

WHY DO GROUPS DISTRUST EACH OTHER ?

Ajeet Mathur, Ph.D,
Professor of International Business
University of Tampere
ajeet.mathur@uta.fi

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GROUPS COALESCE 'IDENTITIES'

THE CEMENT IS 'BEHAVIOURAL'

GROUPS HAVE PURPOSES

LOGOS CONSTITUTED THROUGH "EQUIPRIMORDIALITY OF THE ONE AND THE MANY" (HERACLITUS)

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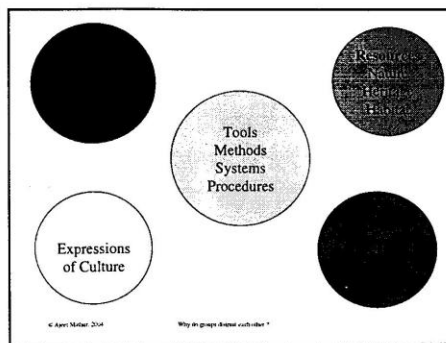
Why do groups distrust each other ?

What boundaries does a group provide ?

- TASK
- RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN
- TIME
- SPACE
- RELATEDNESS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY WITHIN GROUP, AND, TO OTHER GROUPS

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Why do groups distrust each other ?



THEORIES EXPLAINING DISTRUST

- NATURE OF PREJUDICE (ALLPORT, 1954)
- FUNCTIONAL RELATIONS (SHERIF, 1961)
- BLUE EYES, BROWN EYES (JANE ELLIOTT, 1968)
- EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS (PETTIGREW, 1998)
- LOSS OF SYSTEM INTEGRITY (ARROW- MCGRATH -BERDAHL, 2000)
- SOCIAL CONTEXT (MORELAND-LEVINE, 2002)
- COPING RESPONSES / DEFENSIVE REACTIONS TO ANXIETY (MATHUR , 2003)

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Why do groups distrust each other ?

ANXIETY

- AVOIDANCE
- INDIFFERENCE
- HOSTILITY
- SYMPATHY
- EMPATHY
- CONTACT

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CONTACT

- CREATES PREJUDICES ?
- CONFIRMS PREJUDICES ?
- REMOVES PREJUDICES ?

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INTER-GROUP DILEMMAS

- SYMMETRY OR HARMONY ?
- SAMENESS OR EQUALITY ?
- STANDARDS OR EQUIVALENCE ?
- SAFETY OR CREATIVITY ?
- ENVY OR JEALOUSY ?

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GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS ?

	RIVALROUS	EXCLUDABLE	EXHAUSTIBLE
ORGANIC RESOURCES	YES	?	YES
INFORMATION RESOURCES	NO	?	NO

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INFORMATION ASSYMETRY

CONTRACT ENFORCEMENT

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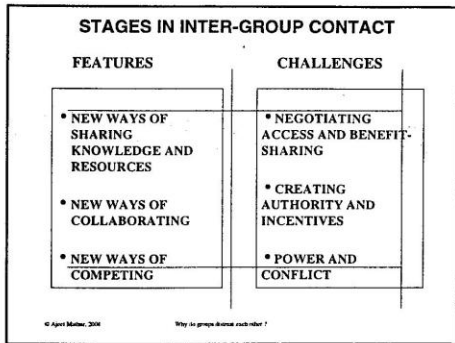
PROTECTION OF KNOWLEDGE AND GENETIC RESOURCES

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STAGES IN INTER-GROUP CONTACT

FEATURES	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEARNING NEW INFORMATION AND EXCHANGES • NEW BEHAVIOUR, NEW HOPES • NEW WAYS OF CREATING KNOWLEDGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOTIVATION TO BENEFIT FROM DIVERSITY • NEW SENSATIONS, IMITATION, ADAPTATION, INTERNALISATION • LEARNING BY DOING

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- CONCLUSIONS**
- **COMPETITIVE INTER-DEPENDENCE IS**
 - * HERACLITAN + HOBBSIAN + DAWKINSIAN
 - HENCE 'ANXIETY' THE KEY
 - **CONTACT SOLUTIONS NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT:**
 - TRANSPARENCY/TRANSFERENCE
 - DICHOTOMIES ARE NOT RESOLVABLE THROUGH SYMMETRY SEEKING CONTACTS
 - **TURQUETIAN "ONENESS" IS A PASSING ILLUSION**
 - **AWARENESS, SENSITIVITY, EDUCATION AND CREATIVITY FOR FLOWS ACROSS 'BORDERS IN THE MIND' MUST BEGIN WITH DISSOLVING 'INVADERS IN THE MIND'.**
- © April Mather, 2008 Why do groups behave such-and-such?



Abstract

WHY DO GROUPS DISTRUST EACH OTHER¹ ?

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There are several theories, rich in descriptive power, offering explanations for inter-group distrust. However, their prescriptive power can be questioned because solutions based on them have not worked. Can it be so that solutions are always badly designed or poorly implemented ? Or has something critically important been conceptually missed ?

I trace the missing link to the contact-based treatment of anxiety in inter-group encounters where transparency is typically operationalised by bridging information asymmetry or improving contract enforcement. Such defensive measures in inter-group contacts actually produce more prejudice and add to the distrust if they are not associated with processes enabling new ways of developing and sharing knowledge and other resources. This paradoxical result from contrary intent is natural because groups coalesce identities for purposes, but the cement that binds members together is behavioural. The 'logos' constituted through Heraclitan "equiprimordiality of the one and the many" reflects a compromise between Hobbesian anarchy and Dawkinsian self-interest. A symmetry-seeking solution is, *ab initio*, doomed to failure because each group is historically unique. For a group to transparently discuss its security with another group assumes capacity to experience a threat to its own identity before any shared visions may crystallise a new common identity through discovery of values passionately shared by both groups.

Turquetian 'one-ness' is a passing illusion that groups experience. The paper concludes that awareness, sensitivity, education and creativity for inter-group flows across 'borders in the mind' must begin with dissolving 'invaders in the mind'. This is quite impossible to achieve if competitive inter-dependence cannot be replaced by any overarching notions of transcendence.

¹ Paper presented at the Doctors' seminar on 'Trust and transparency',
Tampere, February 20, 2004 © Ajeet Mathur, 2004
Suggestions and comments welcome. If you wish to read the complete paper,
email: ajeet.mathur@uta.fi for a reprint to be mailed to you.