Chapter 13

Communication That Damages Teamwork

The Dark Side of Teams

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Teams are small groups of organizational members who possess complementary characteristics, share a common goal, and are mutually accountable for their performance (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Organizational teams range from intact work units, through cross-functional groups (e.g., project teams), to ad hoc aggregates (e.g., discussion groups in high-involvement organizations). The latter two typically have a focused purpose and shorter lifecycle than other organizational teams (e.g., self-managing teams), which span multiple tasks and persist over time (Arrow, McGrath, & Berdahl, 2000).

Implementation of teams in U.S. organizations increased during the 1980s and 1990s, part of larger trends toward the modeling of such structures from collectivistic cultures, the commitment to participation processes in the workplace, the "flattening" of traditional organizational hierarchies for reasons of cost reduction, and the potential for collaboration afforded by communication technologies (Seibold & Shea, 2001). The use of problem-solving groups in *Fortune* 1000 companies increased from 74% during 1987 to 91% in 1992, and self-managing teams in those organizations increased from 27% to 68% in the same six-year period (Lawler, Mohrmann, & Ledford, 1992). By 1999, 78% of U.S. companies relied upon self-managing teams of employees (Lawler, 1999). Although the percentage of self-managed teams remained constant through 2005, *Fortune* 1000 organizations utilizing employee participation programs, including discussion teams, increased to 90% (O'Toole & Lawler, 2006). A national random sample, as well as a survey of organizations known to use teams, concluded that over one-half of U.S. organizations use teams (Devine, Clayton, Philips, Dunford, & Melner, 1999). Ongoing project teams were the most commonly used type, ad hoc project teams second most common, and production teams existed in more that 20% of U.S. organizations. Most teams were cross-functional, and teams were most prevalent in nonprofit organizations.

As teams have become more pervasive, attention has focused on team effectiveness and success (Seibold, 2005). *Teamwork* is among the most examined topics, both in scholarly work and popular treatments (e.g., Bacon & Blyton, 2005; Larson & LaFasto, 1989). Phrases such as "Teamwork makes the dream work" and "There's no I in team" are increasingly championed by managers and trainers and intoned by members.

Despite the dramatic increase in teams, and correlative focus on teamwork, many American workers are disinclined to collaborate with others in team structures. Organization-wide structural problems undermine team efficacy and frustrate team members, including lack of goal clarity, inadequate resources, insufficient training, misaligned reward systems, coordination demands, and leaders who fail to model effective teamwork (Hackman, 1990). And a host of negative individual, relational, and subgroup relational dynamics (Fritz & Omdahl, 2006)—including gossip, incivility, retaliation, bullying, maladaptive coping strategies, negativity biases, style differences, role conflict and power struggles, and outright conflict—make the idea of teamwork ring hollow. Small wonder that potential members experience grouphate (Sorenson, 1981), the predisposition "to detest, loathe, or abhor working in groups" (Keyton & Frey, 2002, p. 109). Organizational members frequently cringe at the mention of teamwork, which they associate with lengthy, inefficient, emotionally-draining experiences that they endure with fake smiles and hope to escape without offending others.

We examine these and other issues regarding teams. To do so, we adopt a multilevel perspective in this chapter and review individual, dyadic, subgroup, group, organizational, and environmental factors contributing to the dark side of teams. We begin by describing teams *with teamwork*—the bright side—including the dimensions along which teamwork must be built to be effective. Next, we conceptualize the dark side and outline the multilevel framework for understanding this destructive potential in teams. We follow this by discussing factors at the subordinate (individual, dyad, subgroup), group, and superordinate (organization, environment) levels that constitute teams in particularly destructive ways. Prior to concluding with how teams might organize in more constructive ways, we explore a cross-level demonstration of dark-side dynamics to illustrate the complexity of issues that challenge constructive team communication.

Teams with Teamwork: The Bright Side

Teams *with teamwork* are those in which members share and can articulate a team vision that transcends short-term goals. Members with high levels of teamwork also have defined, valued, and accepted role expectations, and enjoy some degree of role-related autonomy. They set high standards for themselves (as opposed to having standards imposed by managers) and are self-disciplined. They develop a structure that is responsive to environmental demands, yet appropriate for the organization.

Members in teams with teamwork make important decisions within the team (in contradistinction to having decisions made for them from atop the unit). Members share leadership, have a formal team leader who emphasizes personally fulfilling activities and works to secure resources that the team needs to excel collectively, or both. High levels of teamwork are most evident in the quality of member interactions: they freely share information and interpretations with each other, acknowledge and reinforce others' contributions and support, and convey and display mutual respect and trust with one another (see Seibold, 1995 for an early formulation and discussion of four dimensions underlying teamwork—vision, roles, processes, and relationships).

Teams with strong and enduring teamwork tend to experience greater productivity, more innovation and creativity, and higher levels of member satisfaction (O'Toole & Lawler, 2006). However, not all teams develop effective teamwork in the first place, and many that do are unable to manage the challenges to sustained teamwork. Indeed, the confluence of individual, dyadic, subgroup, group, organizational, and environmental forces lead many teams to organize and communicate in ways destructive to individuals, subgroups, organizations, and the groups themselves. We address this aspect of teams, their "dark side," throughout this chapter. First, however, we clarify what we mean by the term "dark side."

Conceptualizing the Dark Side

The dark side of teams includes both intentional and unintentional forces and behaviors that impede effective, constructive teamwork and have the potential to harm organizations and their members. Dark-side team interactions can be intentional because some behaviors are enacted specifically to sabotage, undermine, violate, or disrupt teamwork (e.g., withholding information, mobbing). They also can be unintentional because some efforts are meant to facilitate teamwork but fail to do so as a result of unforeseen and incompatible circumstances (e.g., excessive group homogeneity, time pressures, geographical dispersion). In conceptualizing the dark side this way, we adopt a broad interpretation of the metaphor and extend the work of interpersonal communication scholars:

> First, the dark side is about the dysfunctional, distorted, distressing and destructive aspects of human behavior. Second, the dark side dallies with deviance, betrayal, transgression, and violation, which includes awkward, rude, and disruptive aspects of human behavior. Third, the dark side delves into the direct and indirect implications of human exploitation. Fourth, the dark side seeks to shed light on the unfulfilled, unpotentiated, underestimated, and unappreciated domains of human endeavor. Fifth, the dark side [studies] the

> unattractive, the unwanted, the distasteful, and the repulsive. Sixth, the dark side seeks to understand the process of objectification—of symbolically and interactionally reducing humans to mere objects. Finally, the dark side is drawn to the paradoxical, dialectical … aspects of life. (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2007, p. 5)

We embrace this view for two reasons. First, although scholars have studied the dark side of group processes (e.g., Janis, 1972; Stohl & Schell, 1991), they are the exception; researchers and practitioners predominantly concentrate on improving the functional aspects of groups (i.e., the bright side). Second, as we discuss below, although there are important differences between dyadic and group communication, much of group communication is dyadic: leader-member, team member-team member, team member-coworker from another team. Hence, some of the dark side dynamics revealed by interpersonal researchers also have resonance for teams and teamwork.

Multilevel Approach

The seemingly simple difference in size between dyads and groups as small as three members affects numerous dynamics among members: influence, affiliation, role differentiation, task factors, and communication factors (Parks, 1974). Indeed, Parks presents ten conceptual distinctions between dyads and groups of three or more persons. In groups (a) leadership is more pronounced, (b) formation of subgroups is possible, (c) power and authority is less constrained, (d) messages of disagreement are more frequent, (e) activity and involvement is both less intense and unequal, (f) satisfaction with other members is lower, (g) behavior is more predictable, (h) communication networks are possible, (i) feedback contains less self-disclosure and intimacy, and (j) unequal participation is more likely. These ten differences remind us that where and how dark side components may be formed or manifested is more varied and complex than simply dyadic-level communication. More generally, as we will show in the remainder of this chapter, the dark side of teams may occur at the level of the individual member, the dyad, subgroup(s) of members, or the entire group. Furthermore, in view of our introductory discussion of teams and teamwork, organizational and even environmental factors may contribute to dark side dynamics.

Group scholars have recognized the importance of a multilevel approach (Myers & McPhee, 2006; Poole, 1999). Conceptually committed to understanding groups as holistic systems, much group scholarship implicitly or explicitly includes more than one level. For example, a group leader and a deviant—a member who repeatedly deviates from important group standards of conduct—are two very different (individual) roles in terms of their effects on group processes and outcomes (e.g., Fiedler, 1967; Hogg, 2001). Investigations of friendship cliques within a larger group find that subgroup formation also affects group processes (Markovsky & Chaffee, 1995, see also Sias, Chapter 7 this volume). Myers and McPhee (2006) found related but differential effects of socialization interaction in firefighter crews on member-level assimilation and group-level dynamics.

At higher levels of system complexity, organizational structures and proximal embedding contexts also influence teamwork processes (Arrow et al., 2000). Beyond the organizational contexts, the *environment* in which organizations exist—distal embedding contexts—make up part of a multilevel approach to understanding the forces that contribute to dark side team interactions. Distal embedding contexts include environmental factors that indirectly affect the teamwork processes (e.g., sector practices, societal influences, technological constraints, etc.).

The utility of a multilevel approach for understanding the bright side of teams, as indicated by even the brief review above, also suggests the importance of including multiple levels in understanding the dark side of team interactions. Accordingly, we examine the factors that can constitute dark side team interactions from a multilevel perspective. We organize our treatment around dynamics at subordinate (individual, dyad, subgroup), group, and superordinate (organization, environment) levels. Table 13.1 summarizes these levels and associated contributors to dark side team dynamics.

The Dark Side of Teams

Subordinate Levels

At the individual, dyad, and subgroup levels, the dark side involves motives, predispositions, and behaviors created at each strata that—either intentionally or unintentionally—hurt, distract, or disrupt teamwork.

Individual Level

In addition to demographic (i.e., sex/gender, race/ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, religion) and cultural differences between individuals, members may have certain predispositions that contribute to destructive team interactions (Haslett & Ruebush, 1999; Keyton & Frey, 2002). Individual-level dynamics that can harm group processes include aggressive communication (Infante & Rancer, 1996), communication apprehension (McCroskey & Beatty, 1998), multiple identities (Oetzel & Robins, 2003) and role strain (Goode, 1960), grouphate (Sorenson, 1981), withholding information (Price, Harrison, & Gavin, 2006), and social loafing (Karau & Williams, 1993).

Table 13.1 Dark Side of Teams: A Multi-Level Perspective

Environment Level	*Organization Level*	*Group Level*	*Subgroup Level*	*Dyad Level*	*Individual Level*
→ Geographic dispersion → Virtual environment faultlines	→ Inadequate resources → Timing problems → Ambiguous goals → Absence of managerial teamwork → Misaligned structures → Flawed appraisal and reward systems	→ Groupthink → Hazing → Speed traps → Group farrago → Concertive control → Conformity pressures → Obedience to authority	→ Majority/ minority dynamics → Coalitions → Tag-team influence blocks → Mobbing → Inappropriate humor → Dysfunctional competition	→ Close friendships → Deteriorating friendships → Romantic relationships → Face-threatening supervisor–subordinate relationships → Hurtful mentor–colleague relationships → "Difficult" coworkers → Distancing behaviors	→ Aggressive communication → Communication apprehension → Social loafing → Individual farrago → Grouphate → Withholding information → Multiple identities and role strain

To take just one of these as an example of the harmful effects on teamwork, consider a member's propensity toward aggressive communication —the tendency to force another person to believe something or behave in a particular way (Infante & Rancer, 1996). Aggressive communication is linked to four individual traits: (a) assertiveness—a tendency to be interpersonally dominant, ascendant, and forceful; (b) argumentativeness—a trait marked by presenting and defending positions on controversial issues while attempting to refute the positions of other people; (c) hostility—symbolic expression of irritability, negativism, resentment, and suspicion; and (d) verbal aggressiveness—attacking the self-concept of people instead of, or in addition to, their positions. Verbal aggressiveness is negatively related to team members' satisfaction and group consensus (Anderson & Martin, 1999).

Dyad Level

Teamwork dysfunction can emerge from two-person relationships that negatively affect the team. Examples of potentially dysfunctional dyads include close or deteriorating friendships (Sias, 2006), romantic relationships (Mainiero, 1986; Pierce & Aguinis, 1997), face-threatening supervisor–subordinate relationships (Gardner & Jones, 1999), harmful mentor–colleague relationships (Kinney, 2006), and "difficult" coworkers (Duck, Foley, & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Negative work relationships such as these are associated with reduced job satisfaction, diminished commitment, and workplace cynicism (Fritz & Omdahl, 2006).

To be sure, workplace friendships are advantageous to the befriended because they provide emotional and social support, job enjoyment, enhanced creativity (Sias, 2006), and stress relief (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). Friendships also can enhance organizational commitment, increase morale, and decrease turnover. However, friendships at work may become destructive when they contribute to a dysfunctional work environment, when they result in inequality, and, at times, when they deteriorate (Sias). Moreover, as Sias notes, friendships can be a powerful form of unobtrusive control that not only motivates people to accept an unsatisfactory status quo, but that binds workers to bad working environments because they do not want to abandon their friends. Workplace friendships also are subject to dialectical tensions such as equality/inequality, impartiality/favoritism, openness/closedness, autonomy/connection, and judgment/acceptance (Bridge & Baxter, 1992). Some of these friendship tensions are problematic for other team members, especially when the partners in a dyad differ in formal status (supervisor versus subordinate roles) or informal status (one is liked by all on the team, the other is not). Friendships also can become problematic—both for teamwork among all team members and for the close friends—when they perpetuate unequal distribution of rewards, when there is an inability to separate the expectations of the friendship from team expectations and procedures, when privacy boundaries are breached, and when daily interaction in the work environment damages the friendship (Sias).

When friendships at work deteriorate, it can be extremely uncomfortable for persons involved in the friendship, as well as for other team members. Emotion-management norms guiding the "appropriate" expression of authentic positive or neutral emotions and the masking of negative ones (Kramer & Hess, 2002) increase the discomfort in these situations if workers have to conceal felt emotions and "act as if" nothing is amiss. Once a friendship deteriorates, it becomes a non-voluntary relationship that may need to be maintained within the work environment, and in accordance with team norms concerning expression of emotion (e.g., "leave personal matters at home"). Hess (2000) describes three common distancing behaviors that can be destructive to the team when the awkwardness between parties bleeds over into task and informal interactions involving other team members. Distancing behaviors include expressing detachment, avoiding involvement, or displaying antagonism. These forms of destructive team communication take the form, respectively, of ignoring the other person and the relationship, being superficially polite, or expressing outward hostility by directly disclosing negative feelings.

Subgroup Level

The shared understanding of group identity and group norms bind together team members (Hogg & Tindale, 2005), but often in (sub)part rather than in whole. For example, Wit and Kerr (2002) found that when members think of themselves in terms of their subgroups they are more likely to act in the interest of the subgroup over that of the entire team. Potentially dysfunctional dynamics occurring at subgroup level include: (a) "tag-team" influence (Seibold & Meyers, 2007), in which influence occurs because one member (often of high status) competes with another's argument rather than the strength of their reasoning; (b) majority-minority dynamics (Meyers & Brashers, 1999), in which the disproportionate size of subgroups that hold different opinions leads to winners (the majority) and losers (the minority); and (c) inappropriate humor (Meyer, 1997), in which comments intended to be humorous but perceived by some other members as inappropriate divide the team.

Subgroups and coalitions threaten the group's unity, a disruption that can either facilitate positive change or completely divide the group (Wheelan, 2005). The formation of subgroups and coalitions are considered "growing pains" in the process of achieving organizational goals, and the divisive episodes may even be necessary for team development. Subgroups form in response to differing team member opinions about a leader (assuming a leader-directed team). Coalitions, on the other hand, are characterized by conflict and hostility and form when two or more members team up against others in the team, usually for a short period of time. Coalitions are clearly a part of the dark side of teams, and they harm teamwork on the relationships dimension noted earlier (Seibold, 1995).

"Mobbing," more frequently termed "harassment" (Brodsky, 1976) and "workplace bullying" (see Lutgen-Sandvik, Namie, & Namie, Chapter 2 this volume), can emerge from coalitions in teams. Mobbing and bullying are "hostile and unethical communication ... directed in a systematic way by one *or a few individuals* mainly towards one individual" (Leymann, 1996, p. 168; emphasis added). A form of emotional, psychological abuse, mobbing typically begins with small acts of disrespect and becomes blatant, harmful behavior when these acts are persistent and enduring (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). When team members "gang up" on an individual, involvement in the team and performance suffer. Worse, the actions of the "mob" may be unnoticed, ignored, tolerated, or even encouraged by the organization—re-emphasizing the multilevel nature of forces contributing to dark side dynamics.

Group Level

Although the dark side of teams often is rooted in communication-related dynamics just noted at the individual, dyadic, and subgroup levels, the dark side is often caused or manifested primarily at the group level. The dark side of teamwork at the group level emerges from team processes such as groupthink (Janis, 1972), hazing (Nuwer, 1990), "speed traps" associated with members' false perceptions of time urgency (Perlow, Okhuysen, & Repenning, 2002), group farrago (Stohl & Schell, 1991), and concertive control (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985), among others. The latter two dysfunctional processes are grounded in an analysis of group communication, and we treat both in detail here.

Farrago, literally a mix of feed for cattle, figuratively refers to a confused, dysfunctional group fed by a dysfunctional individual member (often a bully or unusually dominant and vocal person) but whom group members enable and reinforce through their own behaviors (Stohl & Schell, 1991). Group farrago has the potential to destroy teamwork at the group level not only because of the characteristics of a focal, problematic individual, but also due to specific structural properties that sustain a farrago's existence at the group level (Stohl & Schell). These properties include the existence of an explicit policy encouraging participation by all members in decision making (including the problematic individual), lack of clear authority within the team, ambiguous rules of conduct, high task interdependence, and tolerance of members' unconventional and detrimental behaviors. These conditions then interact with group processes—before, during, and after meetings in which the dominant "jerk" frustrates other members—and add to the individual farrago's destructive potential. For instance, a tension emerges between the force of the individual and the resistance of the remaining team members. The participation norm, ill-defined rules and authority, and weak socialization enable the individual farrago's actions; the lack of official status for the individual supports the other members' resistance. Additionally, group norms tolerate the individual farrago's dominant and destructive behavior. Dysfunction thus breeds further dysfunction, and the cycle destroys relationships, procedures, performance, and essentially, teamwork.

Similarly, teams evidencing concertive control risk eroding teamwork. Tompkins and Cheney (1985) characterize concertive control systems as those where rules and regulations are enactments of the members' collective understanding of the values, mission, and goals of their organization and team. This form of control is unobtrusive and thus less apparent to the employee. Policies and procedures set forth by management continue to be part of the team's landscape, but the unit's "rules" are those interpretations and expansions that become an integral part of team structures and practices—and members' actions toward, and relationships with, each other. Unlike bureaucratic control, the locus of control rests within the team. The team develops premises that guide members' actions, and ultimately their decision making, based upon a negotiated consensus concerning the organization's (i.e., management's) overarching goals and objectives (Barker, 1993). Although such teams may fare positively in terms of performance, the control is ultimately detrimental for teamwork. Indeed, concertive control is part of the dark side to teamwork in autonomous and semi-autonomous work teams.

For example, Barker's (1993) ground-breaking study of concertive control in self-directed teams documents the evolution of attendance policies, among other things, for teams within an organization. Over time and given particular organizational requirements, teams' concertive control became as punitive and oppressive as any top-down system of overt control. What began as general norms that the whole team embraced eventually became stringent rules used to dictate specific members' actions. The rules created stress and pressure for new and old team members alike. Moreover, it was more difficult for newer members to accept the rules as they were imposed upon them rather than emerging as a natural outgrowth of their organizational identity. This fueled dysfunction among team members as a discrepancy in power grew between old and new members, and between full-time and temporary workers. If new or temporary members chose not to conform to the team's "policies," they were reprimanded and ostracized by the team until they were driven from the workplace.

Superordinate Levels

The dark side of teamwork also emerges due to forces from levels that transcend and encompass teams—the organization in which teams are situated (Seibold, 1998) and organizations' external environments (e.g., sector, cultural, social, political). As we noted in the introduction, the implementation of team structures has been driven by philosophical, cultural, economic, and technological forces in U.S. organizations and their environments. However, such factors and their consequences at the organization and environment levels can—intentionally or unintentionally—influence teams in a way that hurts, distracts, or disrupts teamwork. At the organization level, contextual factors can influence the roles, processes, and relationships dimensions of teamwork (Seibold, 1995). For instance, Stohl and Putnam's (1994) bona fide groups perspective suggests interconnections between a group and the organization in which it is embedded. This perspective also points to the role-related implications of multiple memberships (e.g., members' roles in one group to conflict with their roles in other groups) and permeable boundaries (e.g., flow of new members into a group) that can lead to intragroup role competition with existing members. At the environment level, larger contextual factors directly or indirectly affect group processes. For example, Oetzel's (2002) work on cultural diversity reveals the need to consider vertical differences, especially status, and cultural differences (e.g., individualism–collectivism) to understand how teams might become dysfunctional in culturally diverse settings. These issues are particularly important to groups globally collaborating (Stohl & Walker, 2002).

Organization Level

The dark side of teamwork is greatly influenced by the performance of administrators and managers who often serve as organizational-level representatives. Organizations have a responsibility to provide teams with the time, goals, guidelines, and resources required to complete their tasks effectively. The absence of these negatively affects team processes and performance. Indeed, the misappropriation of time, ambiguous goals or guidelines, and inadequate resources often lead to team dysfunction.

Managers' ability to provide adequate time and to organize work along a meaningful timeline are important contributors to team effectiveness and productivity. These guide the pace of work, and they provide benchmarks by which teams can determine when and how various parts of their work should be altered, as well as when that work should be completed (Hackman, 1990). Time limits and deadlines are among the most powerful temporal features observed in work teams (Ballard & Seibold, 2003). When these limits are in place and reinforced by managers, teams are able to develop rhythms and cycles that facilitate task completion. Conversely, teams without deadlines or those with confusing ones typically encounter problems. In such cases, pace is slower, work is completed sporadically, and members work on multiple projects simultaneously with poor coordination and little or no prioritization. The *communicative* bases of organizational temporality (i.e., what members intersubjectively understand time to mean in their organizations and units) are well documented (see Ballard & Seibold, 2003), as are the related coordination and conflict implications for teams (Ballard & Seibold, 2006).

Teams also require clear goals in order to use their autonomy and discretion to develop meaningful paths to those ends, to develop useful work structures, and to avoid socio-emotional problems (Seibold, 1998). Shaw's (1990) case study of mental health treatment teams in a hospital whose mission included therapy, training, and research illustrates the dysfunctional effects of conflicting organizational goals on teams. A tension between training and therapy made it difficult to provide adequate services to patients, particularly when team members changed and new ones were unaware of important and relevant information. Research and therapy were sometimes in conflict; using new and untested therapeutic techniques could potentially harm patients. Employees could not work effectively as a team because they had different (mission) motives as reasons for the choices they made in providing patient care. Providing effective patient care was even more difficult when new employees were unaware of the reasons certain policies were in place and chose to implement their own "better" way. The problems these conflicts created along the processes (operations-procedures-structures) dimension (Seibold, 1995) continued the destructive cycle in this team and shifted team interactions to the dark side.

Environment Level

Numerous challenges to teamwork emerge from the larger environment in which a modern team may be embedded. The increase in global commerce and global organizations presents new challenges to work teams whose members may be located across different time zones, operate in different countries, or interact and coordinate work via communication technologies without personal presence. The dark side of teams in complex organizations is often fueled by dispersed locations and the dynamics of virtual communication (see also Bazarova & Walther, Chapter 12 this volume). For example, a team of people from various locations within a multinational corporation must mitigate factors relating to *geographic dispersion* (separation in distance and time), as well as challenges that arise in the *virtual* team environment (e.g., nationality, trust, asynchronous communication, spontaneity, and social support). We consider each of these next.

Geographic dispersion refers to the objective, structural aspects of a team's composition, including varying dimensions and degrees of spatial distance, temporal distance, and configuration (O'Leary & Cummings, 2007). Although new technologies enable coordination and instant communication among geographically dispersed team members, there are dark side components in each of the three dimensions. *Spatial distance* is the physical distance between or among team members. With increased spatial distance, isolation of individuals or subgroups becomes more prevalent, and feedback is problematic for those who are "out of sight." As team members become more widely dispersed from one another, the number of time zones in the team becomes salient. This *temporal dimension* includes the degree to which team members' work schedules overlap. Work schedule incongruity can reduce synchronous interaction, spontaneous communication, and real-time problem solving. These coordination challenges may set the stage for *configurational* difficulties such as the development of dominant subgroups, power imbalances, and poor coordination with other groups.

Geographic dispersion of team members is endemic to virtual teams and is among their defining features, although virtuality is not the opposite of collocation (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006). Rather, virtuality has four components: geographic dispersion, dependence on technology, dynamic structure, and feelings of nationality. The more all four components characterize the team, the more it is considered to be a virtual team. The collocation of team members, on the other hand, allows for face-to-face communication, spontaneous interaction, and social support.

These four components of virtuality have unique effects on performance. For example, dependence on technology for basic communication tends to result in less innovation than is found in collocated teams with more information-rich, face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, the greater the extent to which a team is structurally dynamic (i.e., has fluid membership), the greater the uncertainty and risk that members feel about each other, especially with regard to sharing sensitive information. These dark side aspects of virtual teams are not surprising since team members also usually have a short history together and lack shared organizational memory. Increased feelings of nationality may increase the likelihood for subgroup social categorization, resulting in more salient divisions between subgroups of a work team. Such "faultlines" increase conflict, erode trust, and are most likely to be found between subgroups on teams characterized by geographic dispersion and greater degrees of virtuality (Poltzer, Crisp, Jarvenpaa, & Kim, 2006). They are prominent dark side dynamics in virtual teams, factors inherent in the environment level of those teams.

Crossing Levels

We have argued that the dark side of teams emerges as a complex function of multilevel dynamics that—singly and taken together—obstruct effective teamwork. We reviewed more than two dozen contributing dynamics at subordinate (individual, dyad, subgroup), group, and superordinate (organization, environment) levels. We have implied that these dark side dynamics operate not simply within levels but across them, although we have not illustrated that in great detail thus far. Our treatment of individual and group farrago (Stohl & Schell, 1991) crosses levels; like Stohl and Schell, we use the farrago phenomenon to underscore the mutually constitutive nature of communication at multiple levels affecting teams, including their dark side.

Zimbardo's (2007) explication of the Lucifer Effect, however, is a fully developed cross-level example of the dark side of teams that is especially instructive for our purposes. In one sense, Zimbardo deals with the individual level of dysfunction as he attempts to understand what compels ordinarily "good" people to do "evil" (e.g., prison guards' mistreatment of prisoners). Consistent with our conceptualization of the dark side, Zimbardo defines evil as "intentionally behaving in ways that harm, abuse, demean, dehumanize, or destroy innocent others—or using one's authority and systemic power to encourage or permit others to do so on your behalf" (p. 5). These behaviors can be explained from a dispositional, situational, or systemic point of view.

Many analyses invoke the dispositional view, which focuses on personality and psychological traits but does little to explain how two people with very different dispositions can commit the same evil act. However, a systemic perspective can help interpret evil actions by focusing on the conditions, circumstances, and situational factors that foster the deplorable behaviors. Two of the most important situational aspects that teams experience and that may encourage individual and collective evil behaviors are the *pressure to conform* and *obedience to authority*.

Zimbardo (2007) demonstrates conformity pressures with reference to Asch's (1958, cited in Zimbardo) line experiments. Participants were shown a line and asked to choose one of three other lines whose length matched the original. Among the three alternatives, one line was clearly longer, one shorter, and one exactly the same length. When alone, participants usually chose correctly; when part of a group, participants more often answered in accordance with the others even when they knew the answer was incorrect. This research suggests that people conform based on either informational needs or normative needs—the needs to belong or be accepted. Like Janis's (1972) analysis of groupthink, Zimbardo notes that conformity can be dysfunctional—in this case due to the "evil of inaction" (p. 317).

Similarly, when power differences exist within teams, Zimbardo (2007) asserts that individuals may become evil in exercising that power or, conversely, allow themselves to be subject to that power and be complicit in its illegitimate ends. In the Enron and WorldCom scandals, Zimbardo argues, certain members of those corporations' management teams used their power to commit egregious acts while numerous other team members were complicit in the dark side by their own inaction. Legitimate power differences also encourage dark side behaviors due to extreme obedience. Zimbardo demonstrates this phenomenon with reference to Hofling and colleagues' experiment involving 22 nurses. Each nurse received a call from an unknown physician who directed them to administer (a lethal amount of) medicine to a patient so that it would begin to take effect by the time the doctor arrived at the hospital. Although each nurse knew the prescribed dosage was lethal, all but one eventually deferred to the physician's perceived authority and attempted to carry out the doctor's orders until stopped by researchers.

What Zimbardo (2007) characterizes as the "evils" of inaction and extreme obedience are tangible examples of dark side behavior, and neither is necessarily rooted in an individual's personality or disposition. Instead, Zimbardo's "Lucifer Effect" suggests that the combined effects of predisposing individual and dyadic forces and the pressure to conform or the attribution of power at the group level jointly—and *across levels*—shed light on the dark side of teams with respect to their perpetration of despicable deeds. Together with Stohl and Schell's (1991) analysis of group farrago, Zimbardo's work offers compelling evidence for the mutually constitutive nature of the multiple levels we presented on the dark side of teams.

Dark Side *and* Bright Side Communication

Also apparent in our review is that the dark side in teams may be reflected in and constituted by the same medium as the bright side—communication. That is, members' interactions comprise both constructive and destructive organizing. On one hand, research has uncovered a plethora of dark side components. In order to achieve effective teamwork, a team necessarily must avoid these implied pitfalls (Burtis & Turman, 2006). But how does a work unit avoid falling victim to the dark side when achieving effective teamwork demands similar, if not the same, processes that quickly become problematic in teams with excessive concertive control?

Moreover, while pursuing task and maintenance activities, teams constantly negotiate simultaneous and multiple levels of communicative organizing—each of which is capable of manifesting dark side dynamics. Hence, the potential interactions among multiple dark side components, or dark side and bright side components, further complicate understanding dysfunctional teamwork. Can these interactions be beneficial to the unit? If so, in what ways? Addressing this multifaceted process may afford a deeper understanding of the dark side of teamwork and the complexity of group processes in general. On a related note, since the evaluation of team effectiveness is usually *post hoc*, the negotiation between the bright side and the dark side is minimized, if not completely ignored. Like team outcomes, communication is often truncated to a linear process and with dichotomous results—successful or flawed. Overlooked are underlying dynamics: whether a team preemptively dealt with the potential dark side, sensed the emergence of the dark side but effectively countered it, or suffered the effects of it but eventually came out of it.

As implied by our discussion, the dark side of teams is usefully juxtaposed against the bright side—teamwork. Teams must manage numerous dialectics or tensions (Kramer, 2004), most of which involve the bright side *and* the dark side like those associated with workplace friendships: equality/inequality, impartiality/favoritism, openness/closedness (Bridge & Baxter, 1992). For most team dialectics, the bright side is the positive manifestation (e.g., success) and the dark side is the negative manifestation (e.g., failure) of the tension. Decision-making group members, for example, must vigilantly examine various proposals to ensure proper evaluation before deciding on the best one (Hirokawa & Rost, 1992). Failing to exert such effort may result in groupthink-like symptoms (e.g., self-censorship). But if a member questions everything (even if his/her motives are for the overall good of the team), she or he may be seen as a farrago by other members. The dark side of team interactions, then, can also be seen as teamwork that is ill-fitting, given certain contexts and goals. As such, the necessity of the dark side invites further analysis and future research.

The dark side of team interactions is rich with investigative potential. In addition to better understanding the cross-level, dialectical, and inherently communicative dark side dynamics just noted, future research should consider a more developed model that considers additional dark side components from existing research as well as the potential of a more complex process involved in creating, maintaining, or perpetuating the dark side. Moreover, we see a need for prescription or intervention, in the forms of communicative strategies to (a) prevent potential dark side components, (b) deal with or manage enactments of the dark side, and (c) effectively cope with the aftermath of the dark side. As organizational work groups and teams continue to increase, so must our understanding of team processes—both bright and dark sides.

Constructive Organizing: Enabling the Bright Side, Dis(en)abling the Dark Side

In this final section we explore how teams can organize in constructive ways. We emphasize, first, the group level—especially the four dimensions underlying strong teamwork noted at the outset. Then we turn to other levels in the multilevel approach we have taken, examining ways that dynamics at the individual, dyad, organizational, and environmental levels can contribute to constructive, bright-side teamwork.

Group Level Organizing

Teams seeking enhanced teamwork must overcome challenges at the collective level along four dimensions (Seibold, 1995). These dimensions—*vision*, *roles*, *processes*, *and relationships*—reflect areas of significant member interaction that create and recreate teamwork. Communicative organizing along these dimensions is qualitatively different than organizing along related dimensions of groups and teams without teamwork—goals, jobs, structures, and interactions respectively. We consider them in turn, in each case juxtaposing typical group communicative organizing with that characterizing teams with high teamwork.

Organizational groups have goals, which typically are determined and demanded by managers atop those units or by the formal leaders within each group. However, teams with high levels of teamwork are distinguished by the vision members themselves also foster and embrace. *Vision* involves not only members' desired end state (i.e., the goals and objectives they may have internalized and their extensions), but also how the process of envisioning those ends and the result of attaining them affect the development of that unit and its unity, as well as the team's identity (for members and for outsiders).

Members of work groups have jobs, the formal duties associated with their assigned, defined position in the unit. However, members of teams characterized by high levels of teamwork also have roles that may be more or less than their jobs. Team leaders, for example, usually share their formal job duties through empowering other members and through semiautonomous team management processes (while those leaders assume responsibility for activities outside the team—such as resource gathering, advocacy, and boundary spanning). Conversely, team members typically enact behaviors and functions that are more than their formal jobs—assisting others as needed, assuming responsibilities not included in their job descriptions, and providing needed informal functions necessary for maintaining team cohesiveness and ensuring task locomotion. *Role*-related communicative organizing leading to and recreating teamwork first entails whether and how each member comes to understand what other members expect of him or her. In turn, in units with high levels of teamwork, how does each member's role perception become consistent with others' expectations for her or him? Importantly, how does each member come to feel valued by others in the group for the role(s) she plays—especially when that may be less than the member can do or wishes to do, choosing instead to be "a team player" in the service of the team's vision?

Work units possess, indeed are characterized by, the operations and procedures that structure members and enable group performance and goal achievement. As with goals, these are often created by managers.

However, in units in which members attain strong teamwork with each other, the foundational task and maintenance *processes* that must be developed to ensure successful task accomplishment and to sustain teamwork tend to be substantially supplemented by the members themselves. Processes in teams with high levels of teamwork can be more flexible and responsive to the changing needs in the team, and challenges from its environment, than "standard operating procedures" that usually are implemented in top-down fashion by managers. Furthermore, in groups and teams that achieve high levels of teamwork, there are sufficient resources (financial, personnel, technology, and material) to sustain teamwork. There also are reward, training, and information systems that enable and facilitate members' strong teamwork. As Hackman (1990) observed, "Groups that have appropriate structures tend to develop healthy internal processes, whereas groups with insufficient or inappropriate structures tend to have process problems" (p. 498).

Finally, members of any group interact with each other directly and indirectly (through leaders and others in the team, and using multiple channels that vary in their richness). Members of groups or teams evidencing teamwork attain qualitatively different, and better, communication with each other, which in turn fosters stronger interpersonal relationships among team members than among members of units in which teamwork is not evident. This *relationships* dimension of teamwork refers to communication among members characterized by respectful and open sharing of information, by perspective taking and valuing difference, as well as the allowance for constructive communication of disagreement and striving for consensus. Though seemingly less central to task achievement and therefore often ignored, the communicative processes that build effective relationships among members are intrinsic to teamwork, the bright side of teams.

Multilevel Organizing

As indicated in Table 13.1 numerous factors, and at multiple levels, have the potential to darken team interactions. Teams that seek to enhance teamwork must therefore counteract them by disabling them or at least not enabling them—what we term dis(en)abling dark side forces. Many of the threats to teamwork we have identified will be dis(en)abled in direct proportion to the degree to which team members communicatively organize to foster teamwork on each of the four underlying dimensions just reviewed: unifying around a vision, negotiating and valuing all members' roles in the team, internally developing effective task and maintenance processes, and fostering stronger collegial relationships among members. Teams mediate individual, subgroup, and organizational influences (Seibold, 1998), and—as the nexus of teamwork—members' own communicative organizing can dis(en)able dark side forces. At the individual level, for example, aggressive communication, withholding information, and communication apprehension are neutralized, even remedied, in the process of members' learning and enacting communication that is open, respectful, and driven toward consensus. Similarly, social loafing, individual farrago, and grouphate have no bases nor spaces for development in teams in which members' communication is directed toward improved teamwork. The same is true of many dyad level forces (e.g., preventing or coping with dark side effects of close or deteriorating friendships, difficult coworkers, and distancing behaviors) and subgroup dynamics (e.g., majority-minority influence, coalitions, mobbing). And some dark side forces at the organizational level (e.g., ambiguous goals, misaligned structures) and environmental level (e.g., virtual team faultlines) will similarly be counteracted as part of, and as a consequence, of members' efforts to communicatively organize more effectively along vision, process, and relationship dimensions.

At the same time, in order to dis(en)able these dark side forces many things can be done on behalf of the team by management or human resources representatives, or by the team itself, and by outside members' efforts to develop teamwork noted above. Careful screening and selection of members for entry to the team, and socialization of them thereafter, can inoculate against the dark side at the individual level (by eliminating or developing potentially problematic members), the dyad level (by dealing proactively with problematic relationships), and the subgroup level (by confronting mobbing, dysfunctional competition, and inappropriate humor). Moving to the superordinate level, Lawler (1995) reports six organization level factors that improve the probability of successful teams when organizations are transitioning to team-based structures: (a) the existence of a company-wide philosophy that is consistent with teams; (b) organization of top managers in team structures themselves; (c) design or redesign of members' work in ways that require team structures; (d) an appraisal system tied, at least in part, to members' performance as a team; (e) a reward system partially allocated for team outcomes, not only for individual performance; and (f) training for all members in the skills needed to succeed in teams. Read in the context of our analysis of organizing initiatives outside a team that might inoculate against dark side forces on it and enable members within it to develop teamwork, any and all of these organization level initiatives by management or human resources have the potential to reduce superordinate constraints on the bright side of teams—teamwork.

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