Group Dynamics in Matrix Organizations:

The Influence of Power and Trust on Cross Functional Team Effectiveness

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Abstract

The performance of cross-functional workgroups is the keystone of a matrix organization, yet the majority of them have proven to be ineffective most of the time. In an abundant number of scientific publications, we can find a variety of solutions suggesting improvement of matrix functioning by re-enforcing or disputing existing policies and procedures underpinning the definition of a matrix organization. Notwithstanding the need for clarity about roles, responsibilities, and procedures, these theories leave mostly unexplored the social and emotional impact of matrix organizations' typical power-balancing on the participants in cross-functional teams. Using a psychoanalytical approach, this study aims to promote a deeper understanding of the effects of the asymmetrical power and trust conditions on the ability to build relationships and foster cooperation within these teams. The ethnographic study draws on 10 in-depth interviews with participants of a key cross-functional project of a major player in the wind turbine industry. The key findings indicate that power struggles between the different dimensions of the matrix lay the foundation of a variety of defensive traits that, due to their interdependency, potentially accumulate in group defensive strategies. The psychoanalytical approach revealed that these unconscious dynamics that underpin cross-functional team effectiveness start at an individual level.

Keywords: matrix organization, power, trust, group dynamics

Preface

When I joined the corporate organization in 2009, I was intrigued by the lengthy routines management required before making their decisions. Even though the environment was vibrant and determination to make a success of their position in the renewable energy business, it was clear that this fast-growing, newly-transformed manufacturing organization suffered from overly present politics in its decision making.

In 2013, the company had grown to the highest level in the corporate hierarchy and surpassed with a yearly 5 billion euro turnover many of the conventional energy sectors in the company. Now being a market leader, much of the entrepreneurial spirit has been replaced in a number of rapidly succeeding reorganizations into a much more bureaucratic organization driven by compliance protocols and performance indicators. With the growing responsibility, the number of organizational charters and function titles dramatically increased, making the feel and look of the matrix structure more an administrative exercise than a living organization.

Not surprisingly, the changes to create more transparency in the organizational design did not lead to faster decisions; on the contrary, the organization is more stuck in its cross-functional cooperation than ever. Working closely with different leadership levels in the organization, I have seen the demoralizing effects on individual ambition and emotional well-being growing in the same pace as the company turnover. If this syndrome can be observed on the leadership level, it is reasonable to expect that these effects resonate down into the organization. Growing success, enhanced transparency, and apparently unlimited resources do not explain these symptoms and elevates the question of why those people working in cross-functional aggregations working on business' most important assignments are not able to diligently constitute successful outcomes or solutions.

Although it would, from a root cause perspective, be obvious to focus on leadership levels in the organization to increase our understanding about underlying causes, I chose to look at how these conditions effect cross-functional teams. Because members of a matrix team have disciplinary reporting lines to the leadership levels in their functional area, these people are particularly subject to the distressed effects of a matrix organization. Their group dynamics can be stronger than the sum of power of the individual leaders, but their underperformance makes any leader powerless. In my eyes, the importance of a matrix team is an undervalued layer of knowledge and decision making for the organization. As the performance of these teams is perceived as the success factor of a matrix organization, it is remarkable how little is published about how we can make them perform better. The group dynamics taking place in teams that are in the middle of a matrix have not been previously researched to my knowledge. As such, I chose to dedicate this paper to finding characteristics and deviating dynamics in matrix teams that determine their performance and success. It is my ambition, in a later stage, to use these findings as directions for a leadership team coaching model that can help cross-functional teams to get unstuck.

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Reading Guidelines

This thesis is the final assignment of the INSEAD executive master course Coaching and Consulting for Change and presents a detailed account of the research activities undertaken by Mark Kok. The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of power and trust relations, characteristics for matrix organizations, and the effectiveness of cross-functional teams in a major international company. Data has been collected using a combination of methods including observations, semi-structured interviews, and examination of library catalogues and databases. The structure of this thesis is designed as follows. The Introduction presents and describes the background of power and trust in a matrix organization, the theories that provide a background to the various factors, and the resulting positive and negative effects on cross-functional teams.

The Literature Review presents the analysis of the existing literature on the effects of applied power and trust practices seen from a psychodynamic perspective. The literature review examines theories on the use of power within organizations that have a bearing on the effect on the behavior of the individual and his ability to build cooperative relations with other members. The Methodology chapter details the research design and applied methodology and gives account for the applied clinical paradigm. Research Guidelines and the Questionnaire can be found in the Appendices. In Findings, the results of the conducted interviews and observation are presented and commented upon as a first interpretation of meaning to the individual participant.

Discussion takes a deeper look at the qualitative findings in individual behavior in order to identify patterns manipulating group dynamics. The Conclusion summarizes this research and presents limitations and suggestions for future research opportunities.

Introduction

An increasing number of companies are struggling with the challenges of being complex, multidimensional organizations. To address the need to develop specialized product expertise, broad-based customer solutions, global coordination, local responsiveness, economies of scale, as well as focused resources for specific target segments, these organizations have set up interdependent matrix structures. Although the matrix seems to be a logical organizational solution, most managers have not found it to be an easy structure. Many have struggled with ambiguous responsibilities and reporting relationships, been slowed down by the search for consensus decisions, and found it hard to get all the different units to work constructively together (Galbraith, 2009). Many companies are now deeply suspicious of matrix structures, and even leading proponents of it, such as Shell and ABB, have concluded that such structures are no longer working for them (HayGroup, 2009).

The challenges associated with managing matrix organizations have received wide-ranging attention in organization and management theory, with most of them presenting solutions with an organizational or systemic structure in mind. Yet, the organizational structure of a matrix organization inspires a competitive attitude between the different dimensions, often generating political tension when a new internal business-wide project is introduced. Forming for a team to manage a cross functional project, therefore, does not always follow a rational logic.

The diversity of interests of the stakeholders and participants involved is often influenced by emotions and unconscious dynamics. One of the main shortcomings in the previous research is that relational issues such as asymmetrical power, control, fear, or devaluation remain mostly undiscussed. In this paper, I seek to shed some light on the implications of these dynamics on the effectiveness of cross-functional workgroups by using a psychoanalytic approach. Implicit in this

exercise is a perceived need to understand cross-functional workgroups from an individual perspective rather than an organizational perspective. This requires a move beyond the rational perspective on matrix organizations into exploring relational and unconscious issues that go on inside collaborative relationships.

This ethnographic research has been carried out in the multi-divisional organization of Siemens Wind Power in Denmark. It draws on 10 in-depth interviews and a two-day observational study with team members from different departments participating in one of the major cross functional projects in the company. Using a psychoanalytical approach, the aim is to develop a deeper understanding of the patterns and dynamics underlying the process of relationship building and cooperation in cross-functional projects. By applying a clinical paradigm, it complements existing research by building a picture from the unconscious and often irrational dynamic processes within the team.

A Strategic View on Matrix Organizations

Modern organizations require structural forms to cope with uncertainties arising from the challenges of global competition and rapid technological and environmental changes (Clegg, 1989). Increasing the use of strategic business units and strategic networks were the main new forms that emerged in the 1980s. In such contexts, Greiner (1998) indicates that a matrix-type structure is frequently used to assemble the most efficient teams for the appropriate problems. This idea emerged in the 1950s and has been increasingly adapted as a strategy under the current pressure of globalization. The first matrix forms were implemented in the United States aerospace industry and, as it has developed through the years, the term has come to be accepted in both business and academic circles. Matrix designs attempt to possess the benefits of both project and functional organizational forms (Galbraith, 2009). Many organizations now have

adopted various types of matrix structures ranging from less systems-oriented structures, or dispersed systems, to the more systems-oriented ones such as internal consulting services.

By definition, the matrix is a grid-like organizational structure that allows a company to address multiple business dimensions using multiple command structures. A matrix structure is suited for project-driven companies that attempt to combine the advantages of the pure functional structure and the product organizational structure. Such a structure ranges from Weak Matrix through Balance Matrix to Strong Matrix (Saracoglu, 2009).

Many organizations involve all these structures at various levels. In order to ensure that people focus simultaneously on two or more organizational forces, a system of dual reporting relationships was put in place in the matrix structure. Matrix structures focus on both regional market share as well as product lines. In a matrix structure, the project manager shares responsibility with the functional managers for assigning priorities and for directing the work of personnel assigned to the project. Companies form matrix structures when they need to have simultaneous emphasis on two or more of the following criteria of differentiation:

- Functional—grouping knowledge and skills by activity (HR, Engineering, Sales, etc.).
- Divisional—where groups form on the basis of product or process.
- Geographical—differentiating activities by country, region, or area.

The matrix abandons the single command system of one-person-one-boss that is adopted in the military, the church, and the monarchy, in favor of the multiple command system of “two bosses.” While the single command system accepts the greater authority of those higher in the hierarchy, the multiple command system presents plural authority in the hierarchy. Under matrix management, the horizontal flow of work across the organization is the center of action.

Davis and Lawrence (1977) define a matrix as any organization that employs a multiple command system that includes related support mechanisms and associated organizational culture and behavior patterns. The principles of matrix have been applied widely in organizations such as engineering-oriented organizations that do business through a number of distinctive projects.

Many other companies formed matrix structures similar to those of GE. However, some of the companies failed a few years after the matrix was formed. Anderson (1994) states that in the 1970s, the power sharing that worked efficiently for missile projects did not transfer well to major appliance projects: similarly, Xerox and Digital companies had developed “stress cracks” in their matrix structures. It seems that organizations tend to look admiringly at a successful competitor that uses the matrix as the answer to its own organizational problems and then tries to imitate or copy them in its own matrix.

Kotter (1995), who researched more than 100 companies in the 1980s, found that few of the change efforts have been successful; a few have been utter failures and most fall somewhere in between, with a distinct tilt toward the lower end of the scale.

Undesirable Side-Effects

For decades, the matrix has made theoretical sense for nearly all global organizations. Although it is an inevitable structure in companies that sell multiple products or services in different markets, the reality is that, except for the basic benefits of efficiencies and scale, many leaders have found it almost impossible to make the matrix work. In spite of its theoretical simplicity of a two-by-two (or three-by-three etc.) solution that interconnects the right functions to the complexities of multiple products in different markets, we often see silo-think and unhealthy internal competition taking over. While leaders in matrix organizations might

understand at a logical level that synergies and collaboration will bring the best out of their organizations, their own emotions and competitive spirit urges them to play their own game.

Consequently, they are not optimizing for the whole, but maximizing for their own part as they are raised, educated, and rewarded to make the most of their own result if they want to be seen as successful. Under this pressure of performance, the temptation to manage their interests with renowned command and control styles drives them from more likely “matrix” behavior as stimulating collaboration and connection. This impact in turn affects the roles and procedures (Galbraith, 2010a; HayGroup, 2009) throughout the organization and as a result we can expect subordinates working in matrix teams to be forced into acting in similar ways.

Moreover, Canda (2013) concluded in his CCC research paper that those employees lower in the organizational hierarchy experience, on average, have more types of stakeholders and therefore more complexity in their daily tasks. This combined complexity and uncertainty at lower positions in the organization leads to the subject of this study—cross-functional work groups populated with subordinates throughout the organization expose confused behavior, resulting in persistent deviations of the preferred ”matrix team“ mental model. Empirical studies (Daft, 2010) have indicated that there are two kinds of effects for organizations with a matrix structure. First there are intended outcomes, which include:

- An improved reporting structure that is helpful in complex decision making;
- Efficient use of shared resources that provide opportunities for skill development;
- Competencies to deal with legitimate multiple sources of power;
- Sharing of knowledge between divisions.

The unintended outcomes include:

- Excessive overhead in management as a result of doubling-up of resources;

- Time losses with frequent meetings and conflict resolution sessions;
- Power struggles that result from power shifts between divisions.

Despite available role and responsibility structures, the unintended challenges of a matrix cannot be completely removed. The dual reporting structure—one of the characteristics providing a tool for power balancing between the two sides of the matrix—is difficult to maintain. Personal observation adds to Daft's (2010) findings that conflicting goals and priorities uncontrollably cross boundaries of previously agreed-upon roles and responsibilities, especially when it comes to team development, decision-making authority, or sharing resources.

Power struggles are the less manageable aspect of the unintended outcomes but are experienced as the mayor cause for difficulties in a matrix. Based on this experience, a further literature review has been conducted to focus on how the structure and design of power in matrix organizations can have important implications and consequences on the effectiveness of cross-functional teams.

A Political View on Matrix Organizations

An organization is defined as a social system encompassing diverse, and sometimes contradictory, interests and goals. In this definition, the differences in matrix organizations are even further articulated due to the relative self-contained structure of each of the functional dimensions. Cross functional (matrix) teams formed on the basis of an organizational interest are due to their temporary existence and more or less ad hoc objectives competing with the functional dimensions for their resources and role alignment.

Power is the ability of different parties to achieve something together they could not accomplish individually. In neutral terms, power is defined as a force that affects outcomes, while politics is a power in action (Bachmann, 2001; Clegg, 1989). This power governs the

politics concerned with creating new possibilities in an environment where resources may be scarce. Organizational politics to which most employees react can be seen as the win-lose politics of interpersonal conflict and engenders a specific experience of power. Most people are uneasy with politics and largely respond unconsciously, which leads them to avoid conflict and retreat from productivity (Baum, 1989). In this regard, power, political behavior, and resistance are inextricably linked (Buchanan & Badham, 1999).

In matrix organizations, power balancing between market units and functional departments are the anticipated value to achieve the maximum output from their resources and knowledge. Davenport and Leitch (2005) in this regard use the term *strategic ambiguity* to mean the deliberate use of ambiguity in order to create a space in which multiple interpretations by stakeholders are enabled and to which multiple stakeholder responses are possible. In Clegg's circuits of power (1989), power moves in three dimensions through three distinct and interacting circuits. Based on Foucault's (1988) theory of power, knowledge, and resistance, Clegg asserts that change in one circuit inevitably leads to change in the other circuits. In Clegg’s model (Figure 1), the facilitative power circuit, wherein the functional independency is structured, can act as a source of both empowerment and disempowerment. This is essential, as each of the functions can bring in a specific value leading to dependency of the other functions. Particularly in matrix organizations, where high amounts of discretion are delegated, the mode of delegation then becomes increasingly important to the resulting social relations and outcomes. Dominance created through dependency empowers the possessing agency but relatively disempowers delegates from other functions. These changes affected the employee’s power in the episodic circuit, in their day-to-day interaction and control over work resources and outcomes. The way

the organization in such case can re-fix the implications for membership and social interacting strongly depends on how much it can afford concealing uncertainty with trust.

Why Research on this Topic is Important

The performance of cross-functional workgroups is the linchpin of a matrix organization, yet most of them have proven to be ineffective most of the time. In an abundant number of publications (Daspit, Tillman, Boyd, & Mckee, 2013; De Laat, 1994; Galbraith, 2009; Galbraith, 2010b), we can find a rich variety of solutions suggesting improvement of matrix functioning by re-enforcing or disputing the policies and procedures connected to the definition of a matrix organization. Notwithstanding the need for clarity about roles, responsibilities, and procedures, these theories mostly ignore the social and emotional impact of a fragile power balance, typical for matrix organizations, on the participant in cross-functional teams. So far, no connection has been sought among possible consequential individual behaviors, how this individual behavior resonates and accumulates into atypical group dynamics, and resulting team effectiveness. However, studying them is important, for at least three reasons:

1. A deeper insight into the group-dynamic forces unique to matrix leadership teams as well as the causal underlying conditions can help when reviewing and adjusting existing literature for improving matrix organization effectiveness.
2. The overall literature shows that the effectiveness of cross-functional teams is mostly portrayed from an organizational perspective and perceived from a managerial point of view. The building-up of cross-functional workgroups, however, is a complex and uncertain process that does not always follow rational principles. As Clegg (1989) explains in his model of power circuits, when the organization forms a new strategic agency, the mode of delegation becomes increasingly important to the resulting social

relations and outcomes. Hence, responsiveness to the uncertainties and unconscious dynamics is a positive influence on delegates.

3. By identifying and analyzing critical group dynamics and introducing these findings into the framework of leadership roles, I hope to advance thinking about how conditions can be created that improve matrix team functioning. The basic idea is to move thinking about group behavior from a focus on cause-effect relations to an analysis of the conditions (Hackman, 2012) under which groups chart their own courses.

The present study aims to spell out the most distinctive and observable group dynamics with the objective to advance thinking about how management structures and leadership style can be adjusted to mitigate the negative elements of these group dynamics.

Literature Review

It is generally accepted that any robust understanding of group behavior and performance requires attention to both the individual level of analysis (i.e., the attributes of members) and the contextual level, i.e., attributes of the organizational or cultural context within which the group operates (Barsade & Gibson, 2012). The challenge is to deal with cross-level influences in a way that treats them as part of the actual phenomena of group life, rather than as items on a never-ending list of potential moderators. To assess the effect of power diversity from the different organizational dimensions in the matrix on cross-functional group dynamics, two questions are generated: 1) what are the most important moderators determining individual behavior in a group (the list of possibilities is limitless) and 2) how much of a difference do these moderators actually make? For the purpose of this study, cross-functional collaboration is seen as an

emergent process that involves uncertainty because of the context, the nature of the process, the relationship with the department of origin, or the outcome.

A Need for Trust

Many economists, psychologists, sociologists, and management theorists appear united on the importance of trust in the conduct of human affairs. Rotter, Chance, and Phares (1972) argued that "a generalized expectancy of trust or distrust can be an important determinant of behavior" (p. 40). Golembiewsky (1975) stated that, 'There is no single variable which so thoroughly influences interpersonal and group behavior as does trust" (p. 131). Zucker (1986) followed with the statement that trust was "vital for the maintenance of cooperation in society and necessary as grounds for even the most routine, everyday interactions" (p. 56).

However, on the importance of trust, Reichmann (1989) stated there is a "considerable uncertainty about what trust is and how precisely it falters" (p. 185). Hackman (2012), for instance, believes that it would be more useful to study the conditions or determinants of trust rather than to attempt further definition. Ring and Van de Ven (1992) followed through on this approach when they wrote, "The implications of trusting behavior in designing governance mechanisms are generally ignored" (p. 485).

Based on a comprehensive comparing research on the topic, Hosmer (1995) suggested that interpersonal trust and economical trust are the “optimistic expectations of the behavior of a stakeholder of the firm under conditions of organizational vulnerability and dependence” (p. 391). It is argued, however, that, depending on the institutional environment, trust is one part of two distinct patterns of controlling relationships (Bachmann, 2001), where trust and power are interrelated in quite different ways.

First, both mechanisms are generated at the interpersonal level and either trust or power dominates the relationship. Second, power occurs at the organizational level of relationships where it contributes to developing trust between the different units of the organization. Both mechanisms seem to operate on the basis of the same principle. One can say that trust works on the basis of positive assumptions about the other's willingness and ability to cooperate, while power is constitutively based on the selection of a negative hypothetical possibility regarding re-actions from the other (Hosmer, 2010). Thus power, similar to trust, can be seen as another mechanism for coordinating social interactions efficiently and for allowing relatively stable relationships to develop between cooperating social actors.

While power in hierarchical organizations is often institutionalized in bureaucratic procedures and top-down mechanisms of coordinating interactions, in more competitive organizations the idea is that actors simply use their individual resources and therewith distinctive power to follow their specific interests. Matrix organizations in that regard can be seen as a combination of both; departments are often self-contained and hierarchically structured yet maintaining a competitive relation with other departments in the organization. Based on this, we can assume that employees joining cross-functional teams are confronted with an imbalance in the relation between power and trust.

The patchy structure of cross-functional teams does not provide procedures and rules. Hence, to build relationships and cooperate with other teams, the participant needs to operate on a basis of trust, while at the same time needing his resources to adhere to the structure of his home department where trust and values are formalized. However trust may reduce uncertainty in a relationship, it unavoidably also produces risk with regard to the decision problem the participant is confronted with; how do I stay trustworthy on both sides of the organization with

only limited available knowledge? If it is true that the risk of trust can be reduced by strong and coherent institutional arrangements that make it easier for a participant to actually choose trust, we can as well assume that this same structure has a function to protect employees against anxieties that are stirred up by their work (Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008).

Because of the diversity in the composition of cross-functional teams, participants are less likely to perceive themselves as belonging to the same group or category, which is one of the factors that promotes trust (Brewer, 1996). Kramer, Brewer, and Hanna (1996) propose that the strength and salience of identification with a group influences the trust of other members. Social identification (Tajfel, 1982) can lead to in-group bias leading to higher perceived trustworthiness and enhance perceived similarity that may reduce perceived risk. In cross-functional teams, disciplinary differences may be of particular relevance because of the self-esteem participants draw from their individual specialization (Zolin, Hinds, Fruchter, & Levitt, 2004). Each participant in effect stems from a different culture, formed by the values and structures of his department and reinforced by its education and practice. Thus, although task interdependence requires more trust between participants, the multi-disciplinary nature of cross-functional teams may make the development of trust more difficult.

As cross-functional teams are not created around dominant coordination mechanisms, the conclusion seems to be unavoidable. Under conditions in which trust is mostly dependent upon personal trust rather than system trust and where power depends on individually attributed resources, the risk of trust is likely to be intolerably high; participants are more inclined to consciously or unconsciously develop individual defense mechanisms to fulfill their need for power and control.

The Risk of Power

It may be true that trust absorbs uncertainty and diffuses complexity; at the same time, it inevitably produces risk (Bachmann, 2001). A participant who has to decide on trusting another team member has only limited available information about the future behavior of this person. In other words, trust in others can be disappointed and then appear to be misplaced and overly romantic assumptions about good intentions of the other can result in considerable losses. The use of power under these conditions often provides a serious alternative to trust, but the usability of power depends greatly on whether there is a realistic threat of sanctions. Unique knowledge for instance provides a realistic form of power and has a good chance for being acknowledged by the less knowledgeable or dependable team members. The more other team members start to doubt the real threat of 'not knowing,' the weaker the position of the initial powerful participant who started using it. Thus, there are no reasons to assume that power, unlike trust, cannot break down if massively challenged. However, the personal damage is usually not quite as bad and a relationship may still be continued, as power does not carry the same emotional weight as trust. The relative power of one actor over another is thus a product of the net dependence of the one on the other (Pfeffer, 1992).

At the organizational level, the principal sources of an actor's power over an organization are the actor's ability to provide some performance or resource that is valued by the organization or the actor's ability to cope with important organizational contingencies or problems (Pfeffer, 1992). At the interpersonal level, the principal sources of actor power over others are argued to be (a) the office or structural position of the actor, (b) the personal characteristics of the actor (French & Raven, 1959), (c) the expertise of the actor, and (d) the opportunity for the actor to access specialized knowledge/information.

Implied in these theories are the assumptions that organizational actors who have power are more likely to achieve their desired outcomes and actors who lack power are more likely to have their desired outcomes thwarted or redirected by those with power. This focus also has led to the development of strategies and tactics of resource allocation for increasing the power of less powerful parties and reducing the power of more powerful ones (Kotter, 1995).

If we consider empowerment in terms of this relational dynamic, it becomes the process by which a leader or manager shares his or her power with subordinates. Power, in this context, is interpreted as the possession of formal authority or control over organizational resources. The emphasis is primarily on the notion of sharing authority. Burke's (1986) position is representative: "To empower, implies the granting of power delegation of authority" (p. 51). It is so common that often employee participation is simply equated with empowerment (Likert, 1967). Individuals' power needs are met when they perceive that they have power or when they believe they can adequately cope with events, situations, and/or the people they confront. On the other hand, individuals' power needs are frustrated when they feel powerless or when they believe that they are unable to cope with the physical and social demands of environment. Power in this motivational sense refers to an intrinsic need for self-determination or a belief in personal self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Empowerment therefore should be viewed as a motivational concept rather applied to enable than simply to delegate. The process of delegation is too constrictive in scope to accommodate the complex nature of empowerment.

Translated in terms of Bandura's model, empowerment refers to a process whereby an individual's belief in his or her self-efficacy is enhanced. To empower means either to strengthen this belief or to weaken one's belief in personal powerlessness. When individuals are empowered, their personal efficacy expectations are strengthened. According to expectancy theory (van Eerde

& Thierry, 1996), an individual's motivation to increase his or her effort in a given task will depend on two types of expectations: (a) that their effort will result in a desired level of performance and (b) that their performance will produce desired outcomes. However, decisions to be made in cross-functional work groups are seldom clear-cut or obvious and are often multifaceted, which yields multiple ways of evaluation. Consequences of decisions are often known long after the fact, which makes it difficult to feel in control. Without the skills and to motivate and influence others, without the ability to navigate through the political dynamics, empowerment is useless (Pfeffer, 2013).

The Psychodynamic View on Cross-Functional Collaboration

In his study, Ashforth (1990) stated that the presence of an organizational culture itself suggests this culture being the meta-cause of defensive behavior. In Clegg's Circuit of Dispositional Power (1989), the system of values, assumptions, and norms shapes the unwritten rules determining the way of cooperation and therewith influences the organizational culture. As Ashforth (1990) suggests, this may well interact with individual characteristics and influence the tendency to avoid action, blame, and change; this tendency may in turn reinforce the culture. However, in fast-changing environments, defensive behavior is more likely based on organization-specific stressors than the presence of bureaucratic procedures (Tyler & Blader, 2000). Barling and Phillips (1993) found that bureaucratic justice was related only to trust in management while interactional justice (Tyler & Blader, 2000) was related to trust in management, withdrawal behavior, and affective commitment.

One of these stressors we can assume is the asymmetrical power relations, which can lead to fear of losing autonomy and being overpowered (Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Davenport & Leitch (2005) suggest that collaboration operates on a model of shared power, which seems to be

difficult if participants fear for their autonomy. On the other hand, collaboration is another opportunity to justify wronged relationships and increase reputation. As a result of this ambivalence due to positive and negative reactions and emotions, another stressor is indicated due to which defense dynamics are likely to occur. From a psychodynamic perspective, human behavior is often the result of conscious and unconscious processes, and human beings are characterized by avoiding uncertainty and anxiety (Kets de Vries, 2004; Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008). In order to achieve control and predictability and protect themselves, they unconsciously fend off any tensions that arise from the collaboration.

The emerging defense dynamics are an important part of the collaboration as they could hinder both the process and the outcome (Hirschhorn, 1990). Using a psychoanalytical approach in this paper, my aim is to develop a deeper understanding of the patterns and dynamics underlying the process of cross-functional collaboration. It can be seen as an attempt to gain new insight into a topic, by departing from known and familiar ways. This study is designed to build a picture from the influence of both organizational dimensions on team dynamics and at the same time focusing on the participating individuals from business and functional departments. By reconstructing the subjectively lived experiences of managers of departments and team members delegated from these departments, the aim is to understand the patterns and dynamics of matrix team membership in order to address some of the shortcomings mentioned above. It is complementary to existing research by focusing on the manifest and latent dimensions in conjunction with the rational and emotional dimensions.

Research Aim

A study performed by HayGroup (2009) indicated that the majority of organizations that implemented a matrix structured organization did not succeed in making their matrix work.

These companies often end up in a pseudo structure in which the matrix definition ends up being used as an excuse for an abundant number of task forces, special project teams, and other prioritized structures to cover up for its ineffectiveness. Another alarming publication in *Harvard Business Review* (2012) claimed that less than a third of the managers in US-based companies are skilled enough to handle the challenges of managing matrix organizations. Although many scholars and consultancy companies are addressing these challenges, they almost unanimously offer solutions and recommendations based on a "mechanistic interpretation" of the organization or applying rigid "cause-and-effect" analysis.

This approach has led to many initiatives changing the organizational construct and policies into more controllable agencies. However true and valuable these contributions are, none of them considered the indirect effects of the persistent power struggle between the different dimensions of the matrix on the individual participant, let alone how subsequent behavior could influence group dynamics and the potential effect on team performance. Moreover, as flexibility of resources and knowledge are the main objectives, any effort to further rigidify structure seems contradictory to the purpose of a matrix organization. So, attempts to control the power balance without changing the ground form of the organization do not seem to bring much improvement for effectiveness.

The absence of too much structure can be seen as conditional for a proper working organization and consequently we can assume that power balancing forms a primary influence on the self-organizing processes in cross-functional teams. According to the social exchange theory, interpersonal interactions create interdependent relationships among members (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005) and such interdependencies have the ability to generate high-quality relationships.

These relationships reduce risk, encourage cooperation, and can be seen as the next most influential conditions for cooperation and thus effectiveness of team work.

To stimulate renewed discussions about leadership styles in matrix organizations in general and the effectiveness of cross-functional teams led and operating within this organizational structure, it is necessary to develop a deeper insight into the effects of power balancing and related trust feelings on the emerging process of relationship building within cross-functional teams. By using a clinical lens, I aim to offer a deeper understanding about the emerging dynamics and self-organizing mechanics within cross-functional teams.

Methodology

An ethnographic study provides a rich and detailed descriptive account of what transpires in groups without directly addressing the action needed to change or improve group behavior or performance, which is beyond the objective of this paper. By applying a clinical paradigm, I intend to gain insight into the invisible psychodynamic processes and structures influencing the behavior of the individual when participating in a group. As recounted in previous chapters of this paper, the leadership structure in matrix organizations elicits an environment of power struggling between the different departments, which cultivate a prominent condition in terms of support and empowerment (Hackman, 2012). Using this predominant and inevitable condition, which affects every employee in the organization regardless of role or position, provides a reliable qualification for interpretation of collected data.

Methodological Background

In the psychoanalytical approach of text interpretation, the application of psychoanalysis can provide a deeper understanding of suppressed meanings in the context of social and political issues (Nentwich, 2001). A psychoanalytical approach does not include exposing individuals to

clinical psychoanalytical examination. The methodology is rooted in a belief that individual thoughts and actions must be understood through a complex interaction of behavior and experiences of the acting subjects and the group context, power relations, and structures (Andersen, 2003). The psychoanalytical approach of text interpretation assumes that the process of understanding is not complete if the researcher remains at the surface level and does not consider unconscious elements. A psychoanalytical approach aims to understand more than just the manifest content. The researcher is to open the unconscious and latent mechanisms behind the spoken word. In line with the hermeneutic tradition, this approach allows for re-articulation of truth which, according to Kinsella (2006), "resists the idea that there can be one single authoritative reading of a text and recognizes the complexity of the interpretative endeavor" (p. 32). The psychoanalytical approach tries to balance the depth of understanding with the breadth of keeping an overview.

Analytical Process

The reconstruction of individual experiences follows a step-by-step analysis of the collected data. It starts with the logical analysis of what has been expressed. The researcher focuses on the written content and tries to reconstruct the text into a meaningful structure. At this stage, the researcher looks for inconsistencies and use of verbal structures indicating any form of suppression (Nentwich, 2001). Suppression in this context refers to the unconscious mechanism whereby impulses, such as negative emotions or thoughts, are out of awareness and potentially indicates a basic defense against anxiety (Freud, 1960).

The second stage is the analysis where the emotional condition and interpersonal relations are reconstructed. At this stage, the researcher seeks differences between what is

verbally expressed and what is emotionally experienced, indicating possible disturbances in the relationship with group and members.

In the third stage of analysis, verbal expressions are analyzed in the context of interactions and sequences of internal and external events (Nentwich, 2001). By incorporating relevant social, economic, organizational, and professional aspects, this stage prevents too much emphasis from being placed on the inner reality of the individual. The guiding principle within the analysis is to reconstruct expressions about different aspects of the reality. The analysis of the differences and similarities opens up the possibility of a deeper understanding of the meaning that certain aspects of the reality have.

The last stage is a meta-analysis (Stroup et al., 2000), which aims to combine and synthesize the results of the previous analyses of unconscious elements to arrive at conclusions.

Data Gathering and Analysis

This research is based on a cross-functional project initiated by senior management of large manufacturer of wind turbines in Denmark. During the course of 2013, an average of 20 participants represented different functions in the organization in a cross functional team in different timeframes and durations. Their tasks was twofold—lead the development and market introduction of the latest design and provide a proposal for organizational change to realize future product introductions more efficiently. During a five-month period, the project was evaluated using interviews, participating observations, and group discussion. The results in this paper are primarily based on data collected through interviews with 26 participants who took part in the project and represented their department.

Interviews

The influence of a constantly changing power balance on group dynamics and the process of relationship building and maintaining cross-functional teams is of particular interest in this paper. A qualitative approach was chosen for collecting and preparing data signifying symptoms and indications for clinical interpretation. To make sense of the underlying dynamics, a problem-centered interview methodology (Witzel, 2000) was used to collect information, combined with a two-dimensional observation of the individual interacting with other members of the organization. The problem-centered interview, methodologically related to the concept of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), facilitates inductive and deductive thinking required for the clinical interpretation of experiences without being directed by hypothetically deducted procedures.

The structure of a problem-centered interview allows orientation on a topic and a focused analysis of the data by maintaining an open and undirected attention on the process and its latent mechanisms. Each interview, booked for two hours, includes four complementary instruments starting with a short questionnaire to collect data on social characteristics of the interviewee. An interview guideline is used to provide a framework for orientation and ensure comparability of the interviews. The interviews are, as a third instrument, tape recorded and transcribed verbatim for detailed text analysis. The last element of data collecting is a postscript immediately written after an interview. The postscript is meant to capture situation-related conditions and non-verbal aspects (Witzel, 2000). For interpretation of the interviews, the postscript supports the reconstruction of the relationship between interviewee and the interviewer’s feelings, irritations, fantasies, thoughts and interpretations during the interview. It can be seen as a first step in the

analysis of the data to reconstruct the dynamics of the interview and enable a more lively understanding.

Observations

DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) believe that including the method of observation in the design of ethnographic research supports a holistic, objective, and accurate understanding of the phenomena under study. For the purpose of assuring stronger validity of experiences, results from interviewing and text interpretation observation were added to this research. Observer data was collected in two different settings. Prior to interviews, participant nonspecific data was collected over a three-month span that aided the understanding of major phenomena and provided input for the interview guidelines and questionnaire. Subjects were unaware of being observed. To help understand the previous collected data from interviews, a non-structured observational study was conducted. The approach of this observation is derived from the definition of observational studies (Altmann, 1974) in which the objective is to verify previously made interpretations on group behavior and relationships from individual interviews. In a two-day workshop held in November 2013, 18 project members came together to discuss the themes of empowerment, organization, and cross-organizational cooperation in relation to the results the project team had achieved. During this event, a large amount of field notes on observed responses on the different themes were made while taking part in the discussions as a participant observer (Kawulich, 2005). The disadvantages of being a participant observer, a conceivable lack of objectivity both from participants and observer were moderated by the longitudinal effect of several observations in different settings over two days.

Description of the Sample

Of the 10 participants interviewed, five had a technical position; five others were active in commercial roles. All participants had a higher educational background, five with a technical degree and five others with a different educational background. The interviewees were all directly active within the cross-functional team; two spent 100% of their time on the team tasks; eight have parallel tasks within their departments. Eight participants have been active in different cross-functional teams prior to this research and four have been working in different departments before. All interviewees are disciplinary reporting into large highly self-contained hierarchical structured departments. Geographically, they are in the same location. Three participants have been working together before consistently; others met for the first time within this team. Participants of the workshop have all been actively involved in the project; eight have also participated in the interview section of this research.

Questionnaire

The first draft questionnaire emerged from the overt phenomena observed during the three months of lateral observation prior to the interviews. Based on the initial literature study on leadership and power balance in matrix organizations, a second questionnaire divided in seven categories was selected for a second literature study specific to these phenomena. The questions in each category were designed less to elicit a definite point in a response set and instead are intended to lead to a conversation about the matters of concern. The conversations then become the basis for building a case-by-case understanding of the transition of behavior formed by the conditions provided by the organization to the effect on group dynamics. The seven question categories are: attachment, altruism, trust, conformity, feelings, and group think pressure. For a detailed overview of the questionnaire, see the “Interview Guidelines” in Appendix A .

Findings

An important characteristic of matrix organizations is its reliance on cross-functional teams for highly specialized and business critical solutions. Anthony, Green, and McComb (2014) for instance suggested that cross functional project success is impacted by early and continuous support from department management. Galbraith (2009) pointed out in his model for matrix organizations that managers above cross-functional teams can influence performance and culture by acting through policies that affect the behavior of cross functional team members. Enabling collaboration in cross-functional teams, however, requires serious emotional and cognitive investigation to prevent dysfunctional behavior patterns and regressive team dynamics (Kets de Vries, 2004). The results from interviews with participants in cross-functional teams focus on the underlying patterns and dynamics influencing collaboration in their teams. They are structured in a way that allows the construction of a picture from both the interviews and the observations at the same time, focusing on the individual experiences of team participants.

Trust

In this section, questions are built on the relation between power and trust as discussed in the literature study aiming to understand the individual trust as experienced by cross functional team participants. The function of this section is to understand to what extent participants indicate trust as being a reason for potential defensive behavior. Results are taken from both interviews and observation and are using trust as an indicator for defensive behavior.

Interviewees were asked about their opinion on how trust plays a role and is used in the cross-functional teams they have been part of. By raising this question in an indirect way, the interviewee was offered a safe way to discuss the question; however, the opportunity not to talk about “self” related answers interviewees chose to turn the conversation towards their personal

experience. The anticipated resistance against direct vulnerability elicited by the directness of the question seemed unnecessary and was responded to with a certain enthusiasm instead. Trust between team members as it turned out was mostly expressed as a missing factor in the relation with other team members. It could be understood, as replicated by the interviewees, as a felt need for more collegiality. Forms of distrust were not discussed nor observed. The logic of this response became more clear as there was indicated a difference in trust experience with colleagues in the home department.

A further question about participants' willingness to selflessly share information to build up trust and collegiality however indicated a sub stream of trust related concerns. Competence dependencies and knowledge differences, a fundamental characteristic of cross functional work, seem to indicate reticence in building relationships. Knowledge differences naturally create uneven dependencies, which were not indicated as an impediment for team cohesiveness, but potentially form a risk of being manipulated, which is seen as detrimental for their own position. This became clear from questions about trust relations with the department manager of the home department. As indicated before, interviewees have a positive trust experience with their colleagues in the home department, which could be attributed to the way the department is managed. But similar trust expectancy was not reciprocated when participants are delegated to cross-functional teams. Interviewees responded that they feel treated differently once the joined the cross functional team. One interviewee even worded this feeling as "...once you are out there, you are on your own..," indicating a feeling of abandonment once they failed to meet the expected representation of the departments interests' in being in the cross functional set-up. This could be seen as a negative encouragement for a participant to shift his or her focus towards building relationships based on the mechanism of power.

Deducting from this finding, it could explain why people shift their perception of competency and performance of others in the team as soon as they experience this team member starts to use knowledge or organizational position difference as a leverage to pursue opinions or demands. In fact, interviewees stressed the importance of keeping their commitment inconspicuous and avoiding being held accountable for their functional contribution. Comments like “Once you are there you are on your own,” indicate a role ambiguity and conflict (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970, p. 151) which, as this is inherent for matrix organizations, forces participants to cope with their role. This can, from a psychodynamic perspective, be understood as a defense mechanism (Wood, Bandura, & Bailey, 1990) and potentially lead to rationalization to accept and perform in their role (Brown & Starkey, 2000) and suppress conscious and unconscious negative feelings and behavior. One interviewee expressed this as “...but I somehow excused it with a [..] because it is a big complex setup.” Using this psychodynamic pre-condition, interview transcripts and observation notes were analyzed to understand how individual behavior emerges and exerts influence on team dynamics.

Group Affect

In this section, the questionnaire built further on the effects of trust on defensive traits and is constructed to gain understanding about participants’ behavior related to their effort to ‘belong to’ or ‘be a member of’ either their home department or their cross-functional team. Results from this section are used to reconstruct behavior related to gaining and maintaining social identity and self-efficacy.

Questions in the previous section about trust and empowerment ultimately gave reason to visible physical responses (red faces, uncomfortable moving around) and other emotional wordings when the relation with the home department was discussed. Confusion about the own

role and the role of the cross-functional team likely led to misspeaking and a mix-up of politically correct answers with frustration-infused statements. Despite an initial appreciation of talking about trust, hesitation in formulating thoughts point towards concerns about the relationships within cross-functional teams. On the question to which department interviewees feel most connected, eight out of 10 interviewees answered to feel most save in their home department while they in the same time responded negatively on the question about their willingness to share information outside their department. Where this can be seen as behavior to avoid being manipulated, it indicates why participants might have difficulties with being seen as team member.

Questions about loyalty conflicts for instance were answered with multiple examples with a positive stance towards the home department, but questions about examples of integrity conflicts they have been exposed to resulted in more negative inclined cases within the cross functional group. This can be interpreted as individuals having difficulties in finding their position in cross-functional teams, which is an effect of trust relation with the home department. This finding is further supported by an indirect question about the belief participants have in their ability to exert sufficient power to influence decisions or reaching goals. When asked if they expect participation in cross-functional teams to positively contribute to their career development, interviewees unanimously responded that it contributes to broadening the understanding about the organization but that they did not expect to achieve their more individual goals. Ambiguous performance targets and a complex social interaction structure easily diminish an initial desire to play a significant role in the overall team objectives. An unambiguous statement made by one of the interviewees articulates how social complexity and low self-efficacy turns into defensive behavior: “it would be more interesting for me to see a

different organization." In the responses of most interviewees, meeting individual targets are best achieved by avoiding conflict in both camps, herewith indicating that the unclear authority and incompatible expectations elicit a moral conflict with different dimensions.

Conformity

Questions in this section aim to investigate the hypothesized relation between defensive behavior and the fear of losing autonomy and being overpowered (Bernheim, 1994) in a psychodynamic framework. Important determinants of defensive behavior are related to the expectation to act on behalf of the home department as well as the ability to cope with potential uneven leadership roles within the team (Hirschhorn, 2002). By intensely analyzing answers, feelings, and emotions expressed during the interviews, this section attempts to reconstruct behavior related to fear of losing power or significance (ability to properly represent home group leadership) leading to repudiation in either the home group or matrix team.

A representative example taken from a sentence out of the interviews is, "…on behalf of their hierarchy […] you would have to fear that they revise your decision or torpedo your decision-making process…" The explicit use of the word 'torpedo' in this sentence draws attention. A torpedo is normally defined as a war device, is controlled from a distance, and strikes by surprise. Decision-making processes in a matrix organization are due to their dependence on other functions far from invisible. The use of a metaphoric word like torpedo therefore is representative for the frequent observed distrust which exacerbates the already expressed fear of not being in control over presumed responsibilities. A quote taken from another interviewee on the same question contributes "…there are forces in the team pulling you in different directions […] you have to have somehow strong people otherwise you end up in a deadlock."

The interviewee, who described his own position, avoids claiming this capacity by referring to imaginary ‘strong people.’ Also in this sentence, an association could be made with a battle, in which case he wishes for being strong enough or having strong people around him. Based on this context, the following explanation is suggested. The interviewed team members do not experience an unconditional support from their line management and are afraid that if they do not meet the actual expectations, the department will suffer negative consequences. In the second quote, the interviewee referred to the expectations from his team in which he needs to manage his level of exposure and contribution to meet their expectations. This leaves barely enough space to navigate between these two relationships, hence using a torpedo or referring to imaginary strong people expresses their fear of not being in control. An interesting quote in this regard is, “I want to take the decision but I do not want to formulate the decisions.” We can see in this expression the tendency to stay in control by avoid difficult decision that can potentially lead to conflict with department or team expectations. The justification for this conformity is found in reasons outside the own area of control ‘on behalf of their hierarchy,’ hence, rationalization.

Group-Think

Team members acting on behalf of their home department represent the expectations and interest of their department management together with an individual expectancy regarding the potential success of their own contribution. Bénabou (2013) found that these representatives as well as their managers do not follow a rational exchange of knowledge or preferences, but rather steer on a subset of private signals or exogenous biases in inference. When joining a cross-functional team the participant unconsciously faces a tradeoff to either accept potential

implications and act accordingly (realism) or keep hopeful belief by ignoring (denial) these signals at the risk of acting overoptimistic (Bénabou, 2013).

> …of course there are frustrations because they[the team] expect more from us than we can deliver, because we need to give attention to where we [the home department] have the most business[interest]. That's what I'm doing now, but, but that that's not always the most funny [thing to do] because sometimes you really have to, to let people uh...you can feel that you've let them down somehow because you cannot give them the attention they...they need and would like to have. (Citation)

The key observation in this study shows that this cognitive tradeoff is often based on negative stimuli stemming from political rivalry between department managers. Their controversial interests often lead to certain blindness for signals from their employees who often need more subtle support to collaborate with the other department representatives. These negative signals increase the loss of expectancy and eventually push the employee towards denial. In such a situation, team members apply self-censorship of their own thoughts that deviate from the team consensus, which is contagious:

> If they don't like my solution then I don't care. Normally I just take it in... I mean, I try to keep it not as a personal thing. It’s ...What I like to do is...as long as people are not personal. I mean, if it's a business solution then I am totally fine that people have other opinions and my solution, if that that is not a perfect one, then that's fine with me. (Citation)

In this situation, the interviewed team member applies self-censorship on his own thoughts, which obviously deviates from the team consensus. They felt social pressure from

other team member's results in an attempt to rationalize his proposed solution which ends in a compromising agreement. This is contagious and elicits the illusion that failure does not affect the team (Neck & Manz, 1994) and indicates that delusion, caused by the inevitable confrontation of multifaceted individual expectations, potentially leads to wishful thinking or reality denial. When individual team members are subject to this double morality, they are likely to undergo a regression to defend themselves against the conflicts they experience by their participation in a team (Bion, 1970). They will build a defensive system of avoidance and denial expressed through formation of a "team mentality" in which each considers himself an individual contributor rather than a member of a team. This individual typically contributes to the group mentality but is nevertheless situated in opposition to it, since it threatens the satisfactions of the individual's needs as a group animal. The group responds to this threat by means of a compromise formation, the "group culture" which, as what Bion calls base assumption mentality, distracts the matrix team from its supposed task (French & Simpson, 2010).

This section reflected on data mainly obtained through analyses of transcripts of interviews to gain understanding to which extend cross-functional teams are pacified by dysfunctional groupthink.

Discussion

In this paper, I aimed to research the relation between the volatile balance of power characterizing matrix organizations and ineffective group dynamics within cross functional work groups being the other main characteristic of this organizational form. The results are suggesting that, insofar the organization is well-structured in form and function, power struggles, and political manipulation, importantly determining the organizational culture can indeed be seen as the 'meta' cause of much defensive behavior. Interviewees who participated in cross-functional

work groups consistently reflected emotional and cognitive tensions aroused by ambivalence or distrust. Double or unknown dependencies on department management and other cross functional group members have detrimental effect on individual trust related behavior. This results in uncertainty about the relevance of the own role in the team and hesitance in taking responsibility over tasks other team members with different political influences are contributing to.

In an environment where power difference (authority) seems ineffective to manage relationships and reciprocal trust seems troublesome, participants reflected fear of losing control and insecurity about the unknown as significant attributes of their behavior. Detailed findings indicate that several individual defense mechanisms come into play, including rationalization and devaluation to protect the individual ego. The perception of risk as a result of losing control seems only partly caused by interaction with other group members but more likely imposed by the opaque motivations of their empowering agencies. These individual restraints likely determine group dynamics with recurrent exposure of defensive behavior of which idealizing a non-existing leadership and task avoidance are frequently observed. In the following paragraphs, the findings from this research are discussed in more detail.

Effect on the Individual

Becoming aware of the underlying emotional and cognitive processes of the individual participating in cross functional work groups should be seen as a paramount step in understanding and influencing matrix organization dynamics. In much of the practitioner literature on matrix organizations the emphasis is on procedural justice drawing boundaries around roles and responsibilities to determine interdependencies and group internal relationships. However true for theoretical discussion, results of this paper suggest that this presumption of

boundaries is likely the cause for individuals to alienate themselves from their task and participation in the group. Success of formal procedures is linked to the ability to treat people in a fair manner, but the inevitable conflict of interests between project and line management in a matrix organization does not respect these presumed boundaries. Much in this regard is said with one of the quotes "*..once you're out there, you are on your own...*" Indeed, procedural justice is related to trust in management but it is the experienced interactional integrity causing withdrawal behavior and affective commitment (Tyler & Blader, 2000). Social Identity theory contends that people use interactions with others as a source of information about their social identities. Results from this research reversely confirms that when the group does not send the desired positive information people are prone to develop attitudes and values to protect their self-worth which in turn negatively affects group cohesion.

Social Identity

Social identification is the perception of "oneness with or belongingness to" some human aggregate (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 23). In this study, I already indicated a conflict in feelings of belonging when participants are challenged on their loyalty. The effects of the ambivalent feelings on individual behavior and affect can be seen as the antecedents of a negative influence on the ability to affirm one's position in the group. Social identification could explain the observed low interest in active participation in group meetings and confirming the more general stated low level of group affect during interviews. When participants engage in group discussions which require them to cross the boundaries of their role as expected by their home department, they likely alienate themselves from the work group objectives. Another frequently observed behavior adding to this understanding is dropping the message and stepping of the stage again.

When participants delivered the requested knowledge, they did not argue for acceptance nor did they seek joint solutions. Instead, they preferred to distantiate from the group center discussion and hide in the periphery of activeness. Apparently, participants experience difficulties to maintain their feeling of team membership, especially in case the discussion might require their contribution. A representative response expressing these emotions is “I have the impression that whatever I say is completely-- doesn’t matter at all, ‘cause in the end someone else will take the decision. That is where I don’t feel comfortable...” Using Turquet (1994) to explain this friction, the human dislike of being ignored as a “Singleton” seems equally high as the risk of being an “Individual Member” of the group. By using a self-imposed passiveness, the participant seeks the safety of anonymity without provoking complete withdrawal. This self-found equilibrium has shown notable effects on group identity when the number of participants exhibiting similar behavior grows. They form a psychological group (Turner, 1984) of passive attuned “single” participants sharing the same social identification. Out-group identification is associated with defensive traits as the earlier reported rationalization and negative distinction (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). As individuals tend to choose activities congruent with the salient aspects of their identities out-group participants seem to have detrimental effect on intragroup cohesion, altruism and positive evaluations of the work group (Turner, 1984).

Self-Efficacy

Another influence derived from this study exerting a dysfunctional effect on group-dynamics is the level of individually perceived self-efficacy (Wood et al., 1990). Low self-efficacy is suggested as a result from the interviews in which the majority of the interviewees indicate no expectation that participation in a cross-functional work group will support their career development. This can be understood as a lack of confidence in the significance of their

own contribution or doubts about potential positive evaluations of the work group. Individuals are motivated to preserve their personal identity through an individual need for self-esteem. Negative self-illusions and doubt about significance of contribution reduce the orientation towards action. Like individuals, the work group seeks to maintain self-esteem and appreciation but role ambiguity and role conflict negatively affect participants' beliefs in personal efficacy and thereby causes the team to act conservatively to preserve existing identity. Because action orientation is associated with power (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003) inactiveness decreases the attribution of power (e.g., persuasiveness) and negatively influences the acceptance of team deliverables within the organization.

Effect on Group Dynamics

Where the aim of a matrix organization is to efficiently manage resources and effectively combine experience and knowledge to solve cross-functional topics; the exploitation of benefits can only be achieved when a cross-functional team can establish an area of contention and acceptance. In the previous chapter, we have seen that the effects of trust and empowerment significantly affect individual behavior. Vacillation and ambivalence (Hirschhorn, 1999) result in anxiety, which keeps the group from focusing on its actual task, face the challenges of the business, and provide a proper result, solution, or mitigation. Instead, they built up their social defenses to avoid getting in conflict with the expectations of their home department and by doing so the group loses their grips on the issue and therewith the support and attention of the organization.

Controversial in this context is that a strong, single-sourced authority could have provided a context which protects the team from their anxieties. However, it is exactly the projection of a single sourced leadership that unconsciously scares participants of as this could

thread them from achieving their department's objectives. Evidence for this behavior came from the workshop in which participants suggested that they could have done better if there was more empowerment from management, which can be interpreted as "if we only had a strong leader..." It is my observation that the team at this point was unaware of the fact that by suggesting they should have had a strong leader, they actually underline that they do not believe it would help them, which is salient because the team leader himself was in the room. In their fear for having a strong leader, they created an imaginary person; they resisted the reality in which they obviously already had a strong leader whose influence they could not accept.

This group behavior can be explained with two distinct theories. The often individually experienced conscious anxieties as described in the previous chapter are likely to lead to further regression when individuals have to defend themselves against conflicts provoked by entering the team (being a threat to others) or simply by their presence (defending department objectives) in a cross-functional group. In this collective regression, we can recognize the emergence of a more collective defense mechanism that follows Bion's basic assumption (1970) theory in which the group is in denial and avoidance of its real task.

In this case study, we could observe the forming of an out-group (Ashforth & Lee, 1990) allowing team members to negligibly contribute to the expectations of the group and pretend some form of membership. When the number of participants in this sub-group increased we could observe two distinct changes in behavioral dynamics which likely constitutes a major determinant of group effectiveness. These changes in group behavior could point at what Tajfel (1982) calls "an implicit conflict caused by acknowledged differences in power or rank" (p. 7). What could be hypothesized is that the initial out-group in this study reached a critical number of participants and started to reinforce and internalize the reason of being in opposition and

eventually outweighed the further minimized inner-group. A new form of cohesion based on ambivalence and avoidance of conflict is dominating the work group and determines individual behavior. A frequently heard statement from interviewees about this phase concerns their disappointment in assumed alliances and relations within the organization inferring that the negative out-group trait is powerful enough to displace existing relations. The work group is getting in opposition with the organization and starts losing grip on essential management support.

Conclusion

Given the importance of cooperation for cross-functional team effectiveness, trust deserves all the research attention it has received so far. A number of moderators of the effect of trust on cooperation have already been identified (Bachmann, 2001; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Mat & Jantan, 2009) . However, these studies hardly considered the role of individual affect, and consequently we know little about how trust affects individual group members and consequently their relationship with other team members. In this paper, I studied different patterns and behavior of team members to build a compositional perspective of the underlying group dynamics in their cross functional work groups.

The individual anxieties, like the ‘fear of losing power,’ ‘not belonging to,’ and ‘insecurity’ are some responses to the experienced lack of trust and power struggles characteristic for matrix structured organizations. They lay the foundation of a variety of defensive traits which due to their interdependency potentially accumulate in group defensive strategies. The psychoanalytical approach revealed that these unconscious dynamics that underpin cross-functional team effectiveness starts at an individual level. Considering the nature of a matrix organization, it is unlikely and undesirable to ground the inter-organizational competitiveness

with further structuring measures. Instead, becoming aware of the emotional and cognitive processes keeping the team participant from feeling an individual member of the group is a first step to improve the cooperative capabilities. Much more attention should be placed on intra-group relationship building and the processes supporting this, by articulating and reflecting on the dualistic demands on the group participant some of the imperative defense mechanism might become pacified or less dominating. This study also revealed that signs of group defense structures are the formation of out-groups and strong preference for the execution of non-core tasks. These signs are difficult to recognize as they are partly unconscious and difficult to address as they are not individual related. It might be difficult in a task and result driven organization, but results from this study suggest stimulating dialogue within the teams about values, principles, expectations, and fears of all cross functional group participants throughout its life-cycle. Eagerness to contribute to the objectives of this study suggests this might be appreciated and therewith effective.

Limitation

The selected characteristic for this study—power conflicts and trust—predicates a negative tendency that ignores the fact that cross-functional teams are still a favored solution for corporate projects. The initial empowerment of group members from different functional departments surpasses the question if charging a cross-functional team with major organizational issues is not a defense act itself.

Influences on group behavior and performance do not come in separate distinguishable packages; moreover, they add to an already over-determined behavioral environment, meaning there are more redundant features and causes for behavior and performance present than are necessary to cause the effect. Besides, many concepts of behavior only exist at a collective level

as they emerge from the interactions between group members. It is therefore both unrealistic and optimistic to assume that I can understand group dynamics without circumventing many conditions influencing the experiences gained during field research. For instance, one of the characteristic differences between cross-functional teams and other team structures is the relatively frequent exchange of team members. While new members joined the team, I found during the preparatory observation period when they evolved their purposes and strategies, their influence again redefined the perception I had on objective reality.

What I tried to do in this study is to make sense of what was observed and experienced. Sense-making, however, has less to do with discovery than with the construction of reality (Vansina & Vansina-Cobbaert, 2008). In this context, the created social construction, being the interpretation of the available data seen through a specifically chosen psycho-social lens, is what should make sense, not necessarily truth or reality. This stance introduces a first limitation—an absolute understanding of the influence of certain conditions like the characteristic power struggle in a matrix organization require in depth analysis and interpretation including other disciplines of social sciences like systems and organization theory as well. Confronted with the fact that there are different disciplines within the social science and even different schools within psychoanalysis who do interpret the same situation in diverse ways it is reasonable to conclude that interpretations made in this study are to be seen as the best possible conclusions seen from my point of view. Because of the subjectivity of observing and interpreting the collected data, and a position as participant observer in the field of research, the second limitation is the observer himself. As I just recently, however enthusiastically, entered the world of social science, I tried to avoid making imposing interpretations of the reality or making statements on a qualitative basis as if they are facts. Understanding that these limitations are inherent to the

discipline of psychodynamic analysis I wish my interpretations only to be understood as an approximation of the truth (Bion, 1970).

Future Research

Considerable research has focused on the internal management of cross-functional project teams and its impact on project performance. For example, Anthony et al. (2014) demonstrated that lateral coordination that occurs above the cross-functional project team is important for information flow and coordination of resources, thereby, building stronger support regarding the important role that department heads have with influencing project success. This study illustrated that despite these overt coordination mechanisms, a much stronger influence comes from the individually experienced trust and safety for those who are working in these cross-functional teams. The success of a cross-functional work group depends on the individual stepping forward and making his knowledge and inputs heard and simultaneously adapt other insights in the joint effort to find best solutions for business cases.

As Bandura (1977) pointed out: “The strength of peoples’ conviction in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they would even try to cope with given situations” (p. 193). Empowerment processes may help leaders to lessen the emotional impact of demoralizing organizational changes or difficult competitive challenges, but equally fosters dependency and powerlessness when team members do not experience sufficient trust to build relations with other team members. We can say that at best the matrix organization allows for managing local and global complexity through adequate deployment of resources however, at worst it also allows competitive mangers to pursue narrow objectives disregarding the effects on other units or resources. The psychodynamic view on the effects of power and trust in this study indicates that effectiveness of cross-functional teams greatly determines the scale between best and worst

case. This indicates a need to further understand the adequate leadership skills that foster trust and cooperation along the different axes of the matrix without reverting into bureaucratic solutions.

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Tables

Table 1

Overview of Interviewees

Interview no.	Gender	Age	Managerial role	Size of department	Representing in team
1	F	41-50	Yes	200	Installation
2	M	31-40	Yes	55	R&D
3	M	41-50	No	900	Engineering
4	M	21-30	No	900	Engineering
5	M	31-40	Yes	30	Strategy/Marketing
6	M	31-40	No	600	Procurement
7	F	21-30	No	600	Production
8	M	21-30	No	150	Finance
9	M	31-40	Yes	190	Production Technology
10	M	51-60	No	600	Procurement

Table 2

Overview of Team Observations

Participant no.	Gender	Age	Managerial role	Size of department	Representing in team
1	M	31-40	Yes	30	Strategy/Marketing
2	M	41-50	Yes	900	Engineering
3	M	31-40	No	900	Engineering
4	M	41-50	Yes	150	Finance
5	M	31-40	Yes	900	Engineering
6	F	21-30	No	20	Team support
7	M	21-30	No	20	Team support
8	F	21-30	No	150	Strategy/Marketing
9	M	31-40	Yes	190	Production Technology
10	M	41-50	Yes	55	R&D
11	M	31-40	Yes	55	R&D
12	M	41-50	No	900	Engineering
13	M	41-50	No	600	Procurement
14	M	21-30	No	900	Engineering
15	F	31-40	No	500	Service
16	M	51-60	No	90	Quality
17	M	31-40	Yes	900	Engineering
18	M	21-30	No	150	Finance

Figures

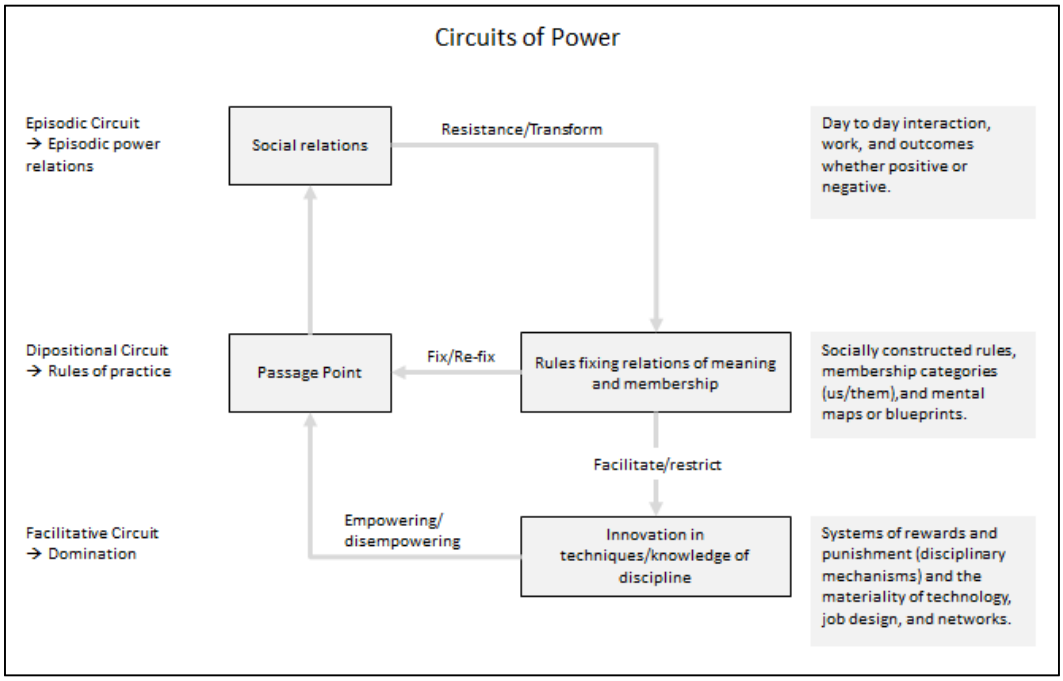


Figure 1. Circuits of power (Clegg, 1989).

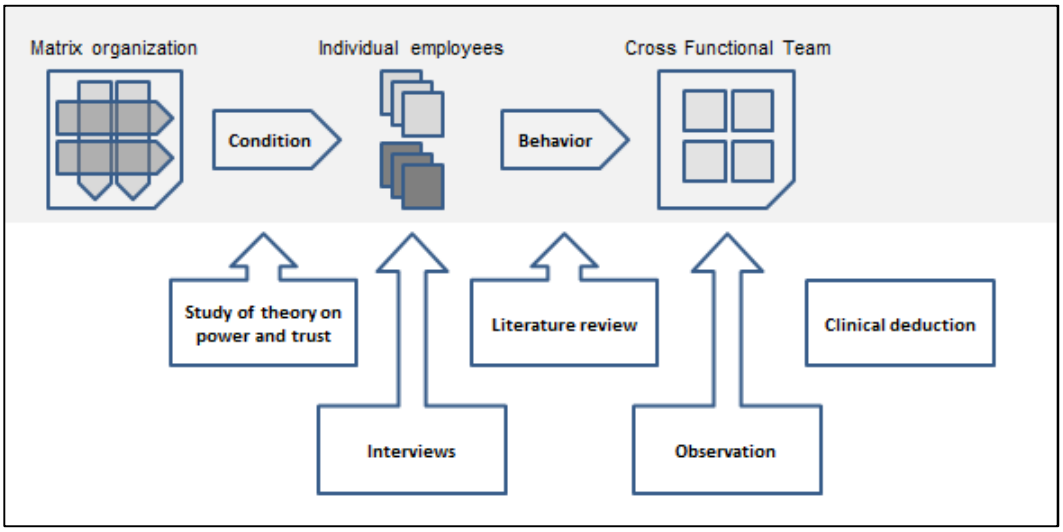


Figure 2. Research framework.

Appendix A

Interview Guidelines

i. Opening: Thank you for your kind willingness to participate in this interview.

ii. My reason for inviting for this interview are:
   1. 80% of the *Fortune* 500 companies are based on a matrix organization structure; only a handful of CEOs are satisfied with the speed of delivery and execution.
   2. With this interview, you are participating in my research into **typical group dynamic,** which has an effect on the **success** or **failure** of matrix teams. This research is the final part of my masters in Change Management at INSEAD. My aim with this interview is to increase my understanding about the invisible influences within and around a matrix team that have counterproductive effects on its purpose. Apart from closing my masters, the outcome of this research could be possibly used to achieve management awareness for the conditions necessary to make matrix teams work more effectively.

iii. Assuring:
   1. **Confidentiality:** as it is in my interest to get your most honest and genuine thoughts and opinions about life in a matrix team, I absolutely **guarantee** confidentiality. Whatever is said and written, I will take personal responsibility over.
   2. **Tape recording:** I want you to feel comfortable with the confidentiality because my next question is whether you to be recorded. As this is a semi-structured interview, it is for me absolutely necessary to concentrate on what we are talking about. I cannot write your responses quickly enough. You can ask me at any moment to stop the recorder or delete passages you don't like.

iv. Notification on interview structure:
   1. We will start with a verification of some **facts** that will help me categorize and interpret my interviews.
   2. Throughout the interview, I will make use of an **interview guideline** (pre-formulated questions)
   3. Despite the guidelines, it is our choice to **elaborate** on different topics if we so choose.
   4. **It is crucial for my research that you speak from your own experience and feelings as much as possible.**
   5. Again, I hope that we can talk **freely** without bothering about **confidentiality**.

A. Affirm pre-collected data interviewee.
    1. Gender, age.
    2. When did you start working for SWP? Year.
    3. What is your position level in the organization?
    4. Are you reporting in your position into the function or into the business unit structure, or both?
    5. In approximately how many matrix team set-ups have you participated?
    6. Have you worked in a corporate organization like SWP before? (check for references)

B. Aligning **definition** and **boundaries** of a matrix team:
    1. What is **your** definition of a matrix team? Ask to make **picture**.
    2. Were you participating in matrix teams in the Siemens definition as well? (check for references, comparison).
    3. What is your general opinion about the effectiveness of matrix teams?
    4. What would **you** consider to be the main obstacle keeping matrix teams from being effective?
    5. Can you give an example of how you are **affected** by these obstacles in your work in a matrix?
    6. Do you **understand** my objectives with this interview?

1. Attachment (to check the individual's role/contribution to connectedness in the "team as whole" concept, THE p.94).
    a. Where do you feel you **belong** most when you are participating in a team—your department or the team?
    b. What **represents** or what is the reason for this connection?
    c. What does it mean to you to **represent** your department when you are working in a matrix team?
    d. Do you remember a case of feeling in conflict with your **loyalty** towards your department of origin?

2. **Trust** (introduce that we are going to talk about trust)
    1. Working together requires a certain level of trust between team members. What is your **observation** about trust levels in matrix teams?
    2. How do both line-managers and functional (project) managers have a **role** in this?
    3. Do you have an opinion about how trust between people in a matrix could or even should be **improved**?
    4. What could you say about the **trust feeling** between members in a matrix team **you** have been part of? Do you have an example of a situation to illustrate your point?
    5. Do you maintain **different** trust levels with the people (managers) in your "home" team than with people in the "matrix" team you are part of?
    6. Can you recall a situation where your **integrity** towards one of the groups has been seriously under pressure?
    7. What would you say about **moral** consciousness in a matrix team?

3. **Conformity** (fear of losing power, empowerment):
    1. What is your opinion about **empowerment** of the people who participate in matrix teams?
    2. If we say that we all need a certain level of (decision) power to get our task done, then where do you think matrix team members get the energy or power **mostly** from to be successful in their task?
    3. How important ant is (personal) **power** for your **performance** in a matrix team?
    4. How do you respond when another team member or team lead uses his power to **influence your** position?
    5. Can you recall a situation where the influence of another team member brought you in **conflict** with the expectations of your line-manager?
    6. How would you like your line-manager to **judge** your performance in the matrix?

4. **Group think pressure:**
    1. Do you know the **effects** of group think?
    2. Do you **recognize** symptoms of group think within the teams you have been a member of?
    3. Do you think there is a **need** within the team to have a similar focus or opinion about an issue?
    4. Do you have experience with particular topics being deliberately **ignored** by the team to avoid problems?
    5. Do you see particular people in the team **protecting** the group from negative information?

5. **Feelings:**
    1. How well do other team members know you **personally**?
    2. How do you expect your team members **think** about you as a person?
    3. Can you feel **comfortable** and confident that other people in the team keep their promises to deliver?
    4. Can you recall a situation in which you felt **vulnerable** in front of the team?
6. **Altruism:**
    1. Do you think you can make your **career** come through by your participation in matrix teams?
    2. How about **helping** others in your matrix—is that expected or does everyone have to rely on themselves?
    3. What do you think people **see** first—your role or your performance in the team?

7. If you need to **characterize your leadership style** (Kets de Vries, 2004) in the matrix team, which of the following fits you best:
    a. Strategist (chess player)
    b. Change catalyst (implementation/turnaround specialist)
    c. Transactor (deal maker/negotiator)
    d. Builder (entrepeneur)
    e. Innovator (creative idea generator)
    f. Processor (efficiency expert)
    g. Coach (people developer)

   h. Communicator (stage manager)

8. **Final question:**
   a. By now you might have a good idea about my search for **typical** group dynamics in matrix teams that make them successful or not. What **question** should I have asked as well?
   b. Do you have any other **recommendations** for me with regard to this subject?
   c. Is there anything said that you now feel uncomfortable about?
9. **Closure:**
   a. Thank you very much for this conversation and your time.