

Socialization and Trust in Work Groups

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Several theoretical analyses of trust in organizations have been offered, but the social context in which that trust operates is often ignored. Our analysis examines trust in work groups, with a focus on changes in such groups over time. Socialization is an important form of temporal change in work groups (Moreland & Levine, 2000). Workers move into and out of these groups over time, so most groups contain people in different membership phases. We are intrigued by the issues of trust that can arise for full members of groups with new or marginal members. One such issue is how much a group's full members can trust its new and marginal members, who belong to the group, but are not fully accepted by it. A related issue is how much full members can trust each other around any new or marginal members, whose thoughts, feelings, and behavior must be carefully monitored and shaped before they gain (or regain) the group's acceptance. After analyzing both of these issues in some detail, we close by identifying several other issues of trust that can arise in work groups as they change over time.

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THE TOPIC of trust in organizations has become very popular recently. Evidence for this popularity includes many articles and books on trust that have been published (e.g. Cook, 2001; Kramer, 1999; Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis, & Winograd, 2000), and major conferences that have been held. One issue that has not received sufficient attention, however, is the context within which issues of organizational trust arise. We have argued elsewhere (Moreland & Levine, 2000) that work groups are the key to understanding organizational behavior (see also Jones & George, 1998; Yan & Louis, 1999), and this may be true for trust as well. Why are work groups so important? Work groups matter not only because of their current

prevalence in organizations, but also because of their importance for workers. There is clear evidence, for example, that people care more about the groups in which they work than about the organizations where those groups are embedded (Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Becker, 1992; Gregersen, 1993; Zaccaro & Dobbins, 1989; see also Brewer, 1993; Caporael & Baron, 1997; Lawler, 1992). Work groups also have

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more power than organizations over people (see Baratta & McManus, 1992; Bearman, 1991; Becker, Randall, & Riegel, 1995; Blau, 1995; George, 1990; Mathieu & Kohler, 1990; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Thus, a thorough analysis of trust in organizations must include some consideration of work group behavior.

Several aspects of work groups are probably relevant to trust. The composition, structure, dynamics, performance, and ecology of such groups (cf. Levine & Moreland, 1990, 1998) may all shape trust among work group members. One important, but often neglected, aspect of group ecology that might play a critical role in trust is temporal change. As time passes, groups can change in many ways. Such changes include group formation and dissolution, group development, and group socialization. This last topic, a special interest of ours, is the focus of this article.

Group socialization

Nearly twenty years ago (Moreland & Levine, 1982), we proposed a general model of socialization that both explains and describes the passage of people through small groups. The model reflects our analysis of material on socialization experiences and practices in a wide variety of groups, including work groups. The model applies most readily to groups whose members interact regularly, are behaviorally interdependent, have feelings for each other, and share a common perspective on the world. However, broader application of the model to other kinds of groups is possible, if care is taken to consider how the processes embodied in our model might differ across groups.

Since our model was originally proposed, we have explored some of its components in more detail (Moreland & Levine, 1984, 1989; Moreland, Levine, & Cini, 1993; Moreland, Levine, & McMinn, 2001), used the model to guide our research on specific socialization phenomena (Brinthaup, Moreland, & Levine, 1991; Cini, Moreland, & Levine, 1993; Pavelchak, Moreland, & Levine, 1986), and analyzed other aspects of groups with the model in mind (Levine & Moreland, 1985, 1991, 1999; Levine,

Moreland, & Choi, 2001; Levine, Moreland, & Ryan, 1998; Moreland & Levine, 1988, 2000). This article, on issues of trust that can arise during group socialization, falls into the latter category.

Basic processes

Our model is built around three psychological processes—*evaluation*, *commitment*, and *role transition*. Evaluation involves attempts by the group and the individual to assess and maximize one another's rewardingness. Evaluation produces feelings of commitment that can rise and fall over time. When commitment reaches some critical level (a decision criterion), a role transition occurs. The relationship between the group and the individual undergoes a transformation, and both parties begin to evaluate one another again, often in different ways than before. A cycle of socialization activity is thus created, propelling the individual through the group.

For the group, evaluation involves assessing an individual's contributions to the achievement of group goals. This includes identifying the goals to which a person can contribute and the behavioral dimensions on which such contributions will be measured, developing normative expectations for each of those dimensions, and then comparing the person's actual and expected behavior. If a person fails to meet group expectations, then attempts may be made to alter his or her behavior. A similar evaluation process is carried out by the individual, who focuses on group contributions to the satisfaction of personal needs. Through their mutual evaluations, the group and the individual develop a general sense of the rewardingness of their relationship.¹

Evaluations are not limited to the present. The group and the individual might also recall how rewarding their relationship was in the past and speculate about how rewarding it will be in the future. Evaluations extend to alternative relationships (actual or potential) as well—other individuals are evaluated by the group, and other groups are evaluated by the individual. All these evaluations can influence commitment through three comparisons. For both

the group and the individual, commitment is stronger to the extent that (a) their past relationship was more rewarding than other relationships in which they were or could have been involved; (b) their present relationship is more rewarding than other relationships in which they are or could be involved; and (c) their future relationship is expected to be more rewarding than other relationships in which they will or might be involved some day. The outcomes from these three comparisons combine to produce an overall feeling of commitment. Moreland and Levine (1982) provide a detailed discussion of that process.

Commitment has important consequences for the group and the individual. When a group is strongly committed to an individual, it is likely to accept that person's needs, work hard to satisfy them, feel warmly toward the person, and try to gain or retain the person as a member. And when an individual is strongly committed to a group, he or she is likely to accept that group's goals, work hard to achieve them, feel warmly toward the group, and try to gain or maintain membership. Problems can arise when commitment levels diverge. Such divergence occurs when the group's commitment to the individual becomes stronger than his or her commitment to the group, or vice versa. Problems such as these lead each party to monitor the other's commitment and then respond to any divergence by changing its own commitment or trying to change the commitment of its partner.

Changes in commitment are also important, because they can transform the nature of the relationship between a group and an individual. These transformations are governed by *decision criteria*—specific levels of commitment marking the boundaries between different membership roles that the person could play in the group. The group will try to initiate a role transition when its commitment to an individual reaches its decision criterion, and the individual will make a similar effort when his or her commitment to the group reaches a personal decision criterion. When commitment on both sides is sufficiently high, the role transition will occur. Role transitions often involve ceremonies or other activities (Trice & Beyer, 1984) that signify

important changes in the relationship between a group and an individual.

After a role transition, the group and the individual relabel their relationship and alter their expectations for one another. Evaluations then continue, producing further changes in commitment and maybe other role transitions. In this way, the individual can go through five phases of group membership (investigation, socialization, maintenance, resocialization, remembrance), separated by four role transitions (entry, acceptance, divergence, exit). A common example of how the relationship between a group and an individual could change can be found in Figure 1.

Passage through a group

Group membership begins with a period of investigation, when the group engages in recruitment, searching for individuals who can contribute to the achievement of group goals, and the individual, as a prospective member, engages in reconnaissance, searching for groups that can contribute to the satisfaction of personal needs. If the commitment levels of both parties rise to their respective entry criteria (EC), then entry occurs and the person becomes a new group member.

Entry marks the end of investigation and the beginning of socialization. The group and the individual try to change one another in ways that might make their relationship more rewarding (Moreland & Levine, 1989). The group wants the individual to contribute more to the achievement of its goals, while the individual wants the group to contribute more to the satisfaction of his or her needs. Insofar as these efforts are successful, the individual experiences assimilation and the group experiences accommodation. If the commitment levels of both parties rise to their respective acceptance criteria (AC), then acceptance occurs and the person becomes a full member of the group.

Acceptance marks the end of socialization and the beginning of maintenance. The group and the individual now negotiate about functional roles (e.g. leading the group) for the individual that maximize the achievement of group goals and the satisfaction of personal needs. If

time, feelings of commitment between the group and the individual stabilize, often at a low level.

Figure 1 is an idealized representation of how the relationship between a group and an individual might change over time and thus masks several complexities (see Moreland & Levine, 1982). For example, group and individual commitment levels may undergo sudden shifts, rather than gradual changes. Group and individual decision criteria are sometimes unstable, and changes in decision criteria could affect how long individuals spend in each of the membership phases. If two adjacent decision criteria are similar, for example, then the membership phase they demarcate will be short, and will not occur at all if the criteria are identical. Some decision criteria can also vary in their relative positions, which changes the order in which related role transitions occur. There are some situations, for instance, in which exit occurs during the investigation or socialization phases of membership. Finally, the figure suggests that the group and the individual have the same set of decision criteria and are equally committed to one another throughout their relationship. When the group's and the individual's decision criteria or commitment levels diverge, as often happens, then conflict is likely to occur (Moreland & Levine, 1984).

Trusting a work group's members

With this model of group socialization in mind, issues of trust can now be considered. But what exactly is 'trust'? Unfortunately, there is considerable disagreement about the meaning of this term. After reviewing several possible definitions, we have adopted one offered by Mayer et al. (1995), who stated that trust is 'The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party, based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party' (p. 712). Put more simply, trust is the willingness of one group member to 'take a chance' on another. Trust within a work group might involve giving a member control over

resources (e.g. equipment, space, funds) or authority over others, telling secrets to a member, or allowing a member to represent the group to outsiders.

But who is trusting whom? Our model suggests that the typical work group contains people in several different membership phases (cf. Ancona & Caldwell, 1998; Lois, 1999; McPhee & Corman, 1995). At the heart of such a group are its full members, whose commitment to the group is strongest and who are trusted to perform the most important group activities. A second set of members, less committed to the group and less trusted by its full members, are new and marginal members. These 'quasi-members' belong to the group, but are not full members of it. New members have not yet been accepted, so they are still moving toward full membership, whereas marginal members once had full membership, but gave it up or lost it, and may or may not be moving back toward it again. Finally, although prospective and ex-members do not belong to the group at all, they are often 'stakeholders' in it, in the sense that they care about its activities and outcomes.

Our focus here is on the trust of full members for new or marginal members of a work group. Quasi-members are intriguing because their mere presence in the group can raise issues of trust. How far can full group members trust a new person, who may not know all that is expected of him or her, and whose motivation to meet group expectations is not clear? And what about a marginal member—how far can that person be trusted? He or she was trusted once, but lost that trust, often because of some misbehavior. Does that mean the person cannot be trusted again? Or can a marginal member be trusted in some ways, but not others? These are just some of the issues that can arise.

There is another, subtler, way in which quasi-members can raise issues of trust in a work group. Distrust of new and marginal members places extra burdens on full members, who must work harder to (a) make sure the group's expectations for quasi-members are clear; (b) monitor the behavior of quasi-members carefully to see if those expectations are met; and (c) take corrective action if the behavior of quasi-members

seems unsatisfactory. However, no one can be everywhere, at any time, to do all that must be done, so in most work groups, full members collaborate in these activities. And that is where new issues of trust can arise, issues involving how much full members can trust one another. Does each full member communicate the same expectations to new members? Are all of the marginal members monitored with equal care, or are some full members careless about that duty? If new or marginal members misbehave, then are some full members more likely than others to take corrective action, and do they act in ways that are too strict or too lenient? Again, these are just some of the issues that can arise.

Trusting new and marginal members

We begin by discussing the trust of full members for any new or marginal members of their work groups. Many factors might affect that trust. These factors can be divided into three broad categories, namely characteristics of (a) the quasi-members; (b) the group, and (c) the environment where the group operates.

Quasi-member characteristics One characteristic of new or marginal group members that can affect how much they are trusted is their *other group memberships*. In the case of new members, what groups did they belong to in the past? If new members belonged to a group that is now viewed as a rival outgroup, then that may limit how much trust full members give them. The longer new members remained in such a group, and the greater their involvement with it, the more disturbing that membership may be to full members. In the case of new and marginal members, current memberships in other groups may worry full members as well, even when those groups are part of the same organization (Williams, 2001). How many such groups are there, and how involved in them are new and marginal members? Full members are less likely to trust new or marginal members who belong to other groups or are more involved in those groups (Levine et al., 1998). Full members may be worried that membership in other groups can lead new or marginal members to act in ways that harm their own group. The most

disturbing memberships, again, are probably those that involve rival outgroups.

Some interesting examples of how membership in one group can affect the trust that someone receives from members of other groups can be found in Emler's work on youth gangs (Emler, 1990; Emler & Reicher, 1995). The parents of gang members often come to distrust their children, and not without reason, because gangs can influence their members to behave in ways that any family would find disturbing. Gang membership can also cause a young person's peers to distrust him or her, not only peers who belong to other gangs, but also those who belong to other formal or informal groups whose norms differ strongly from those found in most gangs.

Another, related characteristic of new and marginal members that might affect how much they are trusted is their *reputations* for trustworthiness. Before newcomers enter a group, full members may have heard rumors or gossip about their behavior in other groups (see Jablin, 2001), and some of that information may involve how much they were trusted in those groups. New and marginal members may also have reputations involving their trustworthiness in other groups to which they belong(ed). In general, full members may be less likely to trust new or marginal members whose reputations are poor, because if those individuals misbehave(d) in other groups, then maybe they cannot be trusted in any group. One possible exception might be misbehavior in rival outgroups. Such misbehavior may be interpreted as evidence that new or marginal members have the 'right' values and thus should now be trusted.

The *knowledge and ability* of new or marginal members is another characteristic that full members might consider when issues of trust arise. It seems likely that full members will give more trust to new or marginal members who know and understand how they should behave in the group and who are able to behave in those ways. If all other factors were equal, then newcomers should be less likely than marginal members to be trusted, because newcomers usually have less knowledge and ability. But

when new or marginal members misbehave, newcomers are more likely to be excused, for those same reasons (see Abrams, Marques, Bown, & Henson, 2000; Greenberg, 1996).

New and marginal members of groups sometimes have *social ties* (strong or weak) that can affect how much full members trust them. Strong ties involve relationships with other people *inside* the group, particularly full members. Some newcomers, for example, are sponsored by full members who brought them into the group and are thus willing to take responsibility (or are viewed as responsible) for them. And some newcomers have mentors (Kram, 1988), who help them move toward full membership in the group. As for marginal members, they sometimes have patrons—friends who help them to regain full group membership. New members with sponsors or mentors, and marginal members with patrons, are more likely to be trusted by full members, who believe that misbehavior is less likely to occur, and that it will be handled if it occurs by the people who play those roles. Sponsors, mentors, and patrons might also lobby on behalf of new and marginal members, arguing for their trustworthiness, and they may take the lead in creating opportunities for new and marginal members to prove that trust in them is not a mistake. Weak ties, which involve relationships with people *outside* the group, could also lead full members to trust new or marginal members, especially if those ties involve people who are respected or feared by the group, perhaps because they have authority over it.

The *perceived commitment* of new and marginal members to a group is yet another characteristic that can promote trust among full members. Full members are more likely to trust new and marginal members who seem more committed to the group. How is such commitment assessed? Levine and Moreland (1991) described a variety of methods, some direct and others indirect. In many groups, new and marginal members are subjected to commitment tests—special situations created by full members to see how quasi-members react. A familiar example involves initiations imposed on new members. Initiations can have many purposes, such as building

commitment to the group (via dissonance reduction—see Aronson & Mills, 1959), teaching newcomers to depend on and obey full members, allowing full members who had similar initiations to seek their ‘revenge’, strengthening the group’s cohesion, and managing the group’s image among outsiders. But in terms of trust, an important purpose of initiations is testing how committed newcomers are to the group. Thus, full group members view newcomers who refuse to participate in initiations, or who cannot complete their initiations successfully, as untrustworthy, whereas those who fulfill all the requirements of their initiations are perceived as trustworthy. Evidence consistent with this claim that the harshest initiations occur in groups, such as military units, coal mining crews, and high steel ironworkers, that operate in dangerous environments (see Guimond, 1995; Haas, 1977; Vaught & Smith, 1980). In those environments, workers must be able to trust one another completely, because otherwise someone may be injured or killed. Though marginal members also face commitment tests, these are rarely as strong as the initiations faced by new members. Do marginal members ever experience anything resembling an initiation? Maybe some marginal members are given a chance to redeem themselves by reacting to situations where they betrayed the group’s trust earlier. In this way, they might be able to ‘rewrite history’ by showing that they can now be trusted.

This leads to the most obvious characteristic of new or marginal members that affects how much they are trusted—their *misbehavior*. But what counts as misbehavior? A recent study by Gruys and Sackett (2001), who asked people about deviance in the workplace, identified many types of misbehavior, including (a) theft, (b) destruction of property, (c) misuse of information, (d) misuse of time and other resources, (e) unsafe behavior, (f) poor attendance, (g) work of poor quality, (h) alcohol abuse, (i) drug abuse, (j) inappropriate speech, and (k) inappropriate physical action.² It is not difficult to view many of these behaviors as betrayals of trust. For example, someone who promises to keep a secret, but later reveals it, is misusing

information. And when someone is asked to finish a project, but does so badly, late, or not at all, then he or she is doing poor quality work. Finally, someone who uses drugs, but keeps that hidden from other group members, may endanger the group when it performs dangerous tasks.

As we noted earlier, similar misbehavior by new and marginal members is usually less disturbing to full members when it comes from new members. However, both new and marginal members are less likely to be trusted as their behavior worsens. Misbehavior may seem simple enough, but it is actually a complex variable with many features, any or all of which could affect trust. An analysis of these features can be found in Levine's (1989) review of group reaction to deviance (see also Levine & Thompson, 1996). Though Levine focused on misbehavior by marginal members, his analysis also applies to new members. One important feature of misbehavior is what someone actually did (see above). Some kinds of misbehavior are more disturbing than others, because their harmfulness (real or potential) to the group is greater, or because they involve values that are more central to the group (Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001). Another important feature of misbehavior is how often it occurs, along with its time course. Frequent misbehavior that seems to be getting worse is more disturbing. The apparent reasons for misbehavior can be important also. Misbehavior that can be attributed to internal, stable, or global causes is generally more disturbing. The perceived motives underlying misbehavior matter as well, so even an internal attribution can lead to tolerance, as long as the person who misbehaved did so for a defensible reason. To sum all this up, full members of a group are more disturbed by misbehavior, and thus more likely to withdraw their trust in new or marginal members, when the misbehavior is harmful, frequent (and getting worse), and attributed to causes that make the miscreant seem less trustworthy.

Finally, the *demeanor* of new or marginal members after they have misbehaved can also affect how much full members trust them. For example, do they offer any excuse for their misbehavior? Do they seem apologetic? Do they

promise not to act that way again? Full members are more likely to trust new or marginal members who misbehave if they at least seem more repentant for what they have done (cf. Schlenker, 1980).

Group characteristics Several characteristics of groups can also affect how much full members trust new or marginal members. One such characteristic is a group's *history*—how often have the new or marginal members of the group misbehaved in the past? The worse a group's history is in this regard, the less likely full members are to trust current new or marginal members. This may be especially true if those persons resemble new or marginal members from the past—the closer that resemblance is, the more suspicious full members will become, and the less trusting they will be.

A group's *demography* can also affect how much full members trust new or marginal members. If these persons are different from full members on such dimensions as gender, race, ethnicity, or age, then full members may well distrust them. Several analysts claim that the whole socialization process is more stressful for newcomers who are different in these ways (Jackson, Stone, & Alvarez, 1992; see also Porter, 1997), and there is some evidence that this claim is correct (Arrow, 1998; Berdahl, 1998). The problem is worse if new or marginal members are different from all of the full members, who are similar to one another. The lone African-American in a group of Caucasian workers, for example, may receive little or no trust from them.

Trust for new or marginal members could also be affected by the *climate* in a group, particularly its sense of psychological safety (see Edmondson, 1999). In 'safe' groups, mistakes are accepted as normal, and may even be seen as valuable, because they help everyone learn more about how work should be performed. If full members trust a new or marginal member in a safe group, and that person makes a mistake, then the mistake may not lead to future distrust, as it would in another group without a safety climate.

A final group characteristic that could be

important is *vulnerability*—the extent to which misbehavior might seriously harm the group. Full members are more likely to trust new or marginal members if their group is successful and has many resources, because betrayals of trust seem less serious in such groups.

Environmental characteristics Finally, a number of environmental characteristics can also affect how much full members trust new or marginal members. The importance of a group's *social environment* was hinted at earlier, when we noted that a new or marginal member's reputation for trustworthiness, memberships in other groups, and social ties to outsiders can affect how much he or she is trusted by full members. The overall level of *uncertainty* in a group's environment can also be important. The less predictable events are outside of a group, the more valuable predictability inside that group may seem to full members. As a result, they might be reluctant to trust new or marginal members, who do not always act as they should. Trust can also be affected by environmental *threats*. If a group is threatened in some way (e.g. by external dangers or conflict with another group), then misbehavior by new or marginal members seems more costly, because it can weaken the group and requires full members (who are already busy) to deal with those persons and solve any problems they create. Trust is clearly unlikely in these situations. Reactions to group members who misbehave during a threatening situation tend to be harsh (see Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961; see also Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981). Trust is seldom one of those reactions. Finally, trust can be affected by a group's *staffing level* (Schoggen, 1989). If a group is understaffed, full group members may be forced to trust new and marginal members in ways they might not if the group were larger.

Trusting full members around new and marginal members

As we argued earlier, the presence of new or marginal members in a group raises two kinds of trust issues for full members. Not only must full members worry about whether to trust the

group's quasi-members, they must also worry about trusting one another around those members.

Consider newcomers, for example. Whether they intend to or not, all newcomers produce some accommodation in a group, simply by belonging to it (see Chapin, 1957). For example, if a female worker enters a group that was always male, then that might be enough to cause her male coworkers to think about who deserves to belong to their group; whether some of the group's norms (more appropriate for men than for women) should be changed; and what new work assignments might be necessary. And if a man is assigned to work closely with the newcomer, then can he be trusted around her? What will he say to her about the other group members? Will he treat her with courtesy and respect? Is there a risk that he might become involved with her romantically? These kinds of concerns are likely to weaken trust among the male members of the group.

Newcomers, of course, must also be assimilated, a task that is usually entrusted to a group's full members. But efforts to assimilate newcomers can, paradoxically, influence full members as well (Feldman, 1994; Levine & Moreland, 1985; Sutton & Louis, 1987). For example, new members may ask questions that lead full members to see themselves and their group in new ways. And in discussing what and how new members should be taught and who should teach them, full members may discover disagreements that alter their relationships with one another, creating new patterns of trust and distrust within the group. Finally, new members may reveal information, including how the group is viewed by outsiders, that causes full members to reduce their commitment to it and hence their likelihood of behaving in trustworthy ways. All this suggests that newcomers, especially when they arrive in large numbers over a brief time period, can destabilize a group and even cause it to dissolve. Too many marginal members can have a similar effect, though that claim is less surprising.

If newcomers are trusted, but then misbehave, trust among full members may also be affected. The issues that can arise are similar to

those involved in the misbehavior of marginal group members, and so once again Levine's (1989) analysis of the latter problem is useful (see also Jablin, 2001). First, the extent of any damage caused by the new or marginal members is evaluated. The reasons for their behavior are then considered. Next, decisions are made about what should be done to the people who misbehaved, and who should do it. Finally, attempts are made to predict the future—can the miscreants be trusted again, or should they be asked to leave the group? If that is not possible, then how likely are they to leave on their own? If they remain in the group, how can further damage to the group be minimized? Some or all of these activities are likely to involve collaboration among full members, collaboration that can alter their trust for each other.

For example, full members sometimes disagree about the severity of new or marginal members' misbehavior. Do some full members try to minimize the gravity of the situation, maybe even joking about it? Why aren't they more concerned—does this mean that they don't care about the group? Are they trying to protect the people who misbehaved, and if so, then why? Are they developing close relationships with these people that will interfere with their obligations to the group?

Full members can also disagree about the cause of misbehavior. This disagreement can produce conflicts among them, especially if some try to blame others for not training new or marginal members adequately or monitoring them carefully. Full members who are blamed may be less trusted as a result.

Analyzing the causes of misbehavior might also affect the trustworthiness of full members themselves, because that analysis could plant seeds of doubt in full members' minds about whether such behavior was really wrong. Maybe the people who misbehaved were right to act that way, even though their behavior seemed a betrayal of trust. How could full members ever reach such a conclusion? Research on minority influence might provide the answer. That research shows minority influence to be private, delayed, diffuse, and unconscious (see Maass, West, & Cialdini, 1987). That is, majority

members often publicly reject a minority's views, but privately acknowledge their value. And immediately after a minority tries to be influential, it has little success, but later on, influence begins to occur. Majority members who refuse to be influenced on whatever issue most concerns a minority may be open to influence on other, related issues. Finally, majority members often appear unaware that a minority has influenced them at all, even though influence may be apparent to impartial observers. Consider the possible implications of all this for full members who try to understand why new or marginal members misbehaved. Such effort could have the unintended effect of making the full members more sympathetic to that misbehavior and hence less likely to behave later in trustworthy ways themselves.

The process of deciding how to handle misbehavior can also be contentious and thus can have strong effects on how much full members later trust one another. A variety of motives may operate, and these can vary both across full members and over time within a given full member. Moreover, a full member's motives may not be readily apparent from his or her overt behavior. Some full members want to avoid any unpleasantness, so they act as if nothing serious has happened, argue that little needs to be done about it, and try to shift responsibility onto others for whatever must be done. All of this makes them seem weak, or worse yet, sympathetic to those who misbehaved. In either case, they are likely to lose some of the trust they enjoyed in the past. Other full members may want to gain the respect of others, inside the group or out, and ensure that no similar misbehavior ever occurs again, so they dramatize what happened, argue that strong measures are needed, and take personal responsibility for doing whatever must be done. These persons may be distrustful of other full members, who seem suspiciously unconcerned about the problem.

Finally, attempts to predict future misbehavior by new or marginal members can also create distrust among full members. Imagine, for example, a full member who claims that a particular person should be given another

chance, even though he or she has misbehaved several times already. Apparent favoritism of this sort might worry other full members. Is there some hidden relationship between the two that could explain it, and if so, then does that relationship represent misbehavior in itself? Maybe the full member has something in common (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity) with the person who misbehaved, and is allowing that bond to supersede the best interests of the group. In either case, trust issues arising from the original misbehavior can spread to other full members with no direct involvement in the matter. For example, other full members may argue about how serious the favoritism was and how the person who displayed it should be treated. Those arguments may reveal differences of opinion among full members that alter their trust for one another.

Conclusions

Trust in organizations has recently become a popular topic for theory and research in organizational psychology. Why? Trust is one form of social capital, so it has value and thus needs to be developed and maintained by organizations. And trust has become very scarce in many organizations, threatening their viability (see Reicheld, 1996; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Several analyses of trust have been offered, but the social context in which trust operates has largely been ignored. Work groups, because of their prevalence in organizations and importance to group members, seem like a good place for 'grounding' the analysis of organizational trust.

An important aspect of work groups is that they change over time. These temporal changes can take several forms. In this paper, we focused on group socialization, which involves changes over time in the relationship between a group and its members. Our model of group socialization both describes and explains such changes. According to that model, a worker can experience several phases of group membership, separated by role transitions. Thus, at any point in time, a work group can contain members in different membership phases. This

has important implications for trust among group members.

Our emphasis here was on full members' trust of new or marginal members of their work groups. New and marginal members of groups are really quasi-members, anomalous because they are not completely in or out of those groups. The mere presence of new or marginal members thus raises issues of trust for full members, who must decide how such people should be treated. We analyzed some of those issues and then discussed how they might be resolved. Dealing with new or marginal members also raises issues concerning full members' trust of one another. These issues, and their possible resolution, were also considered. Though many of our ideas were speculative and await empirical verification, we believe that we have made a strong case for the relevance of work group socialization to trust in organizations.

Space considerations prevented us from exploring here several potentially interesting connections between work group socialization and trust. One of these is the trust that new and marginal members have for one another. New members sometimes help each other through the socialization process (see Burke & Bolf, 1986; Dansky, 1996; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), but can they trust one another? If socialization is competitive, so that one person's progress toward acceptance makes the acceptance of others less likely, then trust among newcomers may suffer. The full members of some groups might even try to turn newcomers against one another, urging them to monitor each other and report any misbehavior. And what about marginal members? If they cooperate with one another, then they may be able to produce accommodation on the part of full members. But can they trust one another, since each may want to outdo the others in the eyes of the full members? This raises a further issue, namely whether a group's new members can trust its marginal members, and vice versa. Marginal group members may sometimes seek out new members and try to influence their views of the group. Because they are less savvy

about the group, newcomers are often susceptible to such attempts and may trust marginal members more than they should. In some work groups, full members may thus try to limit the impact of marginal members on newcomers, by restricting their contact with one another or by informing newcomers that marginal members should not be trusted.

So far, we have considered issues of trust involving new, full, and marginal members of groups, but prospective and ex-members also deserve consideration. Because they are assumed to be relatively unfamiliar with group expectations, and their motivation to meet those expectations is not yet clear, prospective members seldom receive much trust. If they are recruited by group members whose own motives are suspect, they may even be distrusted. In contrast, ex-members are usually familiar with group expectations, and their motivation (whether weak or strong) is clear. If ex-members still seem committed to the group, then they may be trusted to carry out some activities, assuming they are capable and willing to do so. A risk associated with trusting some ex-members, however, is that they may now belong to other groups. If the goals of those groups are incompatible with those of the old group, then ex-members may betray the old group's trust by behaving in ways that favor their new groups.

An important aspect of our socialization model is that relationships between groups and individuals are viewed as reciprocal. Such relationships should therefore be analyzed from the perspectives of both parties. But in this paper we focused primarily on trust from the group's perspective (as reflected in the behavior of full members). We did not analyze new or marginal members' trust of groups, even though that perspective suggests several interesting issues (see Kramer, 1999). For example, are some persons just more trusting than others, maybe because of personality differences (see James & Cropanzano, 1994; Lee, Ashford, Walsh, & Mowday, 1992)? And how do newcomers decide whom to trust in a group, especially when they receive discrepant messages from others about the group and its members? Do new and marginal members react in similar ways

if a group betrays their trust? Perhaps new members attribute such problems to misunderstandings or miscommunications, whereas marginal members attribute them to malice. Why do some marginal members try to regain a group's acceptance, trusting it yet again despite past betrayals, whereas other marginal members do not? Clearly, much could be learned about trust in work groups by analyzing it from the perspective of new or marginal members, as well as full members.

Kramer's work on paranoia suggests that new and marginal members often mistrust full members of their groups (see Kramer, 1998 for a review). He suggests that paranoia begins when people (a) focus on the differences between themselves and others, (b) believe that they are being evaluated by others, and (c) feel uncertain about their social status. All three of these factors, which lead to heightened levels of self-consciousness, are probably strong among new and marginal group members. According to Kramer, self-consciousness encourages a cycle of rumination and hyper-vigilance, which leads in turn to judgmental biases. These biases include (a) interpreting the behavior of others in overly personal ways, (b) attributing such behavior to sinister rather than innocent causes, and (c) 'seeing' conspiracies within the group. Again, it is not difficult to imagine such biases operating in the minds of new and marginal group members. Finally, Kramer argued that these biases can produce various kinds of paranoid behavior.

A series of studies by Kramer and his colleagues supports this model. A study by Kramer (1994) is especially relevant here because it involved newcomers. In that study, first- and second-year MBA students read a series of vignettes that described situations in which a student misbehaved in some minor way, evoking a reaction from another student that could be interpreted as disapproval. The students portrayed in these vignettes were first- or second-year business students. Kramer found that first-year students, who were new to the business school, were more likely than second-year students to 'personalize' one student's reactions to the other (interpreting it as a malicious act),

especially when a second-year student reacted to misbehavior by a first-year student.

Another study, though done for different purposes, also offers evidence of paranoia among newcomers. Moreland (1985) created small discussion groups, each of which met weekly for several weeks in a laboratory setting. Before the initial meeting of each group, some members were led to believe that they were joining a group that had already met several times before. The other members were told nothing about the group, so they believed (correctly) that everyone was new. Questionnaire measures showed that the 'new' group members expected the 'old' ones to behave in biased ways, favoring one another over the newcomers. However, measures of actual behavior during the group discussions showed that the oldtimers behaved fairly—it was the newcomers who were biased. They tended to form strong relationships with one another, treating one another better than they did the oldtimers, maybe in an effort to protect themselves against the discrimination they feared. It was not until the last group meeting that the newcomers began to perceive the oldtimers more positively and treat them more fairly during group discussions.

Finally, there are certain kinds of work groups in which special issues of trust might arise. Consider a recently formed group, for example, where everyone is a new member. People in such groups are likely to be anxious about whom to trust and how much to trust them (Tuckman, 1965; see also Louis, 1980; Nelson, 1987). Research on social dilemmas seems relevant in this regard. In much of that research, strangers are placed in a situation where their own interests are best served by competitive behavior, whereas the interests of the group are best served by cooperative behavior. One factor that seems to encourage cooperative behavior in social dilemmas is trust. People behave more cooperatively when they can trust other members of their group to cooperate too. Communication can build trust, by either strengthening the social identities of a group's members (Kramer & Brewer, 1984) and/or by allowing members to promise one another to cooperate (Kerr & Kaufman-Gilliland, 1994).

Special issues of trust can also arise in other kinds of work groups. For example, cross-functional groups are now used in many organizations (Northcraft, Polzer, Neale, & Kramer, 1995). Levels of trust in these groups may be low if group members come from different parts of the organization, speak and think differently from one another, and have different agendas. Virtual teams, whose members rarely or never actually meet, are also becoming more common in organizations. Because trust often depends, at least in part, on impressions formed during personal encounters with others, levels of trust in these groups may be low as well (Avolio, Kahai, Dumdum & Sivasubramaniam, 2001; Cascio, 1999; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1998). And how will trust change as organizations become more 'dynamic' (Lipman-Blumen & Leavitt, 1999; Meyerson, Weick, & Kramer, 1996), with work groups forming and dissolving in response to specific projects or problems? Workers in such groups may have little trust for one another, and thus might be tempted to betray whatever trust they receive from others, because their relationships are relatively brief and shallow. Finally, a growing dependence on temporary or contract workers in organizations (Feldman, Doeringhaus, & Turnley, 1994; Garsten, 1999) may also cause trust problems. Because their memberships are time-limited, temporary workers may have little trust in the members of the groups they join, and those members in turn may have little trust in them.

Notes

1. For an alternative account of evaluation, derived from self-categorization theory, see Moreland et al. (2001).
2. For another analysis of misbehavior by workers, which focuses on betrayal of trust, see Elangovan and Shapiro (1998).

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