

Socio-Psychological Features of a Small Group as a Target Society

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ABSTRACT: This article considers a small group as a target community. Defines and classifies a small group.

KEYWORDS: small group, social relations, target community, classification of small groups, joint activity.

Introduction: A small group is a complex social object in which the interests of society and the individual are intertwined. For a long time, representatives of various social and humanitarian disciplines have been asking the question: why do people unite in groups and why does society need a small group as a form of organization? What is the integrating, system-forming factor of its vital activity? Defining the role and functions implemented by a small group in relation to the individual and society helps to solve several problems. Firstly, the specification of the socio-psychological characteristics of small groups as elements of the social system, taking into account their target and functional differences, makes it possible to influence their productivity more successfully. Secondly, a small group is the most obvious and familiar example of a complex relationship between an individual and society, which can contribute to its development, but can also hinder self-actualization. Therefore, the problem of differentiation of socio-psychological characteristics of a small group as a form of organization of society and an environment for self-actualization of the individual remains as relevant.

Methods: Initially, the search for the reasons for the integration of a small group led domestic and foreign scientists to the need to investigate the value-motivational sphere of a small group. Thus, concepts of instrumental and socio-psychological cohesion appeared in foreign psychology, and categories of value-oriented, motivational, volitional, emotional, cognitive unity of a small group were developed in domestic science. Thanks to the work of the methodologists of the systematic approach, the researchers' interest was turned to the search for a system-forming factor of a small

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| 114 | ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by "Global Research Network LLC" under Volume: 3 Issue: 5 in May-2022 https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR |
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group, which is currently considered to be a single goal for the members of the group. Despite the fact that the goals of the group, or rather the collective, play a significant role in the activity approach, there was no need to differentiate them. The individual and the collective, united by a common idea of a bright future, built communism. However, now the social situation of the development of society requires a revision of the key elements of the life of small groups of various types. Acting as an instrument for the realization of social goals and at the same time an environment for the realization of the goals of individuals, a small group, on the one hand, is their qualitative derivative, on the other hand, in the course of self-development acquires a share of autonomy and as a community is able to function according to its internal laws.

Thus, in this paper, an attempt is made to differentiate the socio-psychological characteristics of small groups as target communities of various kinds, since the ability of a small group to accumulate and realize the goals of individuals, organizations, and society contributes to its effectiveness. Therefore, it is important to understand: a) how this balance is achieved; b) what role joint activity and other forms of joint activity play in the realization of the goals of small groups of various types.

Our earlier analysis of empirical and experimental work has shown that different types of small groups rarely become objects of one psychological study. We can borrow the experience of comparing the essential characteristics of small groups of different types from sociologists. Despite the fact that small groups are identified in sociology with the ambiguous concept of "social organization" or "target community", these categories inherently contain characteristics close to the definition of a "small group" in psychology. In addition, often a small group acts as an autonomous community, or a structural element of a large organization, therefore we consider the analogy of the properties of a small group and the sociological categories mentioned above to be fair. For example, according to A.I. Prigozhin, "... an organization is an artificial association of an institutional nature, occupying a place in society and intended to perform a more or less clearly defined function ...", it is hierarchical and manageable, which reflects the formal characteristics of small production groups. Other features that are related to a small group with a "social" and "target community" is a set of integrative properties and phenomena that are manifested by a small group in the process of its life.

Since a small group as a target community accumulates the goals of social actors at various levels, it is important to remember that its elements can be not only individuals, but also informal subgroups that make a significant contribution to group dynamics. Therefore, it is conditionally possible to distinguish several types of goals of a small group in accordance with its systemic, structural and functional levels:

The goals of individuals;

Goals of informal subgroups;

Group goals focused on maintaining the integrity and autonomy of a small group;

Supra- or extra-group goals that reflect the "mission", the totality of the relationship of a small group with the environment, other groups, an organization of a higher order.

The variety of goals considered by us, which a small group faces in the course of its functioning, give rise to at least several questions, namely: how is the combination of goals of subjects of different levels achieved? Is it possible to identify priority goals for different types of small groups? What is

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the role of joint activities and other forms of joint activity in their implementation? Let's try to answer them.

A key component of social relations at any level is symbolic exchange. At the same time, we can distinguish two mechanisms for achieving the goals of subjects of different levels, when the vital activity of the community acts as an instrument of such social exchange. If the request comes from society, large social groups or a small group as a subject, the realization of the goal is achieved directly through the activity and realization of the goals of individuals in the group. However, the realization of the goals of individuals and subgroups will be secondary to the goals of subjects of a higher order. In the second case, individuals independently unite in a group to realize their goals, which can only be achieved together or as a member of a group. And then the goals of subjects of a higher order will coincide with the goals of individuals or be their result. The two described mechanisms of social exchange unfold in communities of different levels and types simultaneously, but one of them will prevail depending on the primary goal of creating a small group to meet the needs of its members or a public request.

As for the various forms of joint activity that a small group is able to manifest as a subject, it is not customary in modern Russian psychology to absolutize the role of joint activity. Of course, joint activity is a form of conscious purposeful group activity, which is inherent in group subjects of a sufficiently high level, however, it also happens to be of varying degrees of "compatibility" according to L.I. Umansky, and its individual form is sufficient for the realization of the goals of individuals in a small group. In addition, such forms of joint activity as communication, group behavior, group actions and self-reflection play an equally important role for the formation and development of a group subject.

Results and Discussion: Within the framework of the study of the life process of small groups as target communities, we are interested in several grounds for classifying organizations identified by A.I. Prigozhin. Firstly, this is a criterion of the social function that an organization, and hence a small group as its structural unit, performs in relation to society. Secondly, the degree of orientation of a small group to the realization of the goals of individuals. An important addition to the mentioned criteria will be the specification of priority forms of joint activity for various types of small groups. Let's take a closer look at the classification we have reinterpreted.

Business organizations and small groups. The degree of formalization of relations in such small groups is high, rules and regulations are enshrined in the charter. Business organizations and small groups are created by individual or collective entrepreneurs, the state in order to: profit and meet the needs of individuals, long-term solutions to social problems; implementation of administrative functions integrating society; socialization, training, education, inculturation of individuals.

In the first two types of small business groups, the realization of the goals of individuals and subgroups will be secondary to the goals of higher-order entities. However, in small business groups created primarily as a tool of socialization, the goals of individuals will coincide with the request of society. For example, in various educational institutions, the goal of society and individuals is the socialization and training of professional skills of the latter.

For small business groups of the first two types, the priority form of activity will be joint activity of a jointly interacting, jointly consistent, jointly individual type. But, as practice shows, the totality of informal relationships, conditioned primarily by the individual goals of participants and subgroups,

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| 116 | <p>ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by "Global Research Network LLC" under Volume: 3 Issue: 5 in May-2022 https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR</p> |
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have a significant impact on the socio-psychological climate of a small group. Therefore, such forms of joint activity as communication, group behavior and self-reflection can contribute to or hinder the productivity of joint activities, play a significant role in the life of a small group.

As for small business groups focused on socialization and training of participants, joint activities in such groups are situational, unless, of course, involving students in joint activities in a group is not a consciously regulated strategy of an educational institution. For members of such small groups, the goal of obtaining higher education, for example, is similar, but not the same. However, the socio-psychological climate in small study groups, depending on the quality of communication, can contribute to or hinder the successful socialization of the individual, the development of her professional skills.

Allied organizations and small groups are of particular interest from the point of view of sociology and psychology, since they are an example of the direct self-organization of individuals in society. In organizations of this type, the goals uniting the group are especially important, the achievement of which ensures the satisfaction of the cultural, social, creative, political, material interests of the participants, their needs for self-actualization. Also, organizations or small groups of the union type can be characterized as associations created on the basis of the goodwill of the participants and subject to dissolution according to the mutual decision of their members. The degree of formalization of the relationship between the participants may be different, depending on the availability of the charter of norms and rules, the implementation of the principle of electability of managers.

The content of group goals of allied target communities may also be different. The activity of a group subject can be aimed at: solving acute social problems, implementing individually-oriented goals of participants, creating new products of an immaterial nature. However, in this case, the goals of society will coincide with the goals of individuals or be the result of their cooperation.

Regarding the forms of joint activity of allied small groups, we can only state the relationship of joint activity with the degree of formalization of the relationship between the participants. For example, the role of joint activities in the functioning of such allied small groups as a volunteer public organization and an amateur theater will be different.

Associative organizations or small groups are characterized by the spontaneous formation of rules and norms of their functioning, a naturally established hierarchy of management. These include, first of all, family and a stable company of friends. An important feature of such target communities, in addition to their voluntary formation, is the interdependence of meeting the needs of members of a small group. A significant form of joint activity for small groups of this type will be communication. Of course, in such a community, joint goals and activities may arise, but rather as a result of the successful realization by a small group of individual goals of the participants, their personal unified initiative.

The classification described above, of course, is not once and for all correct. Perhaps not all small groups can be assigned to any type unambiguously. Thus, small bandit and terrorist formations, despite their antisociality, can be classified as union-type organizations if such small groups function locally and satisfy the purely interests of their participants. In another case, we can attribute such formations to the business type of target communities if they are a link in a larger corruption or criminal scheme.

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| 117 | ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by "Global Research Network LLC" under Volume: 3 Issue: 5 in May-2022 https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR |
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Thus, the differences in the socio-psychological aspects of the functioning of small groups as target communities allow us to rethink the key components of the life of a group subject and build further psychological research taking into account these features.

Conclusions: The differences in the functioning of small groups revealed during the comparative analysis indicate the specificity of their orientation towards the implementation of the goals of subjects at various levels. The combination of individual, microgroup, group and supra-group goals is achieved through two mechanisms of social exchange, to varying degrees focused on the interests of society, large groups, organizations and the needs of the individual.

The priority of forms of joint activity for small groups of business, union, associative type varies depending on the degree of formalization of group relations, the purpose of the small group.

Prospects for further research. To investigate the "profile" of subjectivity of business, allied, associative small groups, revealing differences in the degree of expression of such socio-psychological characteristics of group subjectivity as interconnectedness and interdependence, the ability to show joint forms of activity, the ability to self-reflection.

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