., Caple, 1978; Garland, Jones, & Kolodny, 1965; Mann, 1966; E. A. Martin & Hill, 1957; Yalom, 1970) constructed a plethora of models that in some way took account of group development in how the process of the group was conceptualized. Each stage was regarded as a set of opportunities for members to complete a significant piece of psychological work related to the difficulties that brought the individual into treatment. For example, some members may have had difficulty achieving intimacy in long-term relationships. Within most models, a stage occurs in the relatively mature group in which conflicts related to intimacy become manifest. Members are thereby afforded the chance to address these conflicts anew and potentially in a more successful way.

Over the decades, the models of group development were many and were constructed with different clinical venues, age groups, and clinical problems in mind. Developmental models were devised not only for groups focused on verbal exchanges but also for activity-oriented groups (e.g., see Garland's [1992] description of children’s groups).

Tuckman

Progressive development models of the 1960s and 1970s tend to share a number of characteristics, many of which were captured by Tuckman (1965) in his seminal and summative article (MacKenzie, 1994a) discussing the developmental literature on psychotherapy groups, human relations training groups (T-groups), and natural groups versus laboratory groups.

Tuckman (1965) depicted psychotherapy group development as being characterized by a series of stages that have a predictable set of themes, with each subsequent set of themes building on those of the prior stage. In keeping with Bales's (1950) division of socioemotional and task functions, he characterized each stage with a description of the interpersonal realm and the task realm. In Stage 1, forming, the group experience is launched by a period in which members transform themselves from a collection of individuals to a bona fide group. During this period, members shift from seeing themselves as a mere collection of individuals to a view of themselves as a group. They orient themselves to the rules and processes of the group and begin to engage with one another. Yet, members see the therapist as the primary change agent.

*MacKenzie (1994a) saw the Tuckman (1965) article as the capstone of all of the theory and research that had occurred on group development since theoreticians and researchers began addressing it; as such, its historical significance is inestimable.*
and await the therapist's ministrations. In Stage 2, *storming*, the group structure is plagued with intragroup conflict, defensiveness, ambivalence, and competition. Polarization in relation to issues of dependency and leadership results in conflict. The task aspect features emotional expression by members as a form of resistance to disclosure, joining, and task requirements. In Stage 3, *norming*, the group becomes a cohesive unit with common goals and group spirit; members function as a team. Conflict recedes as the task of exploring and discussing individual group members and their problems and experiences becomes paramount. Members express feelings constructively as the cohesive structure of the group enables the discovery of personal relations. A final stage, *performing*, is described by Tuckman (1965) as follows:

- This is a stage of mutual task interaction with a minimum of emotional interference made possible by the fact that the group as a social entity has developed to the point where it can support rather than hinder task processes through the use of function-oriented roles. (p. 390)

Rogers (1970), describing this same period, noted that members at this juncture see the group as truly their own and know that they are responsible for making those self-revelations that will allow them to derive significant benefit from the group.

In a later article, Tuckman and Jensen (1977) posited the existence of a stage related specifically to the ending of the group for those groups in which members have a shared ending point. Although they did not provide an elaborate discussion of this period, they did note that this stage, which they called *adjourning*, involves members' focus on separation issues.

**COMMON FEATURES OF PROGRESSIVE STAGE MODELS**

Since the early 1970s, models that have developed within the stage progression paradigm have shared with Tuckman's (1965) model the general sequence of themes that he described. However, other similarities among these models also exist. First, most models incorporate the important notion of invariance or the concept that groups must proceed through the stages in a fixed way. Later developmental requirements demand that earlier ones have been satisfied.

Second, the progressive models assume that a variety of features distinguish each stage from the other stages. They hold that each stage possesses a characteristic set of themes or issues that can be inferred from members' comments and behaviors. For example, in the earliest stage, as noted previously, the theme of trust asserts itself more prominently than other potential themes. Each stage also has a characteristic pattern of interaction. In the early life of the group, for instance, members show by their nonverbal behavior that their communications are being directed toward the therapist rather than toward
one another. As Caple (1978) observed, “As a member speaks to the group, he or she may watch the facilitator/leader for signs of acceptance and support” (p. 471). Later, members show more attunement to one another. Each stage has a particular set of norms or implicit rules about what behaviors are or are not acceptable to members. For example, Rutan and Stone (2001) noted that whereas a particular disruptive activity (such as loudly chewing gum) may be tolerated by the group in the earliest stage of development, once the group achieves maturity, it is regarded as unacceptable and therefore results in a confrontation of the offender. Still later, although this activity may not be seen as desirable, it is regarded as having meaning and being worthy of exploration. Finally, at each stage the group has a set of competencies that qualify it to perform certain tasks and not others. For example, early in group life, members show some capacity to identify with one another’s experience but not an ability to engage in a sophisticated decision-making process that takes into account different positions in the group.

Third, most models also posit the potential of groups to proceed through stages at different rates, to become fixated or locked within a given stage, or to undergo regression in which they return to an earlier stage. As in individual development, not all groups achieve the level of maturity that others do (Kuypers, Davies, & Hazewinkel, 1986; Wheelan, 2005). Although most group theorists agree that groups have regressive potential, questions remain about the character of the reaction. Does a group that regresses to a stage act in a manner identical to a group newly proceeding through the same stage? Is the regression of a group different from that of an individual? Weinberg (2006) noted that groups may be restrained in depth of regression by the resources for reality testing available in the group. The collective resources of the group enable regressive reversals (i.e., movement out of a regressive episode) to occur more commonly in group psychotherapy than in individual therapy.

A group’s progression, fixation, or regression as well as its rate of progress through a given stage are generally understood as being determined by a variety of factors internal and external to the group. Internal events that are often cited include membership change (Corder, Whiteside, Koehne, & Hortman, 1981), absences (Garland, 1992), violations in confidentiality (Roback, Ochoa, Bock, & Purdon, 1992), impending termination (Slater, 1966; Wheelan, 2005), and any other event that quickly or drastically raises the threat level for members.

External factors include the philosophy, values, and attitudes of the broader treatment environment in which the group is embedded; the support the broader group environment offers in allowing the group to maintain stable boundaries between it and its context; and the socioeconomic pressures placed on the group’s operations (Brabender & Fallon, 1993). An example of the last factor is a third-party payer’s agreement to pay for the number of sessions necessary for a member to accomplish a particular set of goals in the group. Some models allow for the possibility of the group being at one stage and an
individual member being at another. For example, Garland (1992) noted that when a new member enters, although the group regresses, it can return to the preregressive point quickly. However, that new member will most likely have to do work characteristic of stages earlier than that in which the group is residing.

A fourth common feature of progressive stage models is that as groups mature, they become more effective (Chidambaram & Bostrom, 1996). For example, the presumption is made that as groups proceed through the developmental stages, they become better able to perform therapeutic tasks and fulfill the goals established on their launching. This notion is one that has been subjected to considerable empirical scrutiny and is discussed further in chapters 4 and 10 of this volume.

DIFFERENCES AMONG PROGRESSIVE STAGE MODELS

The progressive stage models differ from one another in a variety of ways. Differences among group models are due to variability in the type, length, composition, and context of the group on which a model is based as well as the broader theoretical orientation that the model builder brought to the enterprise of running a group. The relationship between these factors and group development is discussed in chapters 7, 8, and 9 of this volume. For the present, we discuss five particularly notable factors accounting for variability among developmental approaches: (a) the role attributed to group development in promoting favorable outcomes, (b) the primary organizational level at which developmental phenomena are described, (c) the number of stages, (d) the importance of leaders or other members in fostering group development, and (e) the task-versus-conflict emphasis. Each of these areas is discussed in turn.

The Role of Group Development in the Fulfillment of Treatment Goals

Models vary on the extent to which they see positive outcomes of group participation as a direct or indirect consequence of the operation of developmental processes. For some models, group development is the warp and woof, the sine qua non, of how group treatment works. Each developmental period provides members with the opportunity to redress challenges that characterize their own individual development. In meeting the challenges in the group more satisfactorily than they have done individually, members advance their own intrapsychic and interpersonal well-being. Examples of approaches that use group development as primary therapeutic tools are the object relations (Kibel, 2005) and systems-centered approaches (Agazarian, 1997).

For other models, a certain level of maturity must occur in the group to enable members’ use of a particular set of processes critical to the goals of the
group and the individual members. For example, the interpersonal approach emphasizes interpersonal learning wherein members receive and offer one another feedback within an atmosphere of affective engagement. Only with group maturity do members come to trust and care about one another at a deep level, and until they can do so, their ability to either provide or accept feedback is extremely limited. Members benefit from proceeding through the initial stages of group development because work in these stages enables members' full involvement in interpersonal learning.

Primary Organizational Level at Which Group Phenomena Are Described

Theoretical approaches differ in whether functioning of the individual, subgroup, or group as a whole is emphasized in the description of the model. Some models, such as Kutter's (1995), emphasize the dynamics of the individual member, whereas others, such as Yalom's (1995), focus on dyadic activity and thematic concerns over the course of the group.

To provide a more in-depth discussion of the relationship between the level of a system on which a model focuses and the interventions characteristic of that model, we feature Agazarian's (1997, 2004) developmental approach, called systems centered therapy (SCT). SCT was derived from Agazarian's "theory of living human systems" (TLHS; Agazarian, 1997). TLHS rectifies the problem of the historical use of two sets of concepts and terms to account for individual versus group dynamics. It provides a unified and coherent description of the dynamics of human living systems, regardless of whether the system is an individual, a couple, a family, a group, or an organization. Within this framework, systems are defined as isomorphic: Every system in a defined hierarchy is similar in structure and function. Thus, determining structural or functional variables from any one system will generalize to all systems in the hierarchy. This permits discovery of the equivalence in the system variables in individuals, groups, and organizations and solves an important problem in research into these apparently different phenomena.

All of the systems within a hierarchy exhibit three properties: They organize their energy, move in the direction of goals, and correct their courses based on ongoing feedback. Central to TLHS is the postulate that human systems function, survive, and develop toward greater complexity by discriminating and integrating differences. The SCT method, which elicits discrimination of differences in the apparently similar and similarities in the apparently different, is called functional subgrouping to distinguish it from the spontaneous or stereotype subgrouping that is characteristic of all groups. Agazarian recognized that subgrouping has been perceived by group psychotherapists (e.g., see discussion of subgrouping in Yalom, 1995) as a pernicious force, often leading to negative outcomes and stunting group development. The basis of this perception is that subgroups can form along stereotypic
lines or some shared external designation and can be characterized by impermeability. For example, a group may separate into subgroups according to gender. Members of each gender may have stereotypic perceptions of the members of the alternate subgroup (e.g., the subgrouped men may see the women in the group as stereotypically feminine), and they may fail to revise their notions about the other members regardless of incoming data (impermeability).

In contrast to such a subgroup structure, Agazarian recognized the potential for members to subgroup in a functional way, that is, in a way that would serve the group's survival, growth, and movement toward its goals. In systems-centered groups, members are required to come together around similarities rather than splitting around differences, thus reducing system tendencies to scapegoat differences rather than integrate them. As members form into a subgroup based on their recognition of a common position, they begin to recognize that indeed they are not identical to one another vis-à-vis the issue at hand. That is, they begin to discriminate differences. At the same time, they are perceptually alive to the unfolding of subgroups other than their own and increasingly see that members of those subgroups, who at first seemed entirely different, are in certain respects similar to them. When this occurs, members of the group can integrate what was apparently different into their own experience.

In thinking about developmental phases, Agazarian drew on the Lewinian concept of a force field. Each developmental phase presents to members a set of differences that must be discriminated and integrated at both the individual and subgroup level in order for the group to move on to the next stage. The force field comprises forces that drive the group toward this goal of discriminating and integrating differences or restraining them from doing so. Although Agazarian's (1997) developmental sequence is complex and is not described here in its entirety, an example is given of functional subgrouping within a developmental phase.

Our illustration focuses on an era of group life in which members make the transition from the authority phase into the intimacy phase. Following members' experience of confronting the leader with their projections (particularly the negative projections onto authority figures that are characterized by anger and outrage), they can turn their attention away from the leader to their relationships with each other. In many developmental models, the group psychotherapist approaches the positive and negative poles of members' stances toward intimacy sequentially. That is, members are first supported in exploring their enchantment and then their subsequent disenchantment. The critical shift in Agazarian's thinking was in recognizing that functional subgrouping provides the means by which members can address simultaneously forces propelling them toward both enchantment and disenchantment. According to SCT, the advantage of this simultaneity is not mere efficiency. This feature, by managing both enchantment and alien-
ation simultaneously in functional subgroups, enhances the depth and completeness of exploration into the conflicts around separation and individuation. For example, in the subgroup formed around yearnings for intimacy (i.e., the enchanted subgroup), members reach the awareness that their terror is based on the expectation that all intimacy will be lost if members differ from one another. In turn, members who join the subgroup of despair recognize that in spite of the conviction that they are forever alienated and alone, they are in fact exploring their experience of isolation together (Agazarian, 1997).

In conclusion then, for Agazarian, the basic unit of analysis is the functional subgroup because it is through this method that discrimination and integration of information is supported and the goals of system survival, development, and transformation in all phases of development are more easily met.

Number of Stages

From the early history of group developmental thinking, variability has existed in the number of stages or phases different models include. Tuckman noted in his 1965 review that most extant approaches posited four stages. However, Tuckman also specified that some approaches (e.g., observations of a group of drug addicts by Thorpe & Smith, 1953) built on the experiences of members who had a strong resistance to attaching to others and posited a stage prior to the traditional Stage 1. In this prestage, members overcame their negativity in relation to connection. Some contemporary developmental models such as Kieffer’s (2001) psychological model of the self also posit a pregroup phase for persons who have a high vulnerability to annihilation anxiety. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) argued for the inclusion of a fifth stage specifically devoted to termination issues. As noted earlier, progressive models that also include a terminal stage in which the dissolution of the group is the primary focus of the stage are termed life cycle models (Munich, 1993). Within such models, group development is seen as recapitulating individual development.

Current approaches to group psychotherapy typically involve either four or five stages, with the fifth stage included when the group has a clear ending. An example of a particularly prominent four-stage model is MacKenzie’s (1997), which is especially suitable for short-term group work. MacKenzie’s first stage of engagement entails members establishment of a sense of cohesion. In the differentiation stage, members address first their differences with one another and ultimately their dissatisfaction with the leader. MacKenzie (1997) used the term differential rather than the more customary label conflict to capture “the importance of self-assertion and self-definition that underlie the process” (p. 279). In the third stage, interpersonal work, the group achieves greater intimacy and works intensively on individual concerns and in that
work, engages members in a deeper degree of self-reflection. The fourth stage, termination, may occur at varying points in the group’s life depending on circumstances, such as the departure of a member. Termination activates problems related to grief over loss and self-management, given that members are now called on to function more independently.

Yet, exceptions to the four- or five-stage models exist. Probably the best-established system that goes beyond the traditional four or five stages is that of Ariadne Beck (1974) who, with her colleagues, has proposed a nine-stage model based on the analysis of transcripts from client-centered groups. A distinguishing feature of this system is that Beck examined the role not only of the therapist, the designated leader, but also of the members of the group who take on leadership roles and perform important functions in moving the group forward. Because of the prominence of the model and research it has stimulated, we provide a thumbnail description of each stage in the paragraphs that follow.

In Phase 1⁵ (A. P. Beck, 1974) the members forge a commitment to becoming a group that can work on mutually established goals. The task leader, the therapist, assists the members in opening up lines of communication among them. The emotional leader, in an emerging role, tends to the wide range of affects stimulated by the group’s beginning and strives to ameliorate any feelings that may be disturbing to members. The task and emotional leaders begin to develop an especially intimate relationship that is an aid to the group as it moves through the developmental stages.

In Phase 2, the group aims to establish a direction and in this effort, looks to the designated leader of the group, the therapist. However, the members feel an uncertainty about how the group will direct them, an uncertainty with which (they imagine) they cannot confront the powerful therapist. This uncertainty makes members fearful that the group could dissolve into nothingness. This pressure leads members to identify a scapegoat, a type of group leader, who serves as the target of their frustrations. Members believe that by ridding the group of the scapegoat, they will divest the group of all that could destroy it. In the group’s coming to awareness of this dynamic, the group achieves clarity about its values.

In Phase 3, the group recognizes individual members in their uniqueness. Members disclose personal information and explore different modes of communication. The emotional leader assists members in deepening the communication among themselves by providing a model of personal exploration. The emotional leader draws on the supportive resources of the group to un-

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⁵The term phase is used in this context because A. P. Beck (1974) described her model in terms of phases. In later chapters, we primarily use the word stage because it connotes more clearly a progression rather than a succession and, in our view, leads more directly to the examination of process–outcome relationships (i.e., whether a higher level of group maturity brings a greater capacity to accomplish group and individual goals).
dergo growth and thereby demonstrates how the group offers a special environment for achieving structural personality change.

In Phase 4 the group works to achieve greater intimacy, an accomplishment made possible by the achievement of greater cohesion in the prior stage. Members learn more about others’ close relationships outside the group, including sexual aspects. Feelings of warmth, caring, and tenderness reign at this time. At this time, the task leader is seen not merely as an authority figure but as a complex being in part because of the task leader’s greater sharing. This shift is essential to the entire group’s movement toward a new depth of involvement.

In Phase 5, the intensity of members’ expressions of affection for and affinity with one another implies a level of commitment that creates apprehension in members. They wonder whether they will be able to meet the needs of other members satisfactorily, whether their own needs will be met, and whether the give and take of mutuality will be achieved. This phase sees the emergence of the defiant leader, who provides the clearest and strongest cautionary voice for the perils of closeness and the conformity that seems to attend it. The group agrees to accommodate the special needs of this member for self-protection, an act that sets the stage for the group’s responsiveness to each member’s individual needs.

In Phase 6, the leadership pattern is reorganized such that a broader sharing of leadership functions takes place and greater flexibility occurs in different members’ performing different functions. At the same time, the importance of the emotional leader, whose key functions from this point on “are to act as a low-key coordinator and to be the main support person to the other members including the Designated Leader” (A. P. Beck, 1974, p. 450), is acknowledged. In fact, at this time the emotional leader takes over some of the responsibilities of the task leader with respect to guiding and support functions, and this move is a symbolic expression of the members making the group their own.

In Phase 7, the group is characterized by self-confrontation, in which members examine the issues that brought them into therapy. Members recognize the complexity of each member’s personality and the inherent difficulty of psychological change. The mutual respect members have for what each is up against leads to a level of cohesion not achieved previously. The scapegoat leader now achieves some prominence because members’ capacity to see the multifaceted character of each individual enables them to recognize that more exists within the scapegoat than what they previously had been able to comprehend.

In Phase 8, members wonder whether they can transfer the learning in the group to the outside to have satisfying, intimate, enduring relationships. This phase entails the group’s most intense work facilitated by members’ greater sensitivity to subtle interpersonal cues and deepened capacity to see one another as multifaceted beings (A. P. Beck, 1974). A. P. Beck (1974)
noted that many groups often fail to reach this level of development, leaving members with some dissatisfaction.

In Phase 9, the final phase, members confront the ending of the group experience. A major aspect of this process is reckoning with the high level of importance members have had for one another. The task and emotional leaders are critical in helping members to give expression to loving feelings for each other, and they thereby enable members to achieve a unity in their rapport with one another despite the imminence of separation.

As the reader may have noticed, a good deal of overlap exists between A. P. Beck's stages and the traditional four- or five-phase models, particularly those derived from the Bennis and Shepard (1956) model. Beck's Phases 1 and 2 resemble the dependant and fight-flight stages quite closely. The features of Beck's Phases 3 and 4 are typically combined into a third stage of development that follows the group's negotiation of the authority crisis. Beck's last stage of development is similar to the termination stage posited by many approaches. However, Phases 5 through 8 are unique to Beck's model. Perhaps, as MacKenzie (1994a, 1997) suggested, Beck was merely subdividing the later phases of development, which have been subjected to less study than earlier phases.

The Contributions of Leaders

Models vary in whether the therapist effects change in the group by working to create a growth-promoting atmosphere within the group or by fostering more specific interpersonal and intrapsychic patterns within members. Models that emphasize the group's potential to develop see the leader's crucial activities as geared toward the cultivation of a growth-promoting atmosphere. Foulkes's (1986) group analysis is consistent with this view: Provided that the therapist or conductor creates a group environment with certain types of stability, the group will move from a therapist-focused (or conductor-focused in Foulkes's terminology) to a member-focused mode in which members are able to engage in transformational interpersonal work:

[The therapist] knows that a good number of therapeutic or anti-therapeutic factors depend on culture he creates and especially on the manner in which he does this. He has made himself into the first servant of the group, into the instrument the group can use, but he has also forged the group, and continues to do so, into the instrument of group-analytic psychotherapy. It is of the greatest importance to realize that in this form of treatment the group itself is the active agency for change. (Foulkes, 1986, p. 107)

According to this approach, the therapist, rather than engineering group development, helps the group address any obstacle to a natural growth process.
Within many other models (e.g., Yalom's [1983] interactional agenda model), the therapist's actions are direct rather than indirect: The therapist affects not merely the atmosphere but also more specific interactional patterns within the group. Within these models, the therapist may make a variety of interventions to catapult the group's development. For example, the object relations therapist (Alonso & Rutan, 1984) interprets symbolic manifestations of displeasure with the therapist to enable members to make more direct expressions toward him or her.

**Task Versus Conflict Emphasis**

Since Bennis and Shepard (1956) presented their group developmental approach, many therapy group models (e.g., Agazarian, 1997; Brabender & Fallon, 1993) have been constructed that emphasize the resolution of conflicts as the vehicle by which groups progress from one stage to another. The work of the stage is the crystallization of each side of the conflict, often through the formation of subgroups, and the subgroup's movement toward greater tolerance for the position and accompanying psychological contents expressed by the alternate subgroup. These approaches are compatible with a conflict model of psychopathology (Kibel, 1987) wherein psychological difficulties are rooted in the individual's unsatisfactory resolutions of a set of basic conflicts that every human being must successfully negotiate to achieve maturity.

Other models give greater emphasis to the group's performance of certain tasks within each stage. For example, such models see members in the earliest stage of development as needing to develop trust in the group and in one another. Following the completion of this task, members enter a stage in which the task at hand is to learn to manage conflict and differences within the group. Task-oriented approaches are most compatible with a deficit approach to psychopathology (Kibel, 1987), in which psychological problems are rooted in the individual's failure to acquire adaptation-promoting structures in the course of individual development.

In the past 3 decades, developmental models have been applied to a wide range of populations and contextual circumstances. What has characterized the group psychotherapy literature, however, is a tendency to describe the developmental pattern for a group in a given setting without the systematic collection of data on that group or the comparison of that group with those in other settings (including population, time frame, and other structural conditions). In fact, one purpose of the current volume is to inspire more systematic comparative studies of developmental patterns in psychotherapy groups.

Table 3.1 summarizes the progressive stage models we have discussed here.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Orientation emphasis (conflict vs. task)</th>
<th>Type of group</th>
<th>Phase-specific role and behaviors of leader or therapist</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bennis and Shepard</td>
<td>1. Dependence: flight, Counterdependence: flight, Resolution: catharsis</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>The leader exercises care not to subvert a natural developmental process.</td>
<td>The historical importance of this model is inestimable; the relatively easy transfer of theoretical constructs derived from observations on a group of residents to therapy groups argues against the compartmentalization of findings from different types of groups.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Interdependence: flight, Disenchantment: flight, Consensual validation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuckman and Jensen</td>
<td>1. Forming</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Training, experiential, therapy</td>
<td></td>
<td>This model is important in that it incorporates extant research based on 50 studies, 26 based on therapy groups, 11 on training groups, and 13 on natural or laboratory groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Storming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Norming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Performing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Adjourning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agazarian (1997)</td>
<td>1. Dependence-flight, Counterdependence-flight</td>
<td>Task and conflict</td>
<td>Therapy and training</td>
<td>The therapist helps the members to form into subgroups, engage in differentiation of positions within subgroups, integrate with alternate subgroups, and challenge defenses.</td>
<td>Agazarian has developed a highly specific group process technology for enabling the group to move from stage to stage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A. P. Beck  
1. Making a contract  
2. Establishment of a group identity and direction  
3. The exploration of individuals in the group  
4. The establishment of intimacy  
5. The exploration of mutuality  
6. The achievement of autonomy through reorganization of the group’s structure  
7. Self-confrontation and the achievement of interdependence  
8. Independence, the transfer of learning  
9. Termination of group and separation from significant persons  

MacKenzie  
(1997)  
1. Engagement  
2. Differentiation  
3. Individuation  
4. Intimacy  
5. Mutuality  
6. Termination  

Conflict  
Long-term outpatient  
The therapist supports the emergence of different types of leaders at different developmental stages.  
This model provides the most comprehensive account of how the membership participates in the leadership of the group and does so in varying ways across the developmental phases. This approach provides attention to the mechanisms by which a shift occurs from one phase to another.

Task and conflict  
Short term  
There are subtle shifts in therapist bearing from phase to phase.  
MacKenzie outlined for each stage the ramifications of maturation for the individual member and the group as a whole. MacKenzie’s model is particularly useful for short-term groups.

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<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheelan (2005)</td>
<td>1. Dependency and inclusion 2. Interdependency and fight 3. Trust and Structure 4. Work 5. Termination</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Groups conducted in work settings and to a lesser extent therapy and personal growth groups.</td>
<td>The leader has specific goals at each stage of development. Goals vary depending on the type of group being led.</td>
<td>Wheelan's model is distinguished by the rigor with which it has been tested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brabender and Fallon (this volume, chaps. 5 and 6)</td>
<td>1. Formation and engagement 2. Conflict and rebellion 3. Unity and intimacy 4. Integration and work 5. Termination</td>
<td>Task and conflict</td>
<td>Inpatient and outpatient psychotherapy</td>
<td>The therapist varies a range of interventions selected with mindfulness of stage. Interventions are directed both toward helping members complete the tasks of the stage as well as assisting members in accessing the resources that will enable them to resolve stage-specific conflicts.</td>
<td>This model specifies a range of interventions within each stage to enable members to complete the tasks and resolve the conflicts of that stage.</td>
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ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROGRESSIVE MODEL

Some approaches to group development see the group as continually cycling through a series of developmental stages, even with a stable membership. Although cycling approaches are more prevalent in the organizational psychology literature, an example within the group psychotherapy literature is Schutz’s (1958) previously described model in which the group members address and readdress issues pertaining to inclusion, control, and affection. Within the more recent group psychotherapy literature, cyclic approaches often are used to describe the process of very brief psychotherapy groups for which the presumption exists that the groups do not have sufficient longevity to undergo the type of developmental process described by a progressive model.

As MacKenzie (1997) noted, the cyclic and progressive approaches are potentially compatible with and capable of being integrated into a comprehensive theoretical model of group development. For example, Bales’s view of groups as moving between task and emotional domains may occur in every stage of development. In other words, certain recurrent cyclic models may capture micropatterns within a broader stage pattern. See Figure 3.1 for MacKenzie’s depiction of a conceptualization integrating cyclic and progressive descriptions of change (1997, p. 283).

Yalom and Leszcz (2005), who wrote about the process of interpersonal learning in which members accept and offer feedback, described a two-stage process in which affect is evoked through member exchanges and then members strive to understand the experiences that led to these affects. Many developmental writers incorporate this concept of interpersonal learning into their descriptions of members’ work within the developmental stages, particularly the latter stages. As such, they acknowledge the presence of cyclic phenomena within a progressive model.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THEORY TO THINKING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THERAPY GROUPS

Early models of group psychotherapy had their foundation in psychodynamic theory and, most especially, object relations thinking. Bion’s articulation of the basic assumption states was rooted in Melanie Klein’s paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions (McLeod & Kettner-Polley, 2004). The concept of containment so critical to understanding the role of the therapist was based on Melanie Klein’s concept of projective identification. Many approaches such as Agazarian’s (1997) systems-centered psychotherapy and MacKenzie’s (1990) short-term approach integrated psychodynamic concepts with GST (von Bertalanffy, 1968). The psychodynamic aspect provided a framework for understanding the goals that members should address and the
sequence of issues that arise in a group. GST has provided a means of conceptualizing the relationships between individual members, subgroups, and the group as a whole. In the past 2 decades, developmental stages have been considered from the vantage of a greater array of theoretical orientations such as self psychology (Kieffer, 2001), constructivism (Brower, 1996), and intersubjective approaches (Cohen, 2000).

NEW PARADIGMS FOR CONSIDERING GROUP DEVELOPMENT

In recent decades, other paradigms for characterizing group development have appeared. These recently emerging approaches were inspired by theoretical developments in the physical and biological sciences that address the role of uncertainty and unpredictability in the changes in complex adaptive systems (Masterpasqua & Perna, 1997; Perna & Masterpasqua, 1997).

Complexity–Chaos Theory

The complexity sciences provide new insights into change in the psychotherapy group. From the standpoint of complexity theory and its subarea of chaos theory (Masterpasqua & Perna, 1997), complex adaptive systems...
have certain characteristics that have frequently been ascribed to psychotherapy groups, particularly approaches based on GST (von Bertalanffy, 1968). As such, the mechanisms that are identified within complexity theory accounting for system change may apply to psychotherapy groups as well.

According to complexity theory, four features characterize complex systems: irreversibility, dissipativeness, nonlinearity, and the capacity to self-organize. Irreversibility refers to the notion that the present status of a system is a result of the entirety of its history. Group theorists such as Agazarian and Peters (1981) have noted that within the system of the group, current events that contrast with past events do not nullify the latter; they merely lead to an expansion of the group's complexity. For example, if members who have clashed in an earlier stage are at present on highly amiable terms, the amiability does not eliminate the adversarial dimension; these elements coexist in a higher order representation of members' experiences of one another. The dissipative aspect of a system pertains to the constant exchange of information in which a system and the broader environment in which it is embedded engage (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). This feature had long been recognized by general systems theorists (Durkin, 1982) as a fundamental feature of group life. The group is a system that exchanges information with other groups; the subgroups of the group and the individual members are subsystems that also send and receive input.

Nonlinearity is the lack of a direct relationship between a perturbation (information) to a living system and the reaction to the systems. Nonlinearity has commonly been observed to characterize the unfolding of group process. For example, MacKenzie (1983), who examined the relationship between the dimensions of the climate of the group (engagement, avoidance, and conflict), and the number of sessions, found a nonlinear function for each of the three dimensions. Associated with nonlinearity is the principle of sensitivity to initial conditions. Systems that are engaged with the environment by importing information from the environment and exporting information into the environment are poised at the "edge of chaos" (Lewin, 1992, p. 51) or in the transitional space between order and chaos wherein seemingly trivial bits of information impinging on a system transform that system. As Gould (1991) wrote, speaking of how an individual's input into a system can alter that system, "Perturbations, starting as tiny fluctuations wrought by individuals, can accumulate to profound and permanent alterations in much larger worlds" (p. 505).

The final feature of complex adaptive systems is that they self-organize, possessing the wherewithal to move from chaos to order. That is, systems have the potential to evolve structures that reduce the group's vulnerability to being radically altered by minor perturbations. The structures that arise to order a system are neither predictable on the basis of a knowledge of the units composing the system nor entirely determined by environmental input.
The recognition of a group's capacity to self-organize is what gave rise to group-as-a-whole and GST depictions of group life. Furthermore, group developmental stage models are descriptions of how a group self-organizes. Were groups unable to self-organize, the issue of how they do so would become moot.

The fact that groups manifest the properties of irreversibility, dissipativeness, nonlinearity, and self-organization raises the possibility that the complexity–chaos theory characterization of changes in living systems may apply to the psychotherapy group. According to the complexity–chaos system account of development, a psychotherapy group poised at the edge of chaos in a state of maximal sensitivity to the environment will follow one of any number of courses. These courses are strange attractors that set parameters for how a group can operate. Yet, within these parameters, infinite variation can be seen in a group's behavior. The reader might envision—as chaos theorists often do (e.g., M. D. Lewis & Junyk, 1997)—the group as a ball that has landed in a basin (the strange attractor). Although the rolls of the ball can show infinite variation that is unpredictable, the variation is within certain limits established by the shape of the basin. Once a group moves in the direction of a strange attractor, a period of order ensues. However, if the group continues to have an active exchange of information with the environment, the group can move close to a chaotic state in which the group once again can be sensitive to system-altering perturbations.

The complexity–chaos description of how change occurs in a group can be understood as a model alternate to group developmental stage–phase models. Stacey (2005) for example, argued that complexity theory accounts for change purely in terms of local action—an idea at odds with the existence and operation of a system. For Stacey, the construct of the group as a whole is epiphenomenal (see Schermer, 2005). The notion of a group as a system or as a whole, it may be argued, is the foundation of group developmental approaches. Group developmental models see the group as a whole or the group system undergoing development with individuals partaking of this system development. Stacey also argued that when individual agents determine the unfolding of events in the group, then each group will necessarily have its own unique "evolutionary path" (Stacey, 2005, p. 194), a notion in direct opposition to the theorem that groups progress through a common set of stages.

Conversely, others (e.g., Brabender, 1997; Gantt & Agazarian, 2004; Wheelan, 2005) who have focused on different aspects of complexity theory

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6Schermer (2005), who was the section editor of the special series in the journal Group on group-as-a-whole theory in which Stacey's (2005) article appeared, argued that Stacey, although making many important points, including the danger of unduly reifying the notion of the group as a psychological reality, neglected the role of context provided by the group, a context to which group members are sensitive and that influences their behavior. Schermer saw context as providing theoretical justification for the postulation of the group as a whole.
have noted that these two paradigms are not inherently incompatible. The
greatest potential for their integration exists in relation to group develop-mental stage-phase models that identify the subgroup as the basic unit of analysis in group life because, in this instance, the environment becomes the broader group. Like the basin described earlier, the subgroup is a container for members’ adopting a particular solution to a psychological conflict. The explorations of the subgroup are like the trajectories of the ball within the basin. As Gantt and Agazarian (2004) noted, these subgroups must be sufficiently stabilized to do critical exploratory work. The work within a subgroup enables it to become more porous, that is, increase its exchange of information with the environment including alternate subgroups (an exchange that is not invariable in groups). This intensive exchange enables the group to move closer to the edge of chaos in which the subgroups’ assimilation of a new strange attractor can be transformational, leading the group to move toward another set of developmental conflicts. Alternatively, however, subgroups may move toward a more regressive position. Finally, subgroups that stay far from chaos are least likely to show progressive or regressive changes; in other words, far-from-chaos groups are most likely to become fixated.

Efforts to apply complexity-chaos theory to group psychotherapy have been largely metaphorical; they have not entailed the mathematical modeling of complexity-chaos theory postulates found in the physical sciences. However, in the next chapter, we discuss research efforts that are underway to examine group process with some of the methods used in the physical science applications of complexity-chaos theory. Such efforts will enable group psychotherapists to determine whether group change is best described by a progressive stage model, a nonlinear model derived from complexity-chaos theory, or some hybrid of the two.

The Punctuated Equilibrium Approach

Although complexity-chaos theory is probably the most common alternative to stage-phase models, other models have been proposed. Gersick (1988) described a punctuated equilibrium approach to change in groups. This approach is important in that experimentally it has been used as a competitive model with the stage-phase progressive model. Gersick observed that groups develop patterns early in their histories and may fail to revise these patterns for extended periods. She likened this early pattern to psychotherapy, in which events in the initial session appear to have a formative effect on the relationship. During the period of stability that follows the group’s initial pattern, a diminished sensitivity to the environment is observed. At the midpoint of the group’s life, members show a dramatic receptivity to new perspectives; the group’s former equilibrium is now punctuated. Gersick (1988) wrote,

The midpoint appears to work like an alarm clock, heightening members’ awareness that their time is limited, stimulating them to compare
where they are with where they need to be and to adjust their progress accordingly: it is "time to roll." (p. 34)

Although the midpoint is a natural time for the group to transition into new modes of behavior, some groups make this shift at other times.

The three conditions that are necessary for the transition to occur are that the group understands the task and has the resources for pursuing it, has some sense of urgency with respect to the task, and believes that sufficient time is available to make progress on the task. During the transition point, the group has a heightened responsiveness to environmental input and takes a more active role in using the resources of the environment.

Although Gersick's (1988) model of group change is seen as a competitor model for progressive stage-phase models, as with complexity-chaos theory, some theorists have argued that a punctuated equilibrium model can be combined with a progressive model. For example, Chang, Bordia, and Duck (2003) argued that each model deals with different aspects of unfolding group phenomena. The punctuated equilibrium model illumines members' sense of the passage of time and pacing in relation to completion of the task. The progressive model describes changes in task and socioemotional aspects of members' experience. Once again, however, a conceptualization of two models' compatibility is insufficient to establish the value of integrating them in accounting for group change; such conceptual accounts should lead to testable hypotheses concerning group changes, applying each model independently and in combination.

Social Entrainment

The social entrainment model proposed by Kelly and McGrath (1988; McGrath, 1991) provides another perspective on how change occurs in a group over time through the concept of entrainment. According to McGrath (1991), entrainment can occur "within individuals, between individuals, and between individuals and their embedded systems" (p. 164). Entrainment may mold physiological processes or social behaviors, with the latter being of greater interest to the group psychotherapist. Social entrainment involves a coordination among group members' behaviors that occurs over time and can be affected by both external and internal factors. That is, when an element within a system moves into a rhythmic pattern, other elements in that system will also move into that pattern. For example, on an inpatient unit, the overall atmosphere of the unit may engender a set of behaviors in the group: If a number of members have been precipitously discharged (an event external to the group), members in the group may exhibit patterns of insecurity. Within the group, as one member engages in interrupting behavior (internal behavior), others follow suit, and eventually interruptions become a normative activity. According to McGrath, social entrainment can affect the abil-


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Group phenomena for which the model accounts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progressive stage</td>
<td>Development is organized into stages, each of which builds on the other. At each stage, the structural features of the system and the patterns of interaction among the elements of the system change.</td>
<td>This model describes well the qualitatively different patterns of interaction over periods of group life and the influence of events of earlier periods on later phenomena observed in the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyclical</td>
<td>This model depicts the group cycling and recycling through a limited number of phases.</td>
<td>Group psychotherapists commonly observe that groups return to issues that they had addressed earlier in the life of the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complexity and chaos</td>
<td>Change in complex adaptive systems is characterized by irreversibility, dissipativeness, nonlinearity (including sensitivity to initial conditions), and self-organization.</td>
<td>Chaos theory accounts for the experience of both therapists and group members that the group moves into periods in which behaviors seem unpredictable and sessions have a fragmented quality and also into periods of organization and relative stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuated equilibrium</td>
<td>Long periods of stability are punctuated by environmental upheavals that lead to system changes that are rapid and radical.</td>
<td>The transition from one stage to another is not invariably gradual. For example, once the group proceeds through the barometric event, the group tends to reorganize in a rapid and dramatic fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust equilibrium</td>
<td>The robust equilibrium model predicts a brief period of instability followed by a steady state.</td>
<td>The period that precedes the consolidation of a subgrouping structure is often a chaotic one. Once the subgrouping structure is in place, the group tends to use that structure for a relatively protracted period (relative to the chaotic period).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrainment</td>
<td>The autonomous processes within a system move toward increasing synchrony with one another.</td>
<td>The group often exhibits a pattern synchronous with the external event; members exhibit patterns synchronous with the group as a whole.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptive contingency</td>
<td>Changes occur based on external and internal contingencies.</td>
<td>Psychotherapy groups have been shown to be affected not only by internal events but also by the climactic features of the system in which the group is embedded (Astrachan, Harrow, &amp; Flynn, 1968).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ity of the group to perform the tasks of various developmental stages. For instance, if the previously mentioned interrupting behavior is consonant with the goals of a given stage, the entrainment may serve to advance the group's development. Table 3.2 summarizes models of group processes we have discussed here.

CONCLUSION

Many writers (e.g., Elfant, 1997; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005) on group psychotherapy have exhorted group therapists not to emphasize developmental stages to such an extent that other group phenomena are missed. Rutan and Stone (2001) wrote, "Thus far no schema describing group development has been able to do justice to the complexity of internal fantasies and behavioral transactions that occur when a small group of individuals organize and begin to work together" (p. 37). The emergence of other approaches such as complexity–chaos theory and punctuated equilibrium models, when examined in concert with progressive stage–phase approaches, holds promise for enabling the group psychotherapist to address more fully the manifold dimensions on which groups change over time.