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THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS DURING THE TERMINATION
OF A SMALL GROUP

By

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B.S., Oregon State University, 1977

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

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1980

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Interpersonal Communication

The Communication Process During the Termination of a Small Group

Director: William W. Wilmot

W W W

This researcher acted as a participant while simultaneously observing fifteen subjects of a community-based assertiveness training group. Both group sessions and discussions with an informant concerning the group meetings were taped. The subjects were administered five questionnaires over the history of the group to elicit perceived changes in relationships with other group members. Two interviews at termination and post termination were also utilized to explore self-reported termination behaviors (these were taped also).

The research questions sought to discover: 1) as a group develops over time, how the individual relationships alter and 2) specific patterns of communication (tactics and strategies, metacommunication, dimensions, processes and attachment changes, and conversational mode) that influence the termination process.

Qualitative methodology was used to generate rules of group behavior. The constant comparative method, using transcriptions of the tapes, observations, questionnaires, and interviews, was the qualitative technique of investigation for developing communicative rules. Group initiation behavior, group maintenance behavior, group termination behavior and post-termination behavior rules, along with evidence from the various data to support these rules, was the basis of analysis in this study. The initiation and maintenance rules were used to evidence the processual development of the termination and post termination rules.

Findings show that: 1) in a relationally distant group during termination, individuals communicate discomfort in general; 2) low degrees of mutual attraction, similarities and time add strain to relationship bonding in groups; 3) external effects have a strong impact on suppressing relationships forming in groups; 4) dependency on the leader weakens the possibility of relationships developing; and 5) relational definitions are framed by the episode (termination) itself.

Within a group, individuals move closer together and intensify relations as termination approaches. This intensity, however, does fade significantly following a designated final session.

The forces on individuals of a group at termination are extensive. Choices such as who to see and how often if anyone; importance of outside relationships vs group member relationships; how to make contact with some and not others at the final session; and extensiveness of bonding desired, multiply the complications of developing relationships from a group.

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CHAPTER I
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

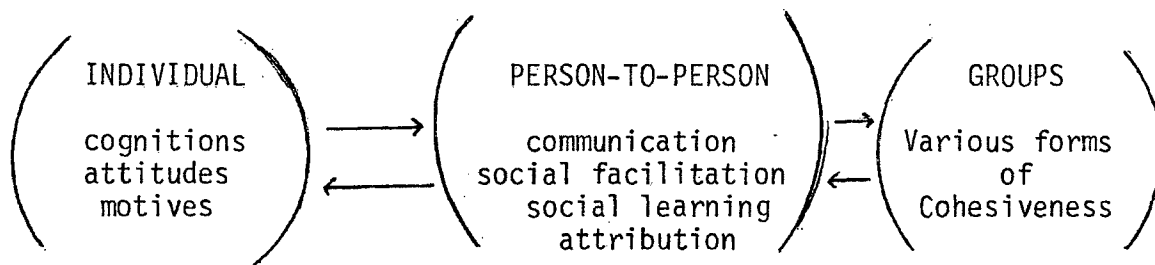
As Cohen and Smith (1976) point out, "Whether intentional or unintentional, many . . . important aspects of group life seem neglected . . . some salient issues needing attention are the acquaintance process, . . . and termination" (p. 212). The purpose of this study was to examine the termination process of a small group, what evolution of relationships affected the termination, and the "after life" of relationships formed that were within the group.

"Relational turnover is one of the most common yet least acknowledged experiences of contemporary people" (Wilmot, 1979a, p. 140). This 'mysterious' concept is in great need of study. Very little systematic research has been conducted concerning dissolution of relationships (Wilmot, 1979a; Levinger, 1976). Albert and Kessler (1976) suggest that "the study of endings . . . has possibly been retarded because of the unpleasant interpersonal and emotional states commonly associated with them; for example, despair, isolation, helplessness, guilt, violence, etc." (p. 148). Though these authors refer to endings of immediate social encounters, I believe we can equate this to terminating relationships as well.

Many theories of social psychology and group theory touch on termination, but few analyze the process of termination. Albert and

Kessler (1976) note that consistency models (Heider, Balance Theory; Festinger, Cognitive Dissonance Theory) make sense out of an individual 'leaving the field,' but fail to relate how this disengagement takes place. Exchange Theory (Thibaut and Kelly), as well, explains at what point one discards the 'high costs' or 'low rewards' of a relationship. But again, the process involved is incompletely analyzed (p. 148).

Newcomb (1978) has developed a model that provided a basis for this researcher to look at the interrelationships of people in groups, and thusly the termination implications.



"From this point of view, interaction among members provides the bridge between intraindividual characteristics and group properties . . ."

(Newcomb, 1978, p. 647). Examining a group from relationships within the group provided a better understanding of the dissolution process. Termination of a group is the termination of person-to-person relationships. When the group dies, what becomes of these person-to-person relationships?

Wright (1978) notes that friendship is voluntary. It goes beyond just spending time together. Commitment to a group may compel individuals

to spend time together. It is when individuals "make a point to spend time together" that friendships evolve (p. 199). Individuals may also maintain a stranger relationship with others in the group, or any degree of closeness between that and friendships. Understanding of these person-to-person involvements within the group focused awareness on the termination behaviors within these dyads.

Farrell (1976) suggests that groups have various ways of ending. All small groups die. Some die on schedule, some die more gradually, and others go in bits and pieces (p. 109). Groups change in systematic ways when they no longer continue to meet (Mills, 1964). It was of interest to discover how these changes affect relationships formed within the terminating group. Follow-up research on maintenance of dyadic relationships is scant. What determines continuation or dissolution of 'friendships' made within groups is an issue rarely considered in the literature. Slater (1966) sums up the need for substantial work in this area as follows:

"... just as the most significant fact about life is the inevitability of death, so the most significant fact about a training group is that it has a fixed and limited lifespan and that everyone knows this at the start. The entire history of such groups can usefully be conceptualized as the evolution of ways of handling separation and dissolution" (p. 70).

Definitions

Within the context of this paper, various terms defining elements of group and relationship life need to be defined for clarity of the review that follows.

Group Phase: A period of time during which the group members show a prominent concern with one cluster of issues (Farrell, 1976, p. 531).

Relationship: Investment of self with another person which takes the form of various commitments centered around a personalized interest in the other; also investing time, energy and resources in the interaction (Wright, 1978, p. 197).

Breadth: The number of different topical areas that are made available to another during interaction (Knapp, 1978, p. 12).

Depth: "Layers of personality" -- ranging from core to superficial. The closeness that the topic is to self-concept; its centrality and connectedness (Knapp, 1978, p. 12).

Termination, separation, dissolution, disengagement, ending: A temporal place where things are coming apart and where social bonds are being weakened; messages of distancing and disassociation; withdrawal of relationship rewards, sharing of less 'core' information (depth) (Albert and Kessler, 1976; Knapp, 1978; Wilmot, 1979a).

Metacommunication: When one person comments on the on-going communicative transactions; anything that "contextualizes" or "frames" messages to assist the participants in understanding the communication event (Wilmot, 1979b).

Intimacy, closeness, bonding: When a person feels some attachment in maintaining the relationship; a sense of 'we-ness' experienced in the relationship. Greater intimacy occurs when the rules for transacting are idiosyncratic, informal, and individually formed (Wilmot, 1979b).

CHAPTER II
RATIONALE AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Models of Group Development/Relational Development

Bennis and Shepard (1956), in their classic article on group development, suggest that the core of group development theory is in the orientation toward intimacy members bring to a group (p. 417). As individuals situationally and interpersonally draw closer, this enables the attraction between them to intensify (Wilmot, 1979a; Wright, 1978). "As participants progress in a relationship, they work toward agreement on the nature of their relationship . . . Either both parties will agree on what their relationship is like or they will continue to struggle until the relationship is defined or dissolved" (Wilmot, 1979a, p. 152). Individuals in groups are continually making sense out of how close or far away they are with other group members. The interaction between members defines the attraction one has for another.

Interaction patterns change through time as the group moves from one phase of group development to another (Fisher, 1974). There is some disagreement among authors regarding the nature of the flow of these group development phases. The process is conceptualized in a variety of ways. Some authors view the process as being cyclical or as a recurring order of events in which there is a time-order of interaction (Bales, 1965; Bion, 1961; Whitaker and Lieberman, 1964).

In contrast with the cyclical view, there are advocates of a sequential, discontinuous conceptualization of developmental flow (Tuckman, 1965; Bennis and Shepard, 1956). These authors describe a flow of issues that are worked through in an orderly, sequential pattern.

Whereas the cyclical and sequential models assume that group activity reaches a peak of efficient work and then ends, continues at that level of development, or cycles back to earlier phases, this does not account for an end to the group. The life-cycle model (Mills, 1967, 1970; Mann, 1967; Slater, 1966) emphasizes not only the developmental phases, but also the importance of a terminal phase for small groups.

Many writers have developed issues and stages which, they suggest, are established through relationships over time. These relationship issues and stages parallel group development phases, emphasizing one-to-one interaction. Most authors place these relationships on a continuum of intimacy, from a stranger to lover relationship. The continuum represents less intimate to more intimate relationships (Wilmot, 1979a). Since indicators of group change are the relationships within the group, an integration of the group development and relational development theory can help identify disengagement behaviors in small groups.

Altman and Taylor (1973) suggest there are five propositions of developing dyadic relations:

- 1) proceed from superficial to intimate levels
- 2) interactions expand at the same level of intimacy
- 3) once experimentation on a certain level of intimacy works, you will go further into intimacy levels

- 4) move is gradual to increase intimacy
- 5) the rate at which we become more intimate is a function of the rewards and costs of the relationship

Knapp (1978) also outlines stages for developing relationships:

- 1) Initiating (small talk, initial reaction to the other)
- 2) Experimenting (discovering unknowns about other)
- 3) Intensifying (delving deeper)
- 4) Integration ('we-ness')
- 5) Bonding (public acknowledgment)

Time, or in this discussion, phases, represents a valid aspect of group and dyadic relationship formation, and deterioration. "Factors that enhance the relationship at one point in time may not do so at another" (Wright, 1978; p. 201). It is vital, therefore, to examine the life history of a group to determine the interacting factors affecting the termination process. Most authors agree that affection and intimacy make the bonds 'stick.' "Affection is based on the building of emotional ties. As a consequence, it is usually the last phase to emerge in the development of a group . . . To continue the group relationship, ties of affection must form, and people must embrace one another in order to form a lasting bond" (Johnson and Johnson, 1975).

Noting that both group and relationship development stress affection as a bonding force for continued interaction (as well as movement through phases), we may intertwine these concepts when faced with understanding what leads to dissolution of relationships within groups.

Group Termination

The phase of separation, when the group begins to face its own death,

is a new contribution to the group literature (Gibbard, Hartman and Mann, 1974; Mills, 1964, 1967, 1970; Slater, 1966; Dunphy, 1968). "Though separation anxiety and the process of termination are familiar to many therapists and trainers, they have not gained an important place in the formations of group development, phase sequence, and so forth . . . in any case, no (theory) formation . . . adequately accommodates group mortality" (Mills, 1964, p. 69).

Many authors speak of groups ending, with individuals leaving to 'get on' with their lives, taking the experience with them. These authors do not deal with the possible on-going relationships formed through the group. Cohen and Smith (1976) suggest that in the final stage members seek closure in their "termination of involvement" (p. 181). Johnson and Johnson (1975) see relationships ending as the group ends. "Terminating relationships may be sad, but the ways in which you have grown within your relationships with other group members can be applied to group situations in the future" (p. 308). Tuckman (1965), one of the forerunners of group models, failed to even recognize termination, naming the "final developmental stage as functional role-relatedness," becoming effective, essentially, in problem-solving (p. 387).

Mills suggests that since most learning groups run by a fixed schedule, the first and last meeting dates are known. This mere fact of separation itself, forces a complex set of demands and issues. There are two primary issues: 1) can the group create something of value that will not die, and 2) what boundaries need to be dissolved before the

final meeting (Mills, 1964, p. 78)? The issue of the group as an entity is rarely dealt with. A group becomes aware of itself as an entity when termination is imminent (Slater, 1966).

Scant amounts of research has been done to describe the termination process of groups. Some authors (Mann, 1967; Cohn and Smith, 1976; Lundgren and Knight, 1978; Schutz, 1966) have observed behaviors at the termination stage. Characteristic behaviors include: absences and lateness increase, more daydreaming, forgetting to bring materials to the group, discussion of death and illness, general involvement decreases, importance and goodness of the group is minimized, and often there is a recall of earlier experiences. Members often desire to discuss events within the group that were not completely worked through at the time they occurred (Schutz, 1966, p. 173). Mills (1964) suggests that there are three levels to the group that hold separate characteristic behaviors at termination: work, intimacy and commitment. Successful group episodes are reviewed, expression of feelings abound, and confirmation of roles are given and received from one another (p. 79).

As termination approaches and with so little time left to be together as a group, members use different strategies to disengage from the group. Schutz (1966) points to four main techniques: 1) withdrawal of investment, 2) disparage and demean the group, 3) force members to reject the person from the group, shifting responsibility for separation onto other group members (i.e., becomes antagonistic, aloof . . .) and

4) refrain from investment in others from the beginning, seeing the pain of separation as too great (p. 174).

Many of the themes and feelings that have occupied the group come out in the final moments of the group's life. Concerns of 'what did we learn?' 'will we stay in contact?' 'did Joe understand me last week?' Mills (1964) suggests there are three separation emergent properties that crop up in the final moments:

- "1) Individual fantasies of a future reunion
- 2) Within persons, a tendency, on occasion, to model their emotional and intellectual processes . . . after the pattern of processes which occurred in the group
- 3) Some sense of accomplishment" (pp. 79-80)

Issues of separation begin the first day the group starts. Understanding the termination process and communication behaviors involved can contribute to understanding the integration of group and relational development as well as group and relational termination. Research supports the concept of persons coming to and leaving the group in the same manner -- individually. Yet there may be more to relationship development within groups. Slater (1966) suggests that ". . . pairing groups emerge whenever it is necessary to combat the idea of group death . . ." (p. 133).

The study of relationships within the group, and the development of the social structure within the group contribute to and are contributed by the study of termination behaviors.

"Emphasis upon . . . dissolution should not be interpreted as an exclusion of other issues and processes which have already been summarized in developmental sequences . . . the emphases are based upon the belief that the realities of group processes are such that a comprehensive model must be in terms of a life cycle -- group formation and group dissolution -- rather than simply a progressive development toward some implicitly desired state" (Mills, 1964, p. 69).

And in this understanding of termination, the final phase of group development is to "redefine the relationships between members and the group as the group is disbanded" (Hare, 1973, p. 300).

The Termination Process

When friendship relationships end, these usually take on the form of gradual deterioration (Davis, 1974; Knapp, 1978; Wilmot, 1979a; Wright, 1978). Most relationships formed within a group will be friendships. Davis (1974) calls this form of separation "passing away" of the relationship. Factors affecting this type of ending include:

- 1) a new individual enters the relationship scene, or 2) interaction distance (availability) may expand and, over time, will cause a relationship to fade (Davis, in Knapp, 1978). Another form of separation, labeled by Davis as "sudden death," occurs very quickly. Factors include:

- 1) once ties are loosened through efforts of both persons, the relationship is quickly over, 2) the dissatisfied partner acts unilaterally and swiftly, avoiding prolongation attempts of the other, 3) expectations differ which prompts one or both to leave and 4) due to unforeseen events, termination is precipitated.

These two main notions of ending relationships incorporate various influential factors suggesting more complexity to the process. A relationship within a group just does not die. There are many dynamics involved. Baxter (in Wilmot, 1979a) mentions some possible factors as "where the relationship is on the intimacy continuum, how long the relationship has stabilized at a given definition, whether the desire to terminate the relationship is two-sided or one-sided, the degree to which the relationship is institutionalized, and how integrated the couple is in other networks of relationships" (p. 157). Shapiro (1977) essentially sums up Baxter's notions, suggesting that "two dimensions of the strength of friendship ties were hypothesized to be associated with dissolution under conditions of reduced interaction: a low degree of mutual attraction, and a low degree of similarity" (p. 470).

It seems that as relationships within groups begin to dissolve, we see the same factors as in the evolution of relationships, only in reverse (Altman and Taylor, 1973; Knapp, 1978). Baxter (1979a) suggests that if this is the case, "the communication behavior . . . is predicted to represent the opposite communicative behaviors from those found during escalation -- i.e., reduced breadth and depth of information exchange, reduced variability in message encodings, increased stereotypical behaviors, reduced synchrony between parties, reduced evaluation, reduced spontaneity of communication behavior" (p. 8). Wilmot (1979a) adds that during the termination process,

participants gradually withdraw the rewards once provided for the other.

Knapp (1978) provides stages of "coming apart" of relationships:

- 1) Differentiating ("I" connotation; individualization)
- 2) Circumscribing (low levels of communication exchange)
- 3) Stagnation (unpleasant feeling states communicated nonverbally)
- 4) Avoiding (active energy to not be together)
- 5) Terminating (one or both makes it clear that the relationship is over)

The process of termination reflects communication behaviors that decrease the interpersonalness of a relationship.

Termination Dimensions

Baxter (1979a) suggests that the more interpersonal or developed a relationship is, the less likely it is that desengagement will occur. There are more costs involved in ending a more intensified relationship. Also, relationships of less intensity are less likely to disengage totally. There is the lingering effect of "oh yeh, let's get together sometime:" which rarely happens, and thus keeps the relationship in limbo. Therefore, the less involved the relationship, the more ambiguity there is in its termination.

Disengagement strategies appear to vary along two key dimensions: Direct/Indirect and Self-orientation/Other-orientation (Baxter, 1979a). Baxter clarifies these dimensions, stating that a direct strategy is characterized by openness in one's desire to disengage, whereas indirect is a lack of openness. Other-orientation displays concern for the other person's goals, and self-orientation by a lack of concern, and pre-occupation with one's own concerns (p. 3). Again, we can see that there

is more ambiguity present in termination of a less intense relationship. The less sense of bonding, the more likely the disengagement will be indirect (Baxter, 1979a, p. 4).

Other-oriented behavior occurs usually when the relationship is closer. There is more concern for the other person. Also, when the perceived cause of the disengagement is external (i.e., the formal end of the group), other-oriented disengagement increases (Baxter, 1979a).

An important distinction between two dimensions of termination is the locus of cause and the locus of legitimation. Both may be either internal or external, but are seen as the perceived versus the attributional, respectively (Baxter, 1979a). Albert and Kessler (1976) clarify this concept. "An important issue . . . is where the source of both the real reason and the expressed reason for terminating . . . are located. Both can be seen as either internal or external to the encounter" (p. 149). Davis (1973) also suggests that there are external and internal loci, but notes that terminations are usually a combination of "internal weaknesses and external pressures" (p. 245).

Finally, to add to the ambiguity of terminating less involved relationships, Baxter (1979a) points out that "the relationship parties will exhibit little agreement in their perceived cause for the relationship's decay" (p. 2).

Attachment Changes

One dimension of disengagement that is more apparent than those

mentioned above is the withdrawal of attachment bonds. Knapp (1978) suggests that ". . . strong attraction for a person is most likely if you view that person as physically attractive, and if he or she expresses positive evaluations toward you, tends to agree with your beliefs and attitudes, and is available for frequent contact" (p. 105). Degrees of attraction and therefore, feelings of bonding, change over time. As relationships develop, individuals revise notions of the other, themselves, and the relationship (Wilmot, 1979a).

Attachments often form between those who share an activity, such as a group commitment, that places the individuals in close physical proximity. These attachments often break down when the shared activity loses its relevance and the "rewardingness" of the friendship changes (Wilmot, 1979a; Wright, 1978).

"One's 'comparison level' for available alternative relationships has a marked impact on the willingness to terminate . . ." (Wilmot, 1979a, p. 167). How involved each individual is in other networks (friends, family, spouse, etc.) may have a strong bearing on the attachments formed between individuals in a group. Not only developmentally, but the termination process will be affected by the strength of these networks.

Forecasting the future of a relationship bears strongly on the termination process. Baxter (1979a) notes that "disengagement varies as a function of the durational expectancies of the relationship parties" (p. 5). An expectation that the other person will never be seen again will lead to different disengagement strategies than those which might

occur with the expectation to maintain contact (Baxter, 1978). Group characteristics take form as well. "Conformity in small groups increases when an individual believes there will be opportunity for future interaction . . ." (Ziller, 1977).

Attachment changes occur as relationships transform over time. The norm of reciprocity suggests there is a tendency to respond in kind to the behavior received (Knapp, 1978). Attachments lose their power when strategies to disengage increase, moreso in non-reciprocal desires to separate.

Tactics and Strategies of Termination

Wilmot (1979a) points out that as termination approaches, friends can spend less time together and return to earlier stages of being friendly but not integrated as friends (p. 170). This becomes the process, then, of redefining the relationship. The two individuals most likely will alter their patterns of interaction, but the influence of that relationship lives on and thus the "new" relationship begins. At different stages of our relationships we utilize different criteria for continuing the relationship. Kerckhoff and Davis (in Wilmot, 1979a, p. 145) call this 'selective filtering.' A reversal of the selective filtering process, of selecting criteria for discontinuing the relationship, must also go on; setting up blocks to interaction.

Knapp (1978) has established a set of strategies individuals use when moving toward termination. We would expect to find: 1) increasing physical distance between the interactants, 2) increasing time between

interactions, 3) shorter encounters, 4) less personal information exchanged, 5) less relationship talk, 6) fewer favors given or asked for, 7) less verbal immediacy, 8) more individual rather than mutual activities, 9) greater concern for self rather than for the relationship or the other person and 10) differences are accentuated (pp. 224-225). Baxter (1979b) also suggests that withdrawal of supportiveness during interactions and a decrease in the frequency of initiating contact with the other are common strategies emerging at disengagement (p. 14). Davis (1973) adds that people specify the time of their next meeting more vaguely as termination becomes more evident.

These strategy choices clarify the process involved in ending relationships. It is possible to funnel attention to specific strategies, as those developed through "doing" termination conversation.

Conversational Mode of Termination

Knapp (1978) suggests that it seems people communicate de-escalation of a relationship by producing messages which communicate "1) an increasing physical and psychological distance; and 2) an increasing disassociation with the other person" (p. 189). As relationships begin to deteriorate, "stranger" characteristics to the message take form. Messages which are narrow, stylized, difficult, rigid, etc., as illustrated in Table I. People begin changes in the form of their messages. Termination talk is directed toward cutting apart the attachment.

Table I

Some General Dimensions of Communication Behavior
in Developing and Decaying Relationships

Growth Stages \longrightarrow	
\longleftarrow Decay Stages	
Narrow	Broad
Stylized	Unique
Difficult	Efficient
Rigid	Flexible
Awkward	Smooth
Public	Personal
Hesitant	Spontaneous
Judgment Suspended	Judgment Given

Leave-taking conversation appears to have: 1) certain normative characteristics as well as 2) a number of specialized communicative functions (Knapp, 1973, p. 183). 'Proper' termination interaction consists of nonverbalisms such as Breaking Eye contact and excessive body movements (Head Nodding, Forward Lean, etc.) (Knapp, 1973). Often, however, these are accompanied by behaviors exemplifying closeness. As Davis (1973) suggests,

"although persons who are parting always promise to keep in touch with each other, the relatively extreme hugging, . . . and other kinesics that accompany these departures seem to indicate that they are fully aware that their intimacy is about to decline precipitously. In intensifying their communications at the moment of separation, they seem to be taking the precaution of raising their relationship to a higher level in order to draw out its anticipated downfall" (pp. 251-252).

Goffman, (1958), as well, notes that the enthusiasm of farewells compensate the relationship for the harm that is about to be done to it by separation (p. 229).

It is through these behaviors that termination becomes such an uncomfortable and unclear phenomena. Knapp (1973) concludes that it is possible to leave someone without giving clear indications of supportiveness. In a case like this, an individual may end a conversation as well as a potential friendship (p. 196). The changes in conversation as termination of the group approaches affects the metacommunication between individuals.

Metacommunication During Termination

"People often do not pay much attention to the form of their interaction, or do not have much control over it. They are usually more attentive to the content of what they are saying. But they unintentionally convey much in their manner" (Bales, 1970, p. 97). This message that is conveyed implicitly is formally called the metamessage. We not only communicate, but comment on that communication. The message itself is on one level, while the metamessage is on a higher, more encompassing level (Wilmot, 1979b).

Much of the time we encode the metamessage without conscious thought. We allow this message about the relationship to compute automatically. Knapp (1978) suggests that we are aware of these relationship messages on at least three occasions: 1) when the message seems to drastically violate our expectations for the relationship, 2) when we are involved

in relationships characterized by high levels of intensity and 3) when disagreement and conflict arise (p. 6). So it would seem that when individuals become more involved in relationships, talk about the relationship itself becomes more apparent. As Knapp (1978) pointed out previously concerning the stages of termination, less communication, particularly concerning the relationship, takes place as a relationship deteriorates.

Wilmot (1979b) suggests that there are two main levels of metacommunication, the relationship level and the episodic level. Both of these forms of metacommunication may be implicitly or explicitly expressed. As Wilmot (1979b) points out, explicit relationship level metacommunication is any comment on 'the relationship between the persons involved.' Any statement that overtly pertains to this is 'how I see you and me in relation to one another' (p. 10). Once a relationship has been explicitly referred to, the definition serves to frame subsequent transactions (Wilmot, 1979b, p. 10). Implicit relational messages are defined after repeated patterns of behavior emerge in which the participants can identify definitions of the relationship (Wilmot, 1979b). These explicit and implicit levels of metacommunication are always evolving, affecting all communication that follows. "The events occurring within a given communicative episode help the participants make relational sense out of an experience" (Wilmot, 1979b, p. 11).

This communicative episode functions to set the sequence of upcoming communication events. Metacommunication at the explicit episodic level

is directed toward the other's acts, the self, or the transaction between the two (Wilmot, 1979b, p. 12). Statements like, "you don't understand me!", or "I'm sorry for interrupting" describe episodic metamessages. The implicit episodic metamessage includes nonverbal cues and linguistic variations to index the roles of each person in the event (Wilmot, 1979b). This relates back precisely to what Bales (1970) was expressing concerning 'unintentional manner.' This provides more information about the episode, and a clearer definition of the event.

Wilmot (1979b) suggests the following propositions, which clarify the interconnection of episodic and relational levels of metacommunication:

- 1) Each transaction involves people working out what sort of behavior is to take place, and how to interpret it
- 2) The interpretive functions are enacted by the episodic and relationship levels
- 3) Relational definitions emerge from recurring episodic enactments
- 4) The more frequently a relational definition is reinforced by episodic metacommunication, the more potent it becomes
- 5) Relational and episodic metacommunication mutually and reciprocally frame one another (pp. 13-14).

Metacommunication not only tells us what the episode and relationship involve, but also what kind of relationship or encounter is desired in the future. Metacommunication, then, may be one of the prime variables explaining the communication patterns of separation interacting with the dynamics of the group.

Summary

It is important to look at the relationships within the small group, and how the social structure is set up by, as well as affects these dyadic relationships. Levinger (1976) even points to this: ". . .there is a difference between the cohesiveness of the total group and the connectedness experienced by its separate members -- group members rarely have identical involvement in the group" (p. 44). Making sense out of group process through the relationship interaction is more effective in understanding group termination and termination of relationships formed within the group.

"The dyad is the building block of other communication contexts. Within small groups of people, each individual engages in a global relationship to others and specific dyadic relationships. Our shifting dyadic relationships allow us to select manageable sets of relationships within a complex social structure" (Wilmot, 1979a, p. 18).

The Research Questions

Through observation of a small group's life history, I wanted to discover the following dimensions of relationship termination within small groups:

- I. As a group develops over time, how do the individual relationships alter?
- II. In what ways do these patterns of communication influence the termination process:
 - A. Tactics and strategies individuals use in disengaging from others in the group.
 - B. Dimensions, processes and attachments involved in terminating relationships.

- C. Metacommunication functions during and after the termination process.
- D. Conversational mode changes through group development.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Methodology

Following are four elements of qualitative methodology (time and process, patterns, observation and rules) that are essential concepts for understanding the mechanics of this study. Hare (1976) suggests that "research of the small group has shifted from group process emphasis to the actor in the social situation" (p. 191). Observing a relationship within a group which is involved in the process of group termination is difficult. Unless some baseline measure for the communication patterns can be compared with later patterns, identifying and understanding the interaction is incomplete (Knapp, 1978).

Time and process. "The recognition of time as a variable in social psychology makes salient the history of the group, the future of the group, and changes from the past to present to the future" (Ziller, 1977, p. 294). It is rarely possible to make sense out of one aspect of an on-going system of social interaction independently of another part. Albert and Kessler (1976) suggest that the definition of a situation, how it is framed and what meaning it has for the person, are elements of the process of ending (p. 151). The entire life history of a group affects the termination behaviors in a group. Time and process are elements of the method that define the on-going interaction affecting termination behaviors.

Observation. Mills (1964) notes that each group has its own 'natural way,' its own course of development. The role of the researcher was to discover and understand the group's development by observing the group in its natural setting (p. 14). By observing the group and developing qualitative schema describing the process, the life-history observation led to clarity of the termination of the group. Content as well as form of interactions are important observational elements.

Observation procedures were aimed at describing and recording behavior as it occurs. Shimanoff (1980) notes that "...systematic observation and analysis of this more common data may also reveal regularities which are not part of one's conscious awareness, and, therefore, perhaps less 'obvious' rules may be discovered via the participant observation method" (p. 159-160). From the behavior of group members an observer can make inferences about the rules of group process and group termination.

Patterns. The central concern in the observation of interaction is more often the typical patterns of action and reaction which constitute the group process. These "act-to-act sequences change over the period of a meeting and over a series of meetings" (Hare, 1976, p. 187). There has been a variety of 'interaction' group research, but little of it defines the meanings or functions of patterns in the process over time. Patterns emerge, through observation, when the function of group processes, relationship issues, and termination elements are understood.

Rules. "A rule is a followable prescription that indicates what behavior is obligated, preferred, or prohibited in certain contexts" (Shimanoff, 1980, 57). Focus on the previous elements of qualitative methodology led to generation of group process and termination rules, following the above description. Therefore, rules must be specified regarding the elements of:

- 1) Followability
- 2) Prescription
- 3) Domain
- 4) Context

Rules should be followable. As Shimanoff (1980) suggests, "rules taken independently must be physically followable, and hence also breakable, but they need not be followed or followable in practice to be rules" (p. 41). This also implies, then, that during a group rules can be changed if members find them inappropriate (or non-followable) and also may be contradictory when factions within a group are involved.

Rules should be prescriptive. This implies that something should happen and that a deviation from this behavior is subject to evaluation by the group or individuals within the group. "Rules prescribe behavior under certain conditions; they do not merely describe desires, motives and/or intentions" (Shimanoff, 1980, 41).

Rules are within a domain. The proper domain of rules is behavior -- what individuals do throughout the group and at termination. Shimanoff (1980) points out a valuable concept in prescribing behavior, saying

that "although rules may be utilized to interpret behavior, there are not interpretive rules (where evaluation is implied)" (p. 54). I can say that "if a group member has not talked of termination throughout the group, he/she must do so the final session" is interpreting a behavior, but it is improper to consider the rule interpretive itself, since that would imply prescription of cognitions. Rules do not prescribe or interpret what one must think, infer, or judge -- only the prescription or interpretation of a behavior.

Rules are contextual. The context of a rule "refer to the physical and linguistic environment, the episode being enacted, the actors, the medium of communication, and purposes" (Shimanoff, 1980, p. 46). The behavior that is followable and prescriptive is only understandable within the context of its observation. The researcher sought out rules as they applied in like situations and behaviors that set up later patterns throughout the life of the group.

With this understanding of rule conceptualization, the researcher structured the rules of this study to have the following properties:

- 1) an indication of the circumstances in which the rule is applicable (initiation, maintenance, termination, or post-termination of the group)
- 2) an indication of that which ought, or may or must be, or not be, concluded or decided (prescribed behavior)
- 3) an indication of the type of inference contemplated, whether under the rule it is preferred, required or prohibited (the character of the rule).

(Shimanoff, 1980, 75)

Chapter IV explains further the use of rules and evidence to support the rules that have been observed over time, detecting patterns of group termination.

Subjects

Subjects for this study were a group of 16 individuals involved in an assertiveness training group. This group met eight weeks, once a week for two hours. The group was conducted by Mr. Andrew Hudak, private counselor in Missoula, Montana; sponsored by the University of Montana center courses, a non-credit class system. This researcher was also a member of the group from its onset, in order to actively participate as well as observe. Subjects were aware of the researcher's role. Ms. Susan Pomeroy also was a member of the group, as well as an on-going informant. The members were of all ages, interests and backgrounds, with the majority of them being from the community rather than the University population.

The following was told to the subjects and Mr. Hudak. (Mr. Hudak was informed prior to the subjects, requesting for consent of entry into the group):

"I am currently a graduate student at the University here, in Interpersonal Communication. I am conducting research on group processes, and would like to use this group to look at various aspects of group life. What this will involve is your willingness to have me as a participant in the group, time at the end of the first, fourth and

sixth meeting to fill out a short questionnaire, and interview times following the group sessions, set up at your convenience. I also would like to tape record all group sessions. All the information will be confidential. I will not write what will, in any way, identify any member of this group. I will also provide everyone here with a summary of my results. I would appreciate your help." I then asked for any questions, and finally, for consent.

Design

This study focused on gathering data qualitatively. The methodology consisted of three qualitative forms: Participant observation, questionnaire, and interviewing.

Much of the group literature focuses on observation as an adaptive study of group life (Bales, 1950; Bion, 1959; Brown, 1976; Lewin, et al, 1939; Lindgren and Knight, 1976; Phillipsen, 1976; Rogers, 1970; Sharf, 1978; Whyte, 1955). An active participant observer maximizes participation with the group in order to gather data and attempts to integrate her role with the others in the group. Participant Observation allows for propositions about group life to emerge. Through this study, the participant observation was designed to draw upon 1) the central proposition (research questions), 2) "mine-run," which are propositions discovered during the weekly group observations and 3) propositions discovered after the complete data collection, forming out of data interpretation (McCall and Simmons, 1969, p. 36). Through such

propositional generation, observations were structured allowing for the group process to direct analysis on termination behaviors. Systematic rules of behaviors were constructed to examine the possible combination of attributes discovered through the participant observation emergent propositions.

An informant was used throughout the participant observation procedure. Informants are described by Lofland (1971) as persons who have developed relatively regularized and involving personal attachments with the group. These individuals address concerns (in private discussion with the researcher) of the group, as an on-going process. The informant, Ms. Pomeroy, was given few instructions at the onset of the study in order to alleviate influence that may have biased or distorted her own perceptions. The researcher asked her to participate in the assertiveness training group as a member, and also for some time with her after each session to talk about the experience that evening. Ms. Pomeroy agreed to participate.

Five different questionnaires were used in this study. One was filled out at the initial meeting, one at the mid-session, and one at the sixth session (see Appendix I, II, III). The fourth questionnaire was filled out at the first interview, and the fifth questionnaire was filled out at the second interview (see Appendix IV, V). The interviews were conducted following the last session of the group, with each individual member. An interview with each member was also set up four weeks following the final group session. The interview was structured

in an open-ended manner (see Interview Schedule Questions, Appendix VI). These interviews added to the construction of comparative data analysis.

Materials

Materials included: five questionnaires for the 16 group members (80 copies maximum, 16 of each form), a tape recorder and tapes to cover eight, two-hour group sessions, as well as 30-60 minute discussions with the informant immediately following each group session (24 hours of taping). The tape recorder and additional tapes were needed for the two, 30 minute interviews (approximately 15 hours of taping) as well. Also, writing materials were necessary throughout observation to record 'unobtrusive data.'

Procedure

An overall, processual view of the procedure analysis is necessary to understand initially. This will reduce repetition, since the "how" of analysis for all these procedures can be explained via the following method. This method is Glazer's (in McCall and Simmons, 1969: pp. 220-224) 'constant comparative method' of qualitative investigation. This method was used throughout the participant observation, with the questionnaires, the interviews, and all activity related to this research. Glazer describes the four stages of this method:

- 1) compare incidents with previous incidents to establish categories

- 2) integrate categories and their properties
- 3) delimit the theory -- modify, clarify
- 4) final theory emerges

There was a constant comparison flow of data intake throughout the study. Though the constant comparative method focuses on emergent categories, the researcher was able to use this method to establish rules. This began even with the initial act of "gaining access."

Approaching Mr. Hudak initially, and then the group itself was the beginning procedure of this study. Gaining access to the 'field' was achieved through establishing a positive rapport, bargaining for my 'place' in the group, and discussing in honest but vague terms a description of my research (i.e., "a broad concern for group information") (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975). Detailed field notes started with the process of gaining access to the situation. This began the process of developing assumptions for emergent rules.

Once in the group, participant observation was the prime methodology. In the process of observing, this researcher looked for general clusters or topics that understandable as well as confusing incidents fell into. What we do not know is how a group's termination affects relationships that have formed in the group. While observing, then, I focused on communication behaviors throughout the group's life that influenced what happened post termination of the group. Mental notes and jotted notes about the group process and interactions were both necessary. These mental and jotted notes were converted into a running

account, called field notes. The process for field notes included: writing promptly after each session, making it a running description, being concrete, recalling distinctions, analyzing ideas and inferences, describing personal impressions and feelings, and making copies of the written account (Lofland, 1971, pp. 102-106). It also was important during participant observation of each session to be aware of and include unobtrusive measures in the field notes. These included non-verbal behaviors, proxemics, subgroupings, and enter and exit behaviors. Each session was taped for the full two hours. These tapes were transcribed into a full running description of communication behaviors. The researcher's observations, thoughts, and feelings were noted on the right hand side of the transcripts as well. All of the above processes were utilized during each of the eight, two-hour sessions, using the constant comparative method for analysis.

Questionnaires were distributed to each member of the group following the first, fourth and sixth group session, as well as at the interview following the final session and the follow-up interview time, four weeks after the group's end. Members were asked to fill them out immediately following the meeting. The questionnaires were collected and the constant comparative method was used, both internally (how one's questionnaire changes over time) and externally (what comparisons can be established from crossing questionnaires with other's answers).

Informant Pomeroy met with the researcher following each session to discuss impressions and analyses. These sessions were taped and transcribed as the regular group session. Pomeroy, to alleviate biases and possible contamination of the data, did not know what this researcher was looking for. She had the same information about the study as other group members.

Interviews were conducted following the final session and four weeks later, at a follow-up session. Each group member was interviewed in a 30-60 minute session. The interview structure focused on the interview schedule (see Appendix VI). The following structure of the interview was established.

- 1) Introduce purpose
- 2) Assure anonymity
- 3) Explain there is no right or wrong answer
- 4) Ask permission to record
- 5) Obtain any biographical information needed
- 6) Focus full attention on the interviewee
- 7) Ask questions without bias
- 8) Do not label any behaviors
- 9) Keep open-ended in the questioning
- 10) Form probes as the interview progresses
- 11) Take jotted notes
- 12) Ask questions in many different ways for internal validity check
- 13) Be supportive

The researcher, following each interview, summarized her notes of impressions and nonverbal information, transcribed the tapes verbatim, and wrote any additional notes of analysis that merged. The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. After all the data had been accumulated, rules were established.

Methodology Concerns

Validity. Establishing validity in a qualitative study is a vital concern. Internal validity, the process of comparison within the confines of the study, was established by the constant comparative method itself. Internal validity "asks whether a difference exists at all in any given comparison. It asks whether or not an apparent difference can be explained away as some measurement artifact" (Bailey, 1978, 60). The study examined comparisons with internal validity as a focus throughout. External validity, the generalizability of the study to other constructs, is an issue treated in the results section. The following procedures helped establish validity within the confines of this study.

Internal validity. Questions the researcher asked throughout the study to assist in the procedures below were, "Is this report consistent within itself? Are there spatial-temporal facts stated at one point that are contradicted or made impossible by spatial-temporal assertions at other points? Do the people involved unaccountably contradict themselves within this report?" (Lofland, 1971, 112). Four internal validity checks this researcher used were 1) cross check with participant

observation, interviews and questionnaire data, 2) cross check with the informant, 3) cross check within the group: different perception of similar incidents, and 4) through the constant comparative method.

McCall (in McCall and Simmons, 1969) supports the use of internal validity checks stating that, "the key to data quality control in participant observation is thorough use of multiple indicants of any particular fact and an insistence on a very high degree of consonance among these indicants, tracking down and accounting for any contrary indicants" (p. 131).

External validity. Questions the researcher asked throughout the study to assist in the procedures below were, "Is this account consistent with other accounts of the same event? Have I assembled enough independent accounts of this event and...compared among them for the degree of their agreement?" (Lofland, 1971, 113). Three external validity checks this researcher used were 1) observation consistent with the interview data, 2) observation results compare with the literature, and 3) external consistency: agreement among independent reports.

Face validity. Questions the researcher asked throughout the study to assist in the procedures below were, What is the definition of the concept being measured? Is the information being gathered germane to that concept? (Bailey, 1978). Two face validity checks this researcher used were 1) determine whether the methodology is really measuring the kind of behavior that the investigator assumes it is, and 2) determine whether the methodology provides an adequate sample of that kind of behavior.

Essentially, then, "face validity is assessed by the evaluator's studying the concept to be measured and determining, in his or her best judgment, whether the instrument arrives at the concept adequately" (Bailey, 1978, 58).

Reliability. "...the concept of validity addresses itself to the truth of an assertion that is made about something in the empirical world. The concept of reliability, on the other hand, concentrates on the degree of consistency in the observations obtained from the devices we employ: interviews, observers,..." (Deutscher, in Filstead, 1970, 202).

The primary procedure used to check reliability was consistency in behavior over time (observation) and consistency in answers over time (interviews, questionnaires). The researcher interpreted reliability by observing behaviors that "occurred under the prescribed circumstances not once, but repeatedly" (Neale and Liebert, 1973, 3).

The degree to which the information is reliable from one interview to the next was obtainable. "It is possible to obtain a reliability estimate of the information gathered, by systematically reinterviewing a subsample of persons" (Neale and Liebert, 1973, 97).

Methodology check questions. The following matters pertain to the researcher-subject interaction. The results were interpreted specifically with these questions in mind. As Lofland (1971) suggests about the participant observation process, "He is close enough to be one of them,

but he can't. His job is to write about their life, not live it" (p 97). The researcher cannot completely give herself over to participation without fear of contaminating the results. To keep check throughout the study, these questions were addressed and their impact on the data noted.

- 1) Any reactivity or influence of the researcher
- 2) Bias and distortion detected
- 3) How representative is this group?
- 4) How accurate is the informant's information?
- 5) Rapport -- too little or too much with the group?
- 6) Quality mechanics of data collection
- 7) Ethnocentrism: is the researcher imposing an outside perspective on the group?
- 8) "Going Native" - has the researcher overidentified with the group members?

Of each observational item recalled, the researcher asked herself whether her actions or presence might have affected the observed event itself. As McCall (in McCall and Simmons, 1969) points out, "the observer should always ponder the likely perceptual consequences of the inflexibilities and peculiarities of his role-relations, person characteristics, and frame of reference" (p 132). A useful check of this throughout the study was comparing an observational item with comparable observations from earlier field notes, to determine the researcher's changing viewpoint (McCall, in McCall and Simmons, 1969).

Researcher constraints. The following list of "do's" and "don'ts" were established by this researcher to structure the process further.

- 1) See everything done or not done by participants and observers as evidence
- 2) Allow for the "frame" to change; let go of presets
- 3) Watch for what is dysfunctional, missing information or fauxpas; every contrary account that doesn't fit and what is not said
- 4) Record any emotions of researcher or members
- 5) Record any practical problems with the method
- 6) Realize marginality of the participant observer's role and how involved the researcher gets
- 7) Watch for bias of researcher or members
- 8) Be careful of finding cause/effect in behavioral measures (i.e., attendance)
- 9) Watch for being molded into a certain role by the group
- 10) Maintain neutrality
- 11) Maintain a record of researcher's place in the group. As the researcher's role vis a vis others changes, it was noted.

To set up validity and reliability checks throughout this study, the researcher developed methodology check questions. These questions were used to determine any problems that occurred during the data collection. Also, researcher constraints were established as guidelines for maintaining objectivity in this qualitative design.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

As evidenced in Chapter II, very little information is available on how groups terminate. The results of this study clarify termination behaviors of a small group from a rules perspective. "Communication research from a rules perspective is designed to identify communicative rules, to specify relationships between rules and behavior, and to provide explanation, prediction, and possibly control of behavior (Shimanoff, 1980, 137). Communication rules were constructed to highlight the termination behavior of a small group as specified in Chapter II. The research questions were:

- I. As a group develops over time, how do individual relationships alter?
- II. In what ways do these patterns of communication influence the termination process?:
 - A. Tactics and strategies individuals use in disengaging from others in the group.
 - B. Dimensions, processes and attachments involved in terminating relationships
 - C. Metacommunication functions during and after the termination process
 - D. Conversational mode changes through group development

Question I is a general question that extends beyond the data, therefore it will be discussed in Chapter V, Discussions and Implications.

Inductive Process

"In his scientific role the participant observer is seeking to apprehend, register, interpret, and conceptualize the social facts and meanings which he finds in a prescribed area of study" (Bruyn, in Filstead, 1970, 307). This inductive process of interpreting and conceptualizing during and following the observation allowed for the emergent rules to surface in this study. The method was as follows:

Data collection and transcription. Participant observation was the primary method of this research design. The researcher observed a formal learning group once a week for 2 hours (8 weeks total), taping the full session and transcribing immediately following the sessions. The transcriptions were typed verbatim onto the left hand column, leaving the right hand column for researcher comments.

The informant, Ms. Pomeroy, and the researcher met following each session for discussion of the group. These sessions were taped and transcribed as in the above description.

Interviews were taped and transcribed as described above as well. The interviews were held with each group member immediately following the termination and four weeks following the termination.

Also, five questionnaires were distributed and collected during the data collection (see Appendices I,II,III,IV).

Data compilation. The researcher gathered all the transcription and questionnaire data together. Reading through the data, a color marker was used to highlight communication behaviors that seemed to occur repeatedly or set a standard for other repeating behaviors. While doing this, the researcher made notes in the columns for possible formation of rules. Following this initial search for communication patterns, the researcher read through all the data once again, looking for comparative evidence to support the patterns.

Rules formation and development. Implicit rules are "unstated prescriptions for behavior, inferred from behavior" (Shimanoff, 1980, 54). The rules generated from the data were strictly the researcher's implicit rules, and were developed from the field observations, transcriptions and questionnaires.

All the researcher's implicit rules were written down in random sentence form. Some rules were thrown out at this point, keeping those that had the most supporting evidence. The rules that were left were transformed into If-Then clauses for consistency and clarity.

The If-Then clause is not a medium expressing causation in the rules perspective. In the causal explanation, the actor is passive whereas in rules explanation the actor has a choice in determining the outcome (Shimanoff, 1980). For instance, rule or 'reason-giving' explanations would be stated as "The actor did X because s/he chose to follow rule A, which prescribes X." (Shimanoff, 1980, 225). The

If clause states the scope of the conditions of a rule, and the Then clause specifies what behavior is prescribed by the rule and the nature of the prescription (Shimanoff, 1980). At this point the If-Then rule clauses were developed into prescriptive statements of behavior. Prescriptive markers used were: preferred, must, ought, should, and required. To explain the use of prescription more fully, "prescriptive markers in rule statements indicate that the action prescribed in the Then clause is ethically entailed; the Then clause of a rule implies what ought to happen and not necessarily what does or will happen" (Shimanoff, 1980, 76). This prescriptive mode explains the derivation from causal statements.

Cut and paste. The If-Then rules were typed onto pages and then cut out individually. All the rules were put into separate piles of group initiation rules, group maintenance rules, termination rules and post-termination rules.

Sheets of paper with the headings Tactics and Strategies, Meta-communication, Processes and Dimensions, Attachment Changes, and Conversational Mode were then set out on a table. Termination and post-termination rules were pasted on the appropriate sheet under each of the above headings. Group initiation and maintenance rules were used to support the termination and post-termination rules, and placed under the appropriate termination rule. The initiation and maintenance rules used as evidence in this way, helped illustrate the processual

aspect of termination behavior. Once again, rules were thrown out at this point due to the quantity of data and the lack of supporting rules. No rules specifically fit in the conversational mode sheet (see Chapter V for discussion).

Dialogue from the transcripts and writing from the questionnaires were taken from the data to use with the appropriate rule. This evidence was pulled out of the data and used so that "the reader is able to follow the details of the analysis and to see how and on what basis any conclusion was reached" (Becker, in Filstead, 1970, 199).

Schema

"We contend that qualitative research...should be scrutinized for its usefulness in the discovery of substantive theory..." which means "the formation of concepts and their interrelation into a set of hypotheses for a given substantive area" (Glazer and Strauss, in Filstead, 1970, 288). The scheme or model set up to discover this study's substantive theory (rules rather than hypotheses formulated) included: 1) identification of the operative rules, 2) evidence of the existence of the rule, and 3) specification and speculation on the behavior.

Each rule began with If to specify within what context the rule operates. Each If clause was subsequently followed by Then to introduce a clause specifying the nature of the prescription (via prescriptive markers) and the behavior being prescribed. This form identified the operative rule, which followed with evidence that the rule exists. This evidence was directly taken from transcript dialogue, researcher

observations or written questionnaire data. Specification of and speculation on the behavior described followed most rule clauses and evidence. Speculation occasionally preceded the operative rule and evidence as a link between rule descriptions.

The rules that emerged from the data were organized according to the scheme in Table II. As noted in Table II, the rules were organized into the five major headings, and chronologically discussed within each category.

As described previously, those rules that were kept for the final resulting rules scheme were those that had the most quantity of supporting evidence. These were all the most strongly supported of the total rules developed, meaning that there was more evidence to uphold the rule. Though not all the evidence is used to illustrate each rule, this researcher found adequate amounts of data for all those described. Some rules did have more substantive evidence, however. These rules were the most strongly supported, and are marked with an asterick in Table II below.

TABLE II

CHRONOLOGICAL RULES WITHIN CATEGORIES

I. TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

A. Leader Rules

- A1. termination behavior (determines group termination)*
 - A1.a. initiation behavior (breaks the ice)
 - A1.b. initiation behavior (punctuates activities)
 - A1.c. maintenance behavior (direction/process)
 - A1.d. termination behavior (central focus)
 - A1.e. termination behavior (leader encouragement)
 - A1.f. termination behavior (verbalize ending)

B. Member Rules

- B1. termination behavior (goodbyes)
- B2. termination behavior (alleviate relational decisions)
- B3. termination behavior (final contacts)*
- B4. post-termination behavior (exaggerate closeness)*
 - B4.a. initiation behavior (indirect communication)
 - B4.b. initiation behavior (finding similarities)
 - B4.c. maintenance behavior (inappropriate person)
- B5. post-termination behavior (external locus of cause)*
 - B5.a. maintenance behavior (leader non-compliance)
 - B5.b. maintenance behavior (group lacks choices)*
 - B5.c. maintenance behavior (opening greetings)
- B6. post-termination behavior (inappropriate person)*
 - B.6.a. maintenance behavior (attack inappropriate person)
 - B.6.b. maintenance behavior (interrupt inappropriate person)
 - B.6.c. maintenance behavior (dissatisfy IP's needs)*
- B7. post-termination behavior (external events)*

II. METACOMMUNICATION

A. Episode Rules

- A1. termination behavior (termination talk)*
 - A1.a. maintenance behavior (attentiveness)
- A2. termination behavior (discuss relationships)*
 - A2.a. maintenance behavior (relationship development)
 - A2.b. maintenance behavior (relationship development)*

B. Relationship Rules

- B1. termination behavior (expression of feelings)*
 - B1.a. maintenance behavior (objectivity)
 - B1.b. maintenance behavior (inappropriate person)*

III. PROCESS AND DIMENSIONS

A. Final Session Rules

- A1. termination behavior (uncertainty)
 - A1.a. maintenance behavior (content/relationship)*
- A2. termination behavior (positive interactions)
 - A2.a. maintenance behavior (extensive interactions)
- A3. termination behavior (leave-taking)*
 - A3.a. maintenance behavior (stressed member)

B. Follow-up Session Rules

- B1. post-termination behavior (closure)*
 - B1.a. maintenance behavior (break time)

IV. ATTACHMENT CHANGES

A. Internal Expression Rules

- A1. post-termination behavior (regrets)*
 - A1.a. maintenance behavior (intensify interactions)

A2. post-termination behavior (sadness)*

B. External Expression Rules

B1. post-termination behavior (support group)

B2. post-termination behavior (less attached with time)*

B3. post-termination behavior (replaceable)*

Resulting Rules

I. Tactics and Strategies

Researchers (Wilmot, 1979a; Knapp, 1978; and Baxter, 1979b) discussing tactics of termination define how individuals disengage from a dyadic relationship. However, in a small group context, a leader is present and has considerable impact on the termination behaviors. These rules emerged relevant to the leader influence.

A. Leader Rules

Rule A1: If there is an appropriate way to terminate, it must be determined by the leader.

(session #8)

Leader does a group relaxation/fantasy dealing with 'unfinished business!'

Leader: "Okay, now I'd like to give you the opportunity to share anything to the group or to a person."

The leader is placed in the position to determine the appropriate way to terminate because of his influence early in the group's life. In those early stages the leader exercised these forms of influence.

Rule A1a: If the group is in the initiation stage, the leader ought to 'break the ice' at the start of the session.

(session #2)

Leader "I think we need to do the name remembering game again, ...uh...has anyone heard of the picnic game? Well, we go around the circle and, let's say I start....I'd say my name and what I'm bringing to the picnic (group laughter). Alright, alright...so, my name is Al, and I'm bringing anchovies.... (group breaks into laughter)..."

Rule A1b: If the group is in the initiation stage, then the leader must punctuate activities.

(session #2)

Leader: "Other comments?"

A: I guess it's kind of a weird thought for me to think that the postal man's insensitive response to this man's struggle is aggressive"

Leader: "Well, it could be non-assertive..."

A: "Yeh, but there's a kind of..."

B: "Off the cuff..."

A: "Yeh, like, 'oh, there's nothing wrong with that'... so insensitive and uncaring because he doesn't know what's going on behind that..."

Leader: "Uh, I would like...(pause), count off by threes..."

Rule A1c: If the leader is directive then he ought to control the process of the group.

(session #4)

Leader: "Okay, let's start...um,...can we turn the overhead light off?"

E: "It's going to be dark in here..."

Leader: "That's okay, if it gets too dark, then we'll do something about it...now..."

Leader: "...and sometimes it may be virtually impossible for a request to be granted... that's where listening comes in...does everyone understand that? (the group does not respond -- silence) HELLO! ! (leader shouts) (group laughs)...alright... okay, now, find a partner..."

In a formal learning group, the leader determines his degree of control of activities and functions of the group itself. Johnson and Johnson (1975) note that "a task is clearly structured and he has a position of high authority and power; under such conditions the group is ready to be directed and is willing to be told what to do" (p 48).

The authority that sets up "appropriate" leader behaviors from the start has the power to direct the group behavior. The group is willing to be told what to do, even at termination.

Rule A1d: If the leader has been the central focus throughout the group, he must continue in this position even at termination.

(session #8)

While discussing the potluck, at the very end of the final session:

C: "Why don't we have a reunion in a couple weeks?..."

Leader: "How are we going to do this?"

A: "First Wednesday in April is the 2nd...next is the 9th..."

Leader: "Does anyone know when the spring quarter center courses start?"

C: "Let's just leave it to luck, that sounds adventurous..."

Leader: "That sounds great...the only terrible thing is if everyone turned up with desserts. I like main dishes more anyway...Okay, April the 2nd. For me it depends on the center courses. Okay, goodnight."

One of the appropriate behaviors a group leader may determine is amount of group-to-group interaction and leader-to-group interaction. In the leader-to-group interaction mode, the leader becomes the central focus, and again the group is ready to be directed. As evidence suggests below, the leader is placed in a position of affirming or vetoing plans for a future get together.

Rule Ale: If the leader, who has maintained control of a group throughout, encourages and finalizes a follow-up session, then the members must express positive emotions about the group experience and plan the follow up session.

(session #8)

D: "I'd just like to say that I thought this group was really neat..."

C: "Why don't we have a reunion in a couple weeks?..."

Leader: "How are we going to do this?"

(see dialogue, rule Ald)

Rule Alf: If the leader has been verbally directive throughout the group, he must verbally identify the ending of the group as well.

(session #8)

Beginning of the group:

Leader: "Well, this is the last night..oh, there's tea!"

Leader: "...I'd like for you to get a partner. This is your last chance so if you haven't been with someone, pair up."

These rules suggest behaviors that elicit the content to be the relationships at termination. It is appropriate for the leader to talk about the ending, since it becomes the content.

B. Member Rules

In addition to the influence of the leader, the members exert influence on the termination process. For this group, the members had the following influence.

Rule Bl: If a follow-up session (here a potluck dinner) is planned, then final goodbyes must not be said even if a member does not plan on attending the follow-up.

(session #8)

End of final session:

People are lingering, exchanging phone numbers, eating and drinking refreshments offered by the member whose house is the meeting place. Talk is of movies, external common events. All leave saying "see you at the potluck" or "so long, see you later."

This strategy may be an extenuation of Baxter's (1979b) notion that we withdraw supportiveness during termination interactions. Individuals exhibit termination finales without having to say goodbyes directly.

Rule B2.: If a follow-up session is planned, it should relieve individuals of relationship decisions at termination.

(session #8)

C: "It just seems that there are some unfinished interactions with people....we started things, and...!"

Leader: "How does that feel?"

C: "Oh, just some incompleteness, or um...why don't we have a reunion in a couple weeks?..."

Rule B3: If a follow-up session is planned, the realization of the eventual termination requires an urgency to make final contacts.

(Interview I)

B: "...um, well definitely expressing a wish to A to see her again. If it had not been the last session I wouldn't have, I would have waited..."

Rules B2 and B3 point to an interesting problem during termination-- one must paradoxically end relationships with people in the group and simultaneously show future interest; two conflicting needs. Polite innuendoes are signs that this rule is operating. As Goffman (1958) points out, enthusiasm of farewells apparently compensate the relationship for the harm that is about to be done to it by separation.

Rule B4: If a group has been relationally distant, relationship talk following termination of the group must exaggerate closeness and should fill the gap of the lack of closeness.

(Interviews I)

- A: "Well, at first we were strangers and uneasy with each other...and towards the middle things were warming up and towards the end it seemed that people were becoming real friends...and wanted to see each other again...and develop relationships."
- D: "I, uh, ...there was a different feeling knowing that, uh...you were interacting with a group in a positive way...I was, uh, when you knew it was over, it was really kinda difficult...like, this is too bad... we've really got something going--it'd be nice to continue."
- B: "There was a desire from a majority of the people to be close to each other...I think people really leveled with each other and gave a lot to each other."

As pointed out previously in this study, there is a scarcity of small group termination literature. The rule above discussing post-termination behaviors adds a new dimension to the existing literature. Any post-termination literature concerning individuals' perceptions of closeness is unknown to this researcher. The following rules during the on-going process of the group support this lack of closeness and are what led the group to develop rule B4.

Rule B4.a.: If the group is in the initiation stage, individuals must communicate in an indirect manner.

- A: "It could mean a number of things...perhaps they were intent on who they were going to see next, or... for me, when I make eye contact with someone it means 'I appreciate what you've written...'"

Leaders: "Is there anyone you would like to ask about that?"

A: "No, no..."

Rule B4.b.: If the group is in the initiation stage, individuals must strive to find similarities between each other.

G: "I don't see aggressive as bad...anybody agree with that?"

C: "Well, she, she (pointing at F) wrote about the same thing I did!"

Rule B4.c.: If a member continues inappropriate behavior, members should ignore him or talk about him as if he were not there.

B: "You know what else, C thinks it is a little request (B laughs), and it would seem huge to his secretary!"

According to Knapp (1978), messages surrounding termination communicate distancing and disassociation with the other person. Though individuals attempted finding similarities between each other, the communication of the group continued to display distancing behaviors. The difficult, rigid, awkward communication (Table I) of decaying relationships was the mode of communication throughout the group's history, as evidenced in rules B4a. and B4c.

Rule B5: If individuals describe a lack of relationships developed in the group, they must express locus of cause as external.

(Interviews I)

D: "...everyone never did settle down so that they felt completely comfortable in front of each other... even the last night. But I think maybe that was the structure..."

H: "...if I had more time to get to know folks, maybe...if I were going to be in town longer, I think I would have followed up on staying better in touch with a couple of people...but I lack the motivation knowing I was leaving and also things got real busy for me..."

The literature supports this pattern, suggesting that termination is usually a combination of internal weaknesses and external pressures (Davis, 1973). It may be that once time has elapsed, individuals see justification in expressing the locus of cause as external.

Rules and evidence derived from the group history may support the perception of external cause in this case. As seen below, when change is attempted and then disrupted, it may determine individuals' perception of cause as external (ie: the leader).

Rule B5a: If the leader does not wish to comply with group requests, he must suggest it is best for the group to continue with the status quo and should ignore further requests for change.

(session #3)

H: "...I find it really hard to feel comfortable in a group this size and I would really like to make it a different, less people..."

Leader: "Okay, what I'd like you to do is sit on it for a week for me, and then next week tell me if being in your small group helps, okay? I want to go around again and do names. I'm Al, hello (group laughs, all say names)... okay..um, I'll give you the..."

(session #6)

Leader: "I won't do the small groups again tonight. We've only got two nights left, we've only met, twice is it? Yeh, and I'm wondering if I need to reassess that..."

Rule B5b: If the members are not allowed to make structural choices for the group direction, then the members ought to lose interest.

(Interview II)

D: "...and, um,...I understand what was happening at the time when A1 abolished the 2 or 3 small groups... but like with J, she was starting to open up...
"...if there had been different people or different combinations of people, broken down into smaller groups,...I kinda feel like it was some kind of a rip off..."

(Interview I)

H: "I'm just disappointed with what could have happened but didn't in the group...I was sorta, well... A1's structure, you know..."

Rule B5c: If individuals have disclosed information to the group, opening greetings should be more energetic the following session.

(session 5, after intense session #4)

Beginning:

Much laughter, more than usual. Lots of mingling, talking.

Mills (1964) suggests that during separation a group's primary issue is its capability of creating something of value that will not die. As shown in the supporting rules above, the group was not able to become invested in the structure or with other members (when they did not come to the group). When choices and requests for creating something in the group are denied, investment in relationship development lowers. In this sense, the external locus of cause for relationship distancing is related to the process of the group itself.

Rule B6: If the "inappropriate person" (IP) is reflected upon, group members must see him as having had overall, positive attributes and contributed actively to the group.

(Interviews I)

K: "Well, I don't know. I'll miss some of them... like C...like at the very beginning he seemed kinda different, ya know? But once ya know, seeing him once a week really changed. I think he's a really neat guy."

D: "...I got to like C...I mean I got, in the beginning, well...you know, I didn't know what was going on with him.. "

Individuals within groups do not always find each other perfectly compatible. Aspects of being a member of a learning group involve sharing information and attitudes that may be different than one's own. The IP in this group was an extreme example. The IP's behavior was negatively sanctioned throughout the group's life cycle, as shown by the rules below. However, member's perceptions of the IP following the termination of the group contradicted these rules. Perhaps this was a method to alleviate any difficulties individuals had with their own thoughts and actions toward the IP. Another explanation by Shimanoff (1980) suggests that "people who are thought to be ignorant of a rule are less likely to be negatively sanctioned for noncompliance than those who are thought to be knowledgeable" (p. 24). Perhaps group members, upon reflection, saw the IP innocent in his actions.

Rule B6a: If a member is acting inappropriately, members must attack or laugh at his clumsiness.

(session #5)

A: "...and you said about dressing sexy..." (Hard laughter from the group)

Leader: "Okay, alright..."

C: "I said, you know, you're sort of a receptionist, and people are coming in here, and if you would..."

A: "Yes, the younger, more attractive woman?" (lots of laughter from the group)

Leader: "Besides everyone laughing, I'd like..."

Rule B6b: If the IP is talking, the leader ought to interrupt him.

(session #2)

C: "...you might get jostled by someone on the street... it would, well to me it would just depend on how you feel about it...if you feel, feel that that person did something to you that you have to..."

Leader: (interrupts) "I will be talking later..."

Rule B6c: If the needs of members in the group are being satisfied, the needs of the IP should not be satisfied if different than the group's.

(session #3)

C: "I guess I'd rather have a mixed group."

Leader: "Alright you guys are going to have to solve this... All I can think of is having you (to C) switch and having this be a group of 3 guys. How adamant are you about that?"

C: "Oh, not, uh,...well, I could switch with...well..."

Leader: "Okay let's do that..."

As shown above in the supporting rules B6a, B6b and B6c, the IP's behaviors were negatively sanctioned, contradicting member's stated perceptions of him post termination.

Rule B7: If relationships are developing after a length of time since termination, they must do so around external events.

(Interviews II)

K: (talking about her job as a hairdresser and F coming in to have her hair done) "Yeh, last week I did F's hair, you know, and, yeh, F liked her henna so I think I'll see her again..she'll be back..."

E: "Well, next week is my birthday and uh, well...I thought I'd, ya know, ask some of the group over..."

H: "Let's see...yes, E may come up to my new place in Deborgia...I invited her up, ya know, to see our "rustic" way of life and check out all the strange folks (laughter)..."

The few individuals who did report contact with members after extended time since termination noted that the contact took place around activities, work or the like. Unless relationships are bonded in the group, it is difficult for members to maintain contact following termination and unlikely that they will.

II Metacommunication

Wilmot (1979b) notes that metacommunication can be implicitly or explicitly expressed. At termination, a group spends much of its time explicitly communicating about the group's life or the termination itself.

A. Episode Rules

Rule A1: If termination of the group is anticipated, talk of it must begin the session before the last.

(session #7)

H: "I think that even though I know the people in the group, I wouldn't have taken the time to go up and say something..."

C: "...there's been even more attrition in the group..."

F: "Hum..I've noticed what I haven't said to people the past 6 weeks."

When the group sought positive endings of group sessions, individuals seemed to increase interaction and intensity as they approached the ending time. Mills' (1964) description of the characteristic group termination behavior, expression of feelings, is one that develops throughout the group's process at the end of each session. This may set the standard for the termination rule A1.

Rule A1a: If a group seeks positive endings to a session, individuals must be more attentive towards the end of the session.

(session #7)

Much intense listening and sharing:

C: "Oh, B, I didn't spell your name right, did I?"

B: "Oh, very close..."

A: "You know it's nice, but it's a somewhat different feeling getting it (positive statements to each other) in writing..."

C: "Does it make you feel like it is really more there?"

A: "I don't know...kinda like a valentine!"

This implicit metacommunication carries over from the demeanor of the group's life to metacommunicating explicitly at the terminating session, as seen in Rule A2.

Rule A2: If relationships between members have not been discussed in the group explicitly, they should not be expressed until the end of the final session.

(session #8)

H: "I find it difficult to say what it is I say..it is different..."

D: "I'd just like to say that I thought this group was really neat and it was great getting to know all of you."

C: "...it just seems that there are some unfinished interactions..."

This is a vital aspect of group life. Individuals must have relational closure; no matter how close or distant they were in the group. Mills (1964) suggests that feeling expression abounds and confirmation of roles are given and received at termination. Because of the formal learning group structure and the leader structure and the leader focus, relationships were not discussed openly in the group. If feelings and roles have not been dealt with previously, this 'unfinished business' is acted upon or talked about, as seen in the following rules.

Rule A2a: If the relational aspect of a group has not been developed before the final session, the leader must strive to create bonds through his direction.

(session #7)

Leader: "...this is the positive chair and everyone is going to have a turn in it and every person share one or two positive things about that person..."

Rule A2b: If members are unsure of their "place" in the group they must wait for others to make the first relational moves.

(Interview I)

A: "I am really glad we are getting together for the potluck. I think that's something we need to do. Sort of a check in with each other. And if there is friendships that have potentiality of going further, then it gives the opportunity for that. And if someone says let's do this again in a month or two, I'd like that..."

B: "I always felt, I felt after leaving each session that gawd, that was so neat!...what a good feeling, what a good bunch of people. And then coming in the door seven days later I would feel a little strained again...waiting for that to happen again."

Rules A2a and A2b support Wilmot's (1979b) propositions of meta-communication. Each transaction involves people working out what sort of behavior is to take place; and the interpretive functions are enacted by the episodic and relational levels. These levels are connected -- what communication has taken place throughout various episodes of the group affect the relational communication, through the termination of the group. And the interpretation of the communication at the termination phase defines the relational termination process.

B. Relationship Rules

Rule B1: If the group is in the termination stage, individuals in a learning group ought to express positive feelings and self disclose these feelings .

(session #8)

A: "I'm sorry that we were rushed the other day when I saw you in the University Center, F...I just had some things I had to run and do...Uh..."

B: (to A) "I'd like to see more of you...let's get together...I really would like an older person that I respect to be a part of my life..."

D: "I thought this group was really neat...it was great getting to know all of you..."

Davis (1973) noted that in intensifying their communications at the moment of separation, individuals are taking the precaution of raising their relationship to a higher level in order to draw out its anticipated downfall. Particularly in a group which has displayed continual distancing behaviors, individuals reserve the process at termination. Communication moves into an intense growth stage dimension, after weeks of ongoing 'decaying' dimensions (see Table I), as exemplified below.

Rule B1a: If talking about learning concepts, a distant group ought to remain objective and not relate those concepts to their own behavior.

(session #2)

B: "I think of an aggressive person as being insecure."

Leader: "Insecure? Aggressive people...and what other feelings? Think of yourself too..."

F: "You mean what I think an aggressive person is?"

Leader: "...or think of yourself...I know there are situations where I can be aggressive."

Rule B1b: If a member is acting inappropriately, members prefer using 3rd person pronouns when talking to the group about this person, even though he's present.

(session #2)

H: "He didn't look at me, though...he was definitely looking at her!...to make the choice, it would have been more effective to me, but he just ignored me."

F: "He stood his ground..."

Leader: "He also used his hands..would anyone call that aggressive?"

The 'decaying' dimensions of communication illustrated above have relational metamessage implications. The implicit relational messages throughout the life of the group suggest distancing, by objectifying situations as well as people (the IP). Yet during the final session there is explicit metacommunication via disclosure of feelings and desires. Relational metacommunication in a learning group is, as Wilmot (1979a) notes, framed by the episode. This may suggest that if relational definitions in a group are not classified, the group depends on the episode or context to determine the appropriate mechanisms for meta-communicating.

III Process and Dimensions of Termination

This section deals with the separation as it occurs during the final session and the follow-up session. Baxter (1979) notes that relationships of less intensity are less likely to disengage totally. Also, Cohen and Smith (1976) suggest that in the final stages group members seek termination of involvement in the group. The group members, as evidenced below, struggled with clarifying termination during the final session. However, plans for the follow-up session allowed for clear "termination of involvement."

A. Final Session Rules

Rule A1: If a relationally distant group is in the termination stage, members should be in a state of uncertainty and disarray.

(session #8)

The group has started ½ hour late...some people have been and left...others are sitting around talking. At break time, people linger in the kitchen, not moving out of the session very promptly upon the leaders call, as usual.

B: "A just went home to eat pizza...we decided class started at 6:30...but she'll be back..."

E: "I just gave her a call..."

B: "Oh, good..."

The above interactions were a product of the group's life history. Since very little emphasis was placed on developing relationships throughout the group sessions, how does an individual bring closure on something that isn't really there? The ambiguity in the termination process led to the uncertainty and disarray expressed. Baxter (1979a) notes that there is more ambiguity in disengagement of less intense relationships. The group was not structured to be a close group (rule A1a), which may have led to this ambiguity.

Rule A1a: If a leader is content-oriented, he must make sure not to spend time on relationship issues in the group.

(session #3)

Leader: "Okay, everybody get out a piece of paper..oh, I want to go around again and do names. I'm A1, hello (group laughs) (all say names)... okay, um, I'll give you the situation and you reply how you would..."

Rule A2: If the group is in the termination stage, positive interactions must be expressed.

(session #8)

Following formal session time: Exchanging of phone numbers, feasting of the host's refreshments, lingering after much longer, laughing and talking.

Baxter's (1970a) discussion also may interpret this behavior. As she says, relationships of less intensity are less likely to disengage totally. There is the lingering effect of "oh, yeh, let's get together sometime:" which rarely happens. Another interpretation may point to the intensity of interaction felt by the individuals -- that they may have wanted to remain longer, as had happened on occasion during the group's history.

Rule A2a: If the interactions during the session have been extensive, then lingering after the group must occur.

(session #3)

"Permanent" small groups were formed...getting acquainted was in full process.

At the end of the session, goodbyes were made clear and to all as each person departed; many people lingered around, talking, laughing.

Rule A3: If a group is structured to terminate and does not, members must feel uncomfortable and awkward in leave-taking.

(session #8)

A: (to the group as leaving) "I hate to go so soon... sorry, but my son is, well, any other time but this is important to be there...I'd really like to stay, but, um...see you at the potluck..."

C: (to the group as leaving) "well, ..uh, I um, I guess I'll see ya around folks...."

Leader: "Okay, April the 2nd. For me, coming to the potluck depends on the center courses.
Okay, goodnight."

H: "Oh wait! You have something on your board about how to survive life or something..." (Much group laughter).

Particularly when the group has been set up by the leader and structured totally by his doing, this new twist in the scenerio leaves members uncertain of the next step. Mills (1964) notes that a primary issue of group termination is what boundaries need to be dissolved before the ending. When boundaries are extended, as in this case, it upsets the process. Rule A3a shows the rigidity of the structure the leader and group set up through the life of the group, where members were uncertain of what next step to take.

Rule A3a: If the leader takes whole responsibility for a group and a member is stressed, others do not know how to and should not deal with the stressed member.

(session #7)

J leaves the group session running to the bathroom in tears. The group continues with its session. M finally goes to see how J is...other members sit stiff and continue the activity.

Mills (1964) specifies this rule, noting that within persons there is a tendency, during separation, to model their emotional and intellectual processes...after the pattern of processes which occurred in the group. The process in rule A3a that altered the structure of the group was a model for what was to come at termination. The uncertainty felt by the group when the neat, precise structure was disrupted was carried over to the group's termination behavior.

B. Follow-up Session Rules

As shown in the following termination and supporting rules, if a certain context facilitated relational communication throughout the history of the group, it does so at the final termination setting.

Rule B1: If there is a follow-up session after termination, it should provide structure of ease in closure.

(Interviews II)

H: "I enjoyed the potluck..more easiness, togetherness... a lack of structure. I was able to find out about the real people...who they were..."

B: "Yeh, I realized that at the potluck--that it was much easier to be lighter with everyone and people were back more into nearly all the same level..."

Rule B1a: If there is interaction during unstructured or break time, then members ought to share basic relational information.

During sessions at pre-structured class time, break time, and post-structured class time, dyads formed sharing information about schools, jobs, activities and commonalities.

Individuals will structure the final session in a way that relates to what was comfortable for them in the group (rule B1a). Closure is such a taboo, that finales are set up to be as painless, yet as uncomfortable as possible. This is particularly apparent in a less close group, since unfinished relational business is scarce (Schutz, 1966).

The structure and process of the group that is set up at the start and throughout the life of the group apparently determines the process used to terminate.

IV Attachment Changes

Attachment changes refer to individuals' perceptions of attraction degree and bonding feelings that had changed with the onslaught of the group's termination.

A. Internal Expression Rules

Rule A1: If group members have regrets, they must focus on not getting to know others better.

(Questionnaires)

"Had hoped to know them better..."

"I wish I'd spent time getting better acquainted with people and spent the effort in forming more lasting relationships."

"If it would have been possible, it would have been nice to develop a relationship; ie: possibly a support group (person)..."

When time has elapsed and individuals reflect on the group, it seems that emphasis is placed on talking about individuals from the group rather than the process itself. In a content-oriented situation, it is clear that relationship matters must be equalized. When the relationships within the group were discussed during the group's history, members could be seen reaching for the contact. Since regrets focus on the lack of relationship bonding, the relational issues shared during the group's history must not have been sufficient.

Rule A1a: If the members begin to share relational issues, individuals must immediately intensify their interactions.

(session #4)

G: "I'm gone, on the road a lot, and uh, afraid of getting close to people...I spend a lot of time alone...and I'm going to work on going out and developing relationships with people..."

L: "I want to strengthen my depth of friendships with men..maybe make a phone call or two..and write down my feelings while I'm talking to them..."

E: "I have a problem of feeling distant from people... and a lot of where it comes from is I have a fear of feeling foolish..."

Rule A2: If sadness is expressed for detachment, it must be detachment from individuals, not detachment from the group itself.

(Interviews II)

E: "I miss seeing the people and the interactions we had."

K: "Well, I just miss seeing everybody..."

Leader: "I miss several of the individuals, but not the group itself."

As stated in Chapter I of this text, termination of a group is the termination of person-to-person relationships. Even in a group that appears to be content-bound, individuals will express regrets in terms of relationships, not the group itself.

B. External Expression Rules

Rule B1: If an individual's outside support group (family, friends, etc.) is perceived as being strong, then individuals must suggest that developing new relationships is not necessary.

(Interviews I)

A: "My friends are always there. But I don't know. Like this group...I've been in and out of many friendship relationships in my life...getting close and then having to leave them..so with these people, well, I have enough people that I don't even have enough time for..."

B: "Well, right now I have one very super support person...and, well, though I don't really have, um...my other supports are not there for me very much now, but my strong support group of one is STRONG, and that's enough..."

Wilmot (1979a) supports this rule, describing that one's comparison level for available alternative relationships has a marked impact on the willingness to terminate. If individuals are involved in other networks, they will be less likely to engage in relationships from a new group -- particularly one that is not close.

Rule B2: If time lengthens since seeing individuals from the group, persons should feel less attached to the group.

(Interviews II)

D: "Well, in many ways it's kinda like back to the same ol grind,..I thought it was a good group..."

A: "I don't miss it..I'm busy with lots of other things..."

E: "I think I've gotten adjusted to it at this point... actually I really don't miss it..I did at first..."

This rule follows up on Rule B1, since involvement in other networks would draw an individual farther away from the group members and closer to the established system. As Baxter (1979a) relates, disengagement varies as a function of the durational expectancies of the relationship parties. As time lengthens and individuals rarely see others from the group, this expectation that contact will not continue functions for disengagement.

Rule B3: If relational attachments are not deeply involved, then the group must be seen as replaceable.

(Interviews II)

H: "I've kinda substituted for it now...I go to a meditation group."

K: "Well, I missed it a lot at the beginning, but now I don't miss it much...just more involved with other things, I guess..."

Individuals all enjoy being a part of a group. Group identification seems to be as important as individual identification (Speck and Attneave, 1973). Wright (1978) notes that the rewardingness of friendship changes. In support of Rule B3, it is clear that replacing the group is a necessary function when friendship intensities and needs change.

Summary

In a structured learning group people come and leave the group in the same manner -- individually. Relationships just do not develop out of a structurally specific learning group. The structure itself contributes to this, as well as the leader's control, appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, outside support groups, and other elements. In a learning group that is not close, group members do not talk about relationships until the final session. If sadness in termination is expressed, the feeling is for dissolution of individual relationships, not termination from the group. Finally, in reflection, group members see the inappropriate person and the group as having been a positive experience.

Questionnaire Data

Tables III and IV represent questionnaire data (see Appendices I, II, IV and V) concerning the importance of the group to members and how others see their relationships with members.

Table III median scores show that on a scale of 1 to 8, with 1 being 'of little importance' and 8 being 'very important' the group was important to most members. Though the majority of scores were high, they remained consistent or dropped in importance over time in the group. No scores showed an increase in importance. The leader marked that the group was very important to him. This supports his high investment in directing the group throughout. The informant's low score in this table parallels her low level of bonding to the group. She had committed herself to helping the researcher, and her investment was not internally, but externally-bound.

Table IV represents the raw numbers and percentages showing how individuals perceived their relationships with other members throughout the life of the group. During the life cycle of the group, members placed over 60% of their relationships in stranger or acquaintance categories. Even following the final session, individuals saw others as strangers to them. Nevertheless, many individual relationships went from stranger to acquaintance or friend. Increase of friends by the last session was 28% and acquaintances increased 35%. Close friends and best friends were minimal. Most members who chose 'best friends'

TABLE III
IMPORTANCE OF GROUP TO MEMBERS

Group Members	Session 4	Following Session 8	Four Weeks After Session 8
A	4	4	4
B	8	6	6
C	6	6	6
D	4	2	2
E	8	8	8
F (informant)	2	1	1
H	7	6	5
K	8	8	8
L	5	5	5
leader	8	8	8
researcher	8	8	8
mean	6.1	5.6	5.5
median	7.0	6.0	6.0

slotted themselves in those positions. Other aspects affecting the data were friends that were already established before joining the group and a sibling pair. In no cases did individuals who began the group as strangers or acquaintances move to the position of close or best friends.

Overall, while the importance of the group did not increase, individual relationships did increase in intensity. The largest increases, however, were in less intense categories of relationships, which supports the idea that the group and personal relationships were improved, but not greatly.

TABLE IV
RELATIONAL PLACEMENT OF OTHERS (n/%)

Categories	Session 1	Session 4	Following Session 8
Stranger	115/ 83	54/ 26	24/ 13
Acquaintance	18/ 13	99/ 48	84/ 48
Friend	2/ 1	41/ 19	51/ 29
Close Friend	1/ 7	3/ 1	7/ 4
Best Friend	2/ 1	9/ 4	7/ 4

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The Termination Process

The first research question asks, "As a group develops over time, how do the individual relationships alter?" In this study, the group observed was not a relationally close group (see Table IV). This researcher found that the intensity of bonding and attraction between group members built slowly and cautiously throughout the group's history (see rules IB5b and II A2b). The relationships in the group did not develop past the experimenting stage of development (see rules IIIB1 and IIIB1a) (Knapp, 1978). Yet the group did not reduce this intensity as termination approached, as some researchers of relational development express (Altman and Taylor, 1973; Wilmot, 1979a). Johnson and Johnson (1975) noted that it is usually the last phase of a group where ties of affection form. What this researcher found was this display of affection as the relationships in the group intensified up until and through the final session (see rules IIA2 and IIB1). Yet in this relationally distant and short term group, the intense ending was used, as Davis (1973) puts it, to raise the relationship to a higher level in order to draw out the anticipated downfall (see rules IVB2 and IVB3). So in a short term, formal study group where relationships were not strongly built, individual relationships intensified over time, with the awareness and anticipation of termination itself.

In this sense, small group interaction allows for individuals to choose the relational investment they wish with group members. Knowing that termination is inevitable and that they may never see the other members again, they may choose whom they desire to bond closely with, if anyone at all.

Question II was concerned with, "In what ways do these patterns of communication influence the termination process. This research question was addressed in terms of tactics and strategies, meta-communication, conversational mode, dimensions, processes and attachment changes during termination.

1. Tactics and strategies individuals use in disengaging from others in the group.

The leader's influence had a profound impact on this group (see rules under IA). This influence functioned to control and direct the group interaction for the leader. For the group members this influence allowed for dependency on the leader's direction (see rule IAc). As Schutz (1966) suggested, one technique for disengaging from a group is to refrain from investing in others from the beginning. So from this study it seems that setting up a dependency-nuturing relationship in a group between the group and the leader, respectively, functions to negate responsibility of the group members for closeness with others, and therefore create a less intense termination (see rules IB5a and IB5b).

Members, at the time of termination, appear to withdraw supportiveness of one another and at the same time compensate for the harm about to be done to the relationship by increasing enthusiasm upon leaving (see rules IB1 - IB3) (Goffman, 1958). This supports the termination literature in that group members in this study began reversing the 'selective filtering' process, setting up blocks to further interaction at the final session (see rules IB1 and IB3) (Kerckhoff and Davis, in Wilmot, 1979a).

The post-termination results were very interesting (see rules IB4 - IB7). Members suggested that the group experience and relationships within the group were what they were "supposed to" be -- close, positive, etc. This may have been a result of researcher effect on the group, considering the group's history of distancing communication. These rules, however, seem to indicate a way for members to legitimize the termination process (Baxter, 1979a). Feeling close after the fact and seeing the Inappropriate Person as a valuable asset may have been ways to justify the lack of closeness in the group (see rule IB6). Also, by individuals expressing external locus of cause for termination (see rule IB5), they were able to protect any relational investment that may have been denied (Baxter, 1979a).

2. Metacommunication functions during and after the termination process.

Metacommunication at termination functioned primarily to define the relationships within the context of the episode (see rule IIA1 and IIB1). Explicit relational communication at the final

session commented on the relationships in terms of the closure of the group and defined the event as an ending episode (see rule IIA1).

Therefore, the relational definitions were framed by the termination in this study (Wilmot, 1979a).

3. Conversational mode changes through group development.

No specific rules were found to support the conversational mode changes. The researcher was unable to see a clear distinction in the tape transcriptions that reflected discourse changes. Throughout the results there is mention of message variance, but no specific rules were developed concerning the discourse variance over time.

4. Dimensions, processes and attachments involved in termination relationships.

Dimensions and Processes. During the final session, the group expressed a large degree of difficulty in knowing how to terminate (see rules under IIIA). As has been mentioned throughout this paper, there is more ambiguity in terminating less intense relationships (Baxter, 1979a). The group in this study apparently was not sure what the proper behaviors were for terminating (see rule IIIA1). This lack of clarity may be due to the intuitive fear people have that termination is difficult and something to be frightened of.

The results of the post termination process focused on members' feeling at ease during this closing session (see rule IIIB1). From this finding, the group behavior supports researchers (Davis, 1974; Knapp, 1978; Wilmot, 1979a) in their suggestion that friendships

deteriorate gradually. The interaction distance of the members between the final session and the follow-up gave individuals a 'passing away' feeling (Davis, 1974), allowing the relational investment to fade (see rule IVB2). Also in this study, the group had defined the follow-up session as an ending to the group, which added relief by not having to explicitly name the structure as termination. Interestingly, breadth exchange increased at this final get-together, in contrast to what the literature suggests (see rule IIIB1) (Altman and Taylor, 1973). This finding supports the continued bonding groups express as they end (Johnson and Johnson, 1975). Being relationally distant, however, the depth of the exchanges at the follow-up session continued to remain simple, even though breadth increased (see rule IIIB1) (Altman and Taylor, 1973). Perhaps this increase in breadth and decrease in depth was a sign of differentiating in the relationships, individualizing information about oneself to members of the group (Knapp, 1978).

Attachment changes. Findings for the internal expression of attachment changes suggest that members of a relationally distant group report sadness and regret in not creating closer bonds (see rules IIIA1 and IVA2). Both relational and group development literature stress affection as a bonding force for continued interaction (Altman and Taylor, 1973; Knapp, 1978; Johnson and Johnson, 1975). Members in this study that reported lack of bonding (ie: expressed sadness and regrets) may feel a need for affection from and continued interaction with some individuals.

The findings above were from reports immediately following the final group session, and the following findings of external expression of attachments from reports four weeks later. Attachments break down when the rewardingness of the friendship changes (Wright, 1978). The rules here support the findings that as time increased, group members felt less attached to the group and found it replaceable by other groups and/or people (see rules IVB1, IVB2 and IVB3). So individuals who are not in a reciprocally rewarding relationship will loosen the ties as time increases since the last group session.

Summary and Implications of Results

In a relationally distant group, individuals communicate discomfort in 'doing' termination. Members follow normative "supposed to" or "should" behavior they have developed from other termination experiences.

Time is an essential element for relational development and bonding. The time for relationships to develop in this group through relational development stages (Knapp, 1978) was not adequate. Also, there appeared to be a low degree of mutual attraction and similarities, which added to the bonding strain (Shapiro, 1977). External effects (establishing relationships, other groups taking the place of this one) have a strong impact on suppressing relationships from forming in groups.

Dependency on the leader weakens the possibility of relationships developing as well as weakening member's development of idiosyncratic

termination tactics--they look to the leader for termination modeling behaviors (Mills, 1964).

At termination, the relational definition is framed by the episode itself (see Discussion: Metacommunication).

The two primary findings that emerged from this study are:

1. Individual termination of dyadic relationships differs dramatically from individuals terminating relationships within a group. The literature supports distancing and disassociation as the mechanisms of terminating dyadic relationships (Altman and Taylor, 1973; Baxter, 1979a; Knapp, 1978). The patterns of termination for individual relationships support that the stages of "coming apart" are more defined and processual than that observed in this group (Altman and Taylor, 1973; Baxter, 1979a; Knapp, 1978). Within a group, the literature (Johnson and Johnson, 1975; Mills, 1964; Schutz, 1966) and this study support that individuals move closer together and that they intensify relations as termination approaches. This intensity, however, does fade significantly following the final 'official' meeting.

2. The forces on individuals of a group at termination are extensive. Choices such as who to see and how often, if anyone; importance of outside relationships vs group member relationships; how to make contact with some and not others at the final session; and extensiveness of bonding desired, multiply the complications of developing relationships from a group. As evidenced in the results of this study, individuals in the group responded to these forces by avoiding termination clarity (Rules IB1, IB2, IB5, IIIA1, IIIA3).

Methodology

Rules. "Because we expect actors to abide by the rules, we utilize rules in interpreting the behavior of others. In fact, they are necessary to make sense out of what would otherwise be random noise" (Shimanoff, 1980, 52). This was the researcher's experience in developing rules from the mass of data collected in this study. The conglomeration of activities, personal variables, social variables and the like influenced the selection of relevant rules of group termination. These rules functioned to interpret and regulate behaviors that this researcher found evident from the comparative data.

Comparative use of data as applied to rule generation. Participant observation was the researcher's primary source of data collection. "Participant observation may reveal information about behavior across time that is not available to methods which observe behavior at one time and place" (Shimanoff, 1980, 183). This time and process frame from the zero-history of the group was one of the most valuable assets of the participant observation method. Entering as a participant and 'blending' into the group helped diminish some of the uneasiness of both the researcher and the group. The distortion that results from being an outside investigator or agent was reduced to a minimum. But primarily its advantage was in gathering rich data on the behaviors from the initial group sessions that affected the termination behavior (ie: leader). If having entered the group at the final stages, it is likely that this affect would not have been so apparent.

The group of individuals observed were primarily a working, non-academic population. Shimanoff (1980) suggests that if participant observation includes actors who are not academicians, the rules inferred may have a larger degree of generalizability. Participant observation of the group under study may be an accurate account of how relationally distant groups terminate.

Four aspects of participant observation that this researcher may have utilized but did not follow were:

1. Ask group members about the appropriateness of behaviors.
(ie: "What do you think Al would do if we just took over next session?" or "do you think it's okay to talk about school now its's break time?")

This could have been another means for assessing prescriptive forces of rules.

2. Manipulate variables in the situation and note the various effects of the manipulation.

3. Violate a hypothesized rule in order to assess its prescriptive force.

4. Focus on choices not made by the group members. Look for behaviors that the individuals were not doing because they considered it prohibitive.

5. Share the "rules" with group members.

These tools would have added to the richness of the data if they would have been used in this study.

Shimanoff (1980) states that "since it is only in rare cases that an actor, without being asked, will explicitly state what rules s/he values and/or believes govern a situation, pencil and paper methods may be the only means of making these associations" (p. 196). The researcher did not find this to be the case in this study. The subjects were not pleased with all the questionnaires they were asked to fill out, so perhaps they were not invested in answering accurately. The questionnaires became a struggle towards the end of the group, and simply became a supplement to the interviews. It was found that the richness and clarity of data from the observations and interviews essentially voided the questionnaire data, except for data compiled in Tables III and IV.

The interviews were very useful, particularly the one four weeks following the final session. With the possibility for each individual to talk with the researcher alone about the group, the data was a valuable new addition to the observation and questionnaire materials. Information this researcher was not aware of and probably would have never known came out of the interview data.

Internal validity was checked throughout the study as noted on page 35. The comparison of these three methods from the cross checks (see Results, p. 42, for explanation of how this was done) proved to hold validity for the data within the study. Particularly the cross check within the group --different perceptions of similar incidents -- was supported throughout the analysis. The results show a consistency with some of the termination literature and an agreement among independent reports (ie: interview data) to support external validity accuracy.

Except for the questionnaires, the methodology measured the termination behaviors as this researcher supposed they would. The tapes of each session provided a rich sample of the group behaviors and therefore adequately held face validity for the researcher.

As shown in the results section, there is much evidence from transcriptions as well as initiation and maintenance rules that support the termination rules developed. This evidence helps support the consistency in the observations (ie: tapes every session, repeated administering of questionnaires, two interviews). Reliability was obtained through consistency in observed and reported behavior over time.

The data obtained from post sessions with the informant, Ms. Pomeroy, following each session was helpful in the on-going analysis, as well as helpful insight in formulating the resulting rules. One of the valuable qualities of having an informant in this study was her awareness of the rules. This was particularly useful because Ms. Pomeroy needed to become conscious of the group's rules in order to follow them, since she was not a full fledge participant, but was trying to 'pass' as one. The information generated at each post session suggested new behaviors that this researcher was not always aware of.

Limitations and Problems

The methodological limitations in this study are derived from the problems experienced by this researcher. To address these problems, this section will focus on the validity questions described in Chapter III under Methodology Concerns.

Reactivity or influence of the researcher and ethnocentrism. This researcher entered the group initially having expectations that relationships would form, it would be a close group of individuals, and that the group would manifest behavior relevant to termination. As Shimanoff (1980) points out, "The manipulation abilities of the participant observer...may influence behavior of the other actors in such a way as to achieve a self-fulfilling hypothesis" (p 183). These expectations led to questions (in interviews and the questionnaires) such as individual rankings of the closest and least closest person to them, who is most involved in keeping a relationship going, who do you think you'll miss? (see Appendices I through VI). All of these questions have assumptions behind them that the researcher brought to the group. In this sense, group members responded to the researcher with the "closeness" construct in mind (see dialogue under rule IVA1 and IVA2).

So, this researcher came into the group setting with biases and influences that imposed an outside perspective on the group. It was expected that close relationships would develop within an assertiveness training group. The social reality as a construct for research lacks control of ethnocentrism, since experience and knowledge is brought into all that one does. "Social reality is partially a mental construct as well as a set of concrete phenomena, and what is observed is partially a picture of the observer's expectations, which are generally based on past observations" (Bailey, 1978, 242).

Bias and distortion detected. Referring to the reactivity above, this researcher was biased during the initial meetings of the group. Although this researcher did not actively do anything to bring about closeness during group sessions (ie: suggest to members that getting together outside of the regular group sessions would be a good idea, or express disappointment overtly to members about the group's progress) personal panic was expressed in the margins of this researcher's field notes. Feelings expressed throughout the margins from session 1 through session 3 were, "where is this group going!?" "I wonder if these people will ever get it together" and "C sure does disrupt the group--nothing will ever happen!" The closeness bias was primarily evident in the questions asked during interviews and on questionnaires (see Appendices I through VI) than during the group sessions.

The Inappropriate Person would often interrupt other group members, had a hard time expressing his thoughts, and verbally attacked other individuals (see rules IB4c, IB6a, IB6b). This researcher had biases toward the IP, since expectations were being stifled by this inappropriate communication.

These biases, and thus, distortions of the observational process were detrimental in the early stages of the observation by not allowing this behavior simply to be evidence. As an observer information was initially blocked out showing that the group was not growing close, rather than using these observations as evidence that they were not a close group, as seen in the field note description above.

The initial biases put a damper on available information for evidence, even though critical judgments by the researcher of the group were suspended over time. The researcher was able to let go of this preset of group closeness and allow for the frame of the group to change as the group proceeded. Notes in the researcher's field notes of later sessions were, "it sure got quiet when C just walked in," "a lot more interaction tonight; they seemed to like the roleplays," and "it's strange...A and B getting together...they haven't seemed to interact much before now." These statements show a change to objective description of behavior from the initial field note entries.

Also, the researcher's perception of the leader's credibility weakened over time. The bias set up initially that the leader was very competent distorted the researcher's awareness of leader-member interaction. As the leader's credibility lessened for the researcher, the leader-member interactions and their possible implications became more apparent (see rules under IA).

How representative is this group? The group itself modeled a structured learning group. The format was structured as a medium for the learning and growth of the participants. "Such groups... primarily meet to understand a subject more thoroughly by pooling their knowledge, perceptions, and beliefs" (Brilhart, 1978, 11). The group was an average sized group of 16 people, however only having one group as this researcher's sample does hamper the ability to generalize these findings to other settings. As suggested in the Future Research section (p 92),

speculation on how other kinds of groups terminate is needed. Different conclusions might result than found in this study about communication during termination in various types of groups.

Rapport - too little or too much and 'going native'. One of the problems with participant observation can be the lack of anonymity as an investigator. This can be useful as a way to integrate oneself into the group, yet the lack of anonymity sets up a condition for the researcher to define the amount and extent of rapport with the members. In this study there were times when this researcher was too careful conducting herself in an 'approved' way with the group, appearing terribly distant. The informant reported, after session 2 and 3, that it was difficult for her to relate to the researcher in the group because she seemed a step removed from the interaction. Other times the researcher came across as overly enthusiastic, confusing the members (particularly at the initial stages). For example, when intense interactions or expression of a 'troubled' member were exhibited, this researcher became consumed by the process (see rules IIIA2a & IIIA3a). It was at these times that this researcher was aware of overidentifying with the group members, or 'going native.' "Personal involvement in the interaction increases the actor's sensitivity to the actor's interpretation of motions, but there is no guarantee that researchers as participants will not be as blind and resistant to regularities and rules as other actors" (Shimanoff, 1980, 183). Finding this fine line between involvement and objectivity was a problem with this methodology.

As this researcher's role changed in the group, this fine line became more difficult. Initially, group members reacted to the researcher more as an observer than a participant. There were references to changing the tape in the tape recorder, questions about major emphasis at school and whether the questionnaires were personally developed or if they were 'standard.' The leader also reacted in a similar way, asking if any time was needed with him to talk about the group and spoke with the researcher about group process content that he was familiar with. In this respect, it was easier to remain objective as a participant observer.

Over time, both the group members and the leader communicated as if this researcher was 'just another member.' After role-playing involvement, the partner this researcher had would report my 'problems' with being assertive, members spoke with the researcher about getting together for coffee sometime, and rarely was the tape recorder ever noticed. Becoming more a part of the group, it became increasingly difficult to maintain objectivity. As mentioned above, 'going native' occurred when there were intense interactions between members. 'Crossing over the line' at these times possibly increased distortion of accurate data collection.

Quality of data collection. One of the problems with participant observation is its lack of structure as an observational instrument. As noted previously, it is easy to see what one expects to see even if it is not there, thus causing bias. The comparative data analysis was useful

in keeping check on this bias. As in this study, though this researcher expected close relationships to develop and may have observed this through biased eyes, the questionnaires showed that relationships were not forming (see Table IV).

Another problem with participant observation is the actual adequacy of the human sense organs. As Bailey (1978) suggests, "in addition to obvious conditions (ie: lighting, noise) that can affect observation, it is well known that a number of other factors such as fatigue, stress, and hunger can affect the quality of sensory perceptions" (pp 242-243). Having an informant and other data collection devices assisted in alleviating some of these distortions. But nevertheless, the researcher's selective perception was in process throughout the life of the group.

Reactions to the questionnaires by the group members suggest that they were uncomfortable filling out a consecutive set of questionnaires. Many times individuals would groan and sigh when presented with "another questionnaire." One member filling out the final questionnaire, stated, "boy, I've got this down to a 'T' now...filling out all these forms has taught me how to zip through them, we've done so many!" So the questionnaires were a cumbersome data source, perhaps affecting the individuals' responses as well. Individuals may have felt compelled, by the format of the Questionnaires, to say the group was closer than it really was. Also, with the repeated questions on the questionnaires over time, individuals may have felt ego-involved in giving consistent or 'improved' answers, though perhaps inaccurate (see Table III).

Future Research

Extensions of this work would be useful. This researcher suggests looking at how a group that is relationally close terminates, as well as comparison between how both a relationally distant and a relationally close group terminate. Exploring termination of groups in different contexts--training groups, leaderless learning groups, organizational groups, and families would also be valuable.

Emphasis needs to be placed on process over time. Awareness of the effects of past experiences and activities of a group on their termination process, as shown in this study, is extremely relevant for understanding behavior.

It is also suggested that specific termination dimensions be extensively studied as they apply in the small group (ie: tactics and strategies of termination). The dimension that is interesting but that did not get tapped in this study is conversational mode. Exploring message changes over time in a small group may be useful in analyzing any discourse change as the group approaches and during termination.

More work is needed in the area of post termination of small groups -- when relationships form, how much of an effect did the group have on the development, and how has the function of the relationship changed over time?

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QUESTIONNAIRE I

FIRST NAME _____ AGE _____

SEX _____

1. List the names of the group members below and state if you see them as a Best Friend (BF), Close Friend (CF), Friend (F), Acquaintance (A) or Stranger (S). Also state how long you have known that person.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	HOW LONG KNOWN
1.	()	
2.	()	
3.	()	
4.	()	
5.	()	
6.	()	
7.	()	
8.	()	
9.	()	
10.	()	
11.	()	
12.	()	
13.	()	
14.	()	
15.	()	

2. Whom in this group do you see outside of the group sessions, how often and for how long?

NAME	HOW OFTEN	HOW LONG
------	-----------	----------

3. Below, rank order, using all the members of the groups, who you feel closest to, through the person you feel least closest to.

CLOSEST PERSON

1.	6.	11.
2.	7.	12.
3.	8.	13.
4.	9.	14.
5.	10.	15.
		LEAST CLOSEST TO

3. Whom in this group do you see outside of the group sessions, how often and for How Long?

NAME	HOW OFTEN (i.e.: times a day, times a week)	HOW LONG
------	---	----------

4. Below, rank order, using all the members of the group, who you feel closest to, through the person you feel least closest to.

CLOSEST PERSON

1.	10.
2.	11.
3.	12.
4.	13.
5.	14.
6.	15.
7.	16.
8.	
9.	LEAST CLOSEST TO

5. a) What do you think the person #1, above, thinks about his/her relationship with you?
- b) Who is more involved in keeping this relationship going? (check one)
- ME BOTH EQUALLY OTHER
6. a) What do you think the person #2, above, thinks about his/her relationship with you?

6. b) Who is more involved in keeping this relationship going? (check one)

_____ ME _____ BOTH EQUALLY _____ OTHER

7. a) What do you think the person #15, above, thinks about his/her relationship with you?

b) Who is more involved in keeping this relationship going? (check one)

_____ ME _____ BOTH EQUALLY _____ OTHER

8. a) What do you think the person #16, above, thinks about his/her relationship with you?

b) Who is more involved in keeping this relationship going? (check one)

_____ ME _____ BOTH EQUALLY _____ OTHER

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE III

1. Of the list of group members below, state if you see them as a Best Friend (BF), Close Friend (CF), Friend (F), Acquaintance (A), or Stranger (S).

1a. If you believe this has changed since the previous questionnaire, describe what has happened that elicited the change in column 3 below:

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	CHANGES
1.	()	
2.	()	
3.	()	
4.	()	
5.	()	
6.	()	
(Names were listed here)		
7.	()	
8.	()	
9.	()	
10.	()	
11.	()	
12.	()	
13.	()	
14.	()	

2. How important is this group to you? (Mark an "X" below, such as . . . / / X / / / / / . . . to illustrate your answer).

VERY IMPORTANT / / / / / / / / / / OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE

QUESTIONNAIRE III (cont.)

3. Whom in this group do you see outside of the group sessions, how often and for How Long?

NAME	HOW OFTEN	HOW LONG
	(i.e.: times a day, times a week)	

4. Below, rank order, using all the members of the group, who you feel closest to, through the person you feel least closest to.

CLOSEST PERSON

1.	10.
2.	11.
3.	12.
4.	13.
5.	14.
6.	15.
7.	16.
8.	
9.	LEAST CLOSEST TO

5. a) What do you think the person #1, above, thinks about his/her relationship with you?
- b) Who is more involved in keeping this relationship going (check one)?
- _____ ME _____ BOTH EQUALLY _____ OTHER
6. a) What do you think the person #2, above, thinks about his/her relationship with you?

QUESTIONNAIRE III (cont.)

6. b) Who is more involved in keeping this relationship going? (check one)

_____ ME _____ BOTH EQUALLY _____ OTHER

7. a) What do you think the person #15, above, thinks about his/her relationship with you?

b) Who is more involved in keeping this relationship going? (check one)

_____ ME _____ BOTH EQUALLY _____ OTHER

8. a) What do you think the person #16, above, thinks about his/her relationship with you?

b) Who is more involved in keeping this relationship going? (check one)

_____ ME _____ BOTH EQUALLY _____ OTHER

POST GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE I

NAME _____

1. Of the list of group members below, state if you see them as Best Friend (BF), Close Friend (CF), Friend (F), Acquaintance (A), or Stranger (S).

1. a) If you believe this has changed over the course of the group, describe what has happened that elicited the change in column 3 below:

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	WHAT PRODUCED THE CHANGE
1.	()	
2.	()	
3.	()	
4.	()	
5.	()	
6.	()	
7.	()	
8.	()	
9.	()	
10.	()	
11.	()	
12.	()	
13.	()	
14.	()	
15.	()	
16.	()	

(Names were listed here)

POST GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE I (cont.)

2. How important was this group to you? (Mark an "X" below, such as ...
 / / / / X / / / / /....to illustrate your answer).

VERY IMPORTANT/ / / / / / / / /OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE

3. Whom in this group do you see now the group sessions are over,
how often and for how long?

NAME

HOW OFTEN
 (i.e. times a day
 times a week)

HOW LONG

4. Who, from the group, do you think you will continue seeing now the
 group has ended? (circle those you think you will see)

(Names were listed here)

4. a) How will you carry this out? (List the person's name(s) and describe)

5. Who do you think wants to continue seeing you now the group has ended?
 (circle the name or names below)

(Names were listed here)

POST GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE I (Cont.)

6. Which two individuals would you like to see from the group now it is over, but won't?
 - 1.
 - 2.
- 6 a) What leads you to these conclusions? What will keep you from seeing these people?

7. What kind of overall predictions can you make about future contact between members of the group? Who do you think will be in contact after the group? Elaborate.

8. Do you wish you had done anything differently in terms of your relationships with specific people in the group?

9. Do you wish you had done anything differently in terms of how the group ended?

APPENDIX V

POST GROUP-QUESTIONNAIRE II

NAME _____

- 1) How important was the group to you? (mark an "X" in the appropriate space, such as . . . / / X / /)

VERY / / / / / / / / / OF
 IMPORTANT / / / / / / / / / LITTLE
 IMPORTANCE

- 2) Who do you still see from the group? How often and for how long?

NAME

HOW OFTEN

HOW LONG

(i.e.: times a day,
 times a week)

- 3) Who do you not see from the group, that you expected to or had a desire to see?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- 3 a) How did you or the other person go about letting the other know your/their desire to discontinue the relationship?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

POST-GROUP-QUESTIONNAIRE II (Cont.)

3 b) For each person, as the relationship changed, who did most of the "pulling away?" Explain.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3 c) Was the pulling apart gradual or sudden? Explain.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3 d) Of those people you don't see, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the change in the relationship(s)? Explain

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3 e) Of those people, you do not see, what do you think the other thinks about the relationship?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

POST GROUP-QUESTIONNAIRE II (Cont.)

3 f) How do you think being in the group affected your relationship with this/these person(s)? Explain.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

4) Do you wish you had done anything differently in terms of how the group ended? Describe.

APPENDIX VI

Interview Schedule Questions

- 1) Who do you still see from the group? How often and for how long? How would you define the relationship?
- 2) What affect did the group have in forming this/these relationship(s)?
- 3) What has kept you 'together' (i.e.: place of business, housing proxemics, social arrangements)?
- 4) What was it like for you to end the group we were in?
- 5) Who did you think you would miss? Do you? Elaborate.
- 6) When you "saw the end in sight," can you describe how you felt and what you thought about not having this group as part of your routine anymore?
- 7) After the group, how did you feel about its absence?
- 8) Who, from the group, did you think about after the group ended?
- 9) How would you describe your current 'support group' of friends, family, etc.? Strong? Weak?
- 10) Anything else you would like to tell me or ask?