Key elements in a sociodramatic approach to groupwork

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SOCIODRAMA IN SPAIN

As in other countries, sociodrama events and publications are fewer in number than in psychodrama. However, I have drawn together and listed many of the existing articles on sociodrama in Spain at the end of this chapter.

SOCIODRAMA AND HUMAN GROUPS

In my experience, sociodrama works with the sociodramatic roles i.e. the social and cultural role aspects, linking members of an already-established group to the remainder of the roles of the whole group, using deep action techniques. Established groups have a long history of inter-relationships. Sociodrama works with groups that score high in the 'acquaintance test', where members meet each other almost every day (through family, company, school or community interactions etc.) and develop their own specific group culture (Moreno, 1960, p.200). Group psychodrama, in contrast, works with any of the roles in the social or cultural atom of any individual in an unestablished group.

Sociodrama works with more specific sociodramatic roles, deals with more specific sociodramatic dysfunctional roles, and works to develop the group's overall social structure. The key is to help that specific and unique social group to mature in a sociogenetic and sociometric way. Sociogenetic maturation means group development from the low sociogenetic first and second levels called "non attachment interaction" and "affiliation", through the third, fourth and fifth levels called "belonging", "multiple consensus leadership" and "logic discussion

compromise", to the high sociogenetic sixth and seventh levels called "task centered" and " experiential maturity" (Alvarez Valcarce, P. 1995; Borgatta, E. F. & Cottrell, L. S. 1956)

Sociometric maturation is the process whereby this shift is carried out, from low cohesion between group members (who make choices to interact only in pairs) to high cohesive structures such as triangulation (choices in threes), circularization (where all group members make choices to interact with each other) and hierarchies (where the group successfully establishes agreed-upon internal structures, such as roles or sub-groups with specific responsibilities and different sociometric status). That kind of movement requires one to work with all the members of an established group that meets frequently (Álvarez Valcarce, 1995).

Sociogenetically, group maturity (the sociodramatic goal) is a kind of evolution that can be diagnosed by sociometric and behavioural objective methods (role testing). Highly developed groups have sociometric configurations of circularization and hierarchies, where the tele factor is operating widely. Sociogroup task roles and psychegroup maintenance roles are all enacted with special emphasis on those roles that enhance the tele factor and enable the group to operate within well-defined role boundaries. Here, dysfunctional roles will have almost disappeared (Álvarez Valcarce 2009).

In 1943, Moreno first conceived the idea he entitled 'sociodrama' in order to overcome psychodrama's limitations in dealing with a variety of cultural groups. Here is how he described it:

> "...the true subject of sociodrama is the group. It is not limited by a special number of individuals, it can consist of as many persons as there are human beings living anywhere, or at least of as many as belong to the same culture. Sociodrama is based upon the tacit assumption that the group formed by the audience is already organized by the social and cultural roles which in some degree all the carriers of the culture share. It is therefore incidental who the individuals are, or of whom the group is composed, or how large their number is. It is the group as a whole which has to be put upon the stage to work out its problem, because the group in sociodrama corresponds to the individual in psychodrama...
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> ...sociodrama is introducing a new approach to anthropological and cultural problems, methods of deep action and of experimental verification. The concept underlying this approach is the recognition that man is a role-player, that every individual is characterized by a certain range of roles which dominate his behavior, and that every culture is characterized by a certain set of roles which it imposes with a varying degree of success upon its membership. The problem is how to bring a cultural order to view by dramatic methods. This would be comparatively simple if (a) all the crucial roles and situations of a culture were known, (b)

if a number of individual participants of this culture were on hand for the purpose of re-enactment. A skillful director could take advantage of the fact that these individuals, being detached from their native soil, are able to play their own role with a certain degree of deliberation and objectivity."

<div align="right">(Moreno, 1943, p.331)</div>

I would like to highlight some of his words:

- "…the tacit assumption that the group formed by the audience is **already organized** by the social and cultural roles…"

- "…at least of as many as **belong to the same culture…"**

- "…The problem is how to bring a **cultural order** to view by dramatic methods…"

- "…the **crucial roles** and situations of a culture **were known**…"

- "…A skilful director could take advantage of the fact that these individuals, being detached from **their native soil**…"

I think Moreno's words put the focus of sociodrama on groups who are, sociometrically speaking, *already organized*, whose members *belong to the same culture*. The director has to detach them from *their native soil* in order to facilitate change, through spontaneity and creative dramatic methods, as group members play, create and re-create the *crucial roles* they take in order to promote their belonging to a reference group or cultural context.

Sociodrama can have an equally important social active learning function of empowering the group, and can also contribute to the development of the sociometric status rates of the group or groups in the wider social net. Group sociometric status rate is the degree to which an established group is chosen by other groups and is also the degree of integration of group members with the members of other culture groups, into a new social network with a common value base, or 'higher axiological field value' (Álvarez Valcarce, 1997). Moreno's 'Social Gravitation Law' (Moreno, 1960, p.300) talks about the alternate rhythm between the differentiation process that separates groups and the transmission processes between them. This rhythm depends on sociometric attractions and rejections.

Inter-group conflict is one of the main arenas for sociodrama interventions. In fact, when doing multi-disciplinary team building in an organization, it is frequently the most difficult task. In my experience of using sociodramatic action learning for leadership and team development in companies, the failure of many project teams to achieve their goals is often attributable to the fact that team members are chosen for their

professional specialized task skills alone, when they may belong sociometrically to different and opposing groups.

It is the same in the field of community sociodrama. It is essential to make a sociometric diagnosis of any intergroup conflict, so that the director can assign sociodramatic roles according to each group's sociometric status in the intersected group networks of the overall community. This way, the director can foster changes in the sociometric configuration, through promoting encounters on the sociodrama stage. The key is to find the action sociometric criterion that allows positive tele attractions to generate new creative role networks. An example of this was the linguistic analysis of flamenco songs in a classroom where there were conflicts in between gypsy and non gypsy pupils

To summarise so far, it is my firm belief that the action learning method of sociodrama can only appropriately and successfully be used with a group, or groups, that already meets regularly. The group must also be facing an important, urgent task, problem or project, for which the members need to develop and implement action strategies. These can be tried out through creative role development and creating the new and needed roles.

WORKING WITH THE SOCIODRAMATIC ROLE

There are three distinct aspects to the sociodrama framework:

1. the concepts of sociodramatic role, role network, role boundaries and role development;

2. the sociometric and sociogenetic view of the group-team-organization-community;

3. the sociodramatic techniques.

When an established group asks me to help them by using sociodrama, they expect to improve their relationships as an emotional psychogroup and to improve their success in achieving goals as a task sociogroup. Along the way, they hope to be assisted in overcoming their depressive and persecutory anxieties, their basic assumptions resistance (Bion, W.R. 1961), the overwhelming demands, the power conflicts, the historic collective trauma, etc.

Moreno, when defining sociodrama, is mainly talking about the social and cultural part of any role, the *sociodramatic* role. There are different frameworks we might use to work with a social or family role.

Let's take for example the role of 'mother'.

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We can work with this role in a ***group psychotherapy framework*** (Álvarez Valcarce, 2009). Using psychodramatic techniques, we will try to highlight the psychosomatic role implicated e.g. ingester role, and the specific mother-child relationship involved at the identity matrix of all the related patients. Also, we will work on the reflections of that 'mother' role on the group dynamics (dependence, negation, oral anger, need for protection, etc).

We can also work with this role in a ***family sociodrama framework*** (Alvarez Valcarce, P. 1985, 1986, 1995). Here we will use sociodramatic techniques to:

- change the sociometric status of that role in that specific family matrix .

- change the cosmic vision of the family as a whole;

- understand the symptoms and the 'illness' roles in relation to stereotyped forms of that 'mother' role;

- develop links between the 'mother' role and functional sociogroup and psychogroup roles.

We could also work with this role in a ***community sociodrama framework,*** as for example in an intervention with two confronting ethnic communities in an area of the city or in a school. Here, we will use sociodrama techniques to see the differences and similarities of the 'mother' role in both cultures. More specifically, we will try to make changes in the two 'mother' roles to help the communities adapt to a new economic and citizen situation. Even more importantly, we need to explore how these two 'mother' roles can use their high sociometric status to prevent street confrontations between teenagers, as with the *Inter-ethnic Mothers' Evening Patrols* we use in our sociodramatic community interventions.

We can also work with a 'mother' role in a ***public sociopsychodrama framework***, where there is no previous relationship between group members. Here, we will use psychodramatic and sociodramatic techniques:

- to analyse the relationship of this role to other social roles clustered around the maternal role;

- to make visible the influence of this role on the 'universal' ethological human race conflicts;

- to influence the inner perception of that role in the different cultures of participating individuals;

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- to, eventually, reach an integration catharsis around the role, through working with some actual event related to the role (perhaps by using the living newspaper technique with a story connected to mothers and mothering).

Moreno's role theory concepts about role clusters, in both individuals and groups, allow a wide and operational understanding of the sociodramatic role dynamics in established groups:

- the space between roles; an example: in couples with space in their role relationships there exists the possibility for separate role development.

- role boundaries; an example would be boundaries, such as signs and separate functions, marking the marketing and commercial roles within a Management team

- overlapping roles; an example is where a CFO takes on both the Financial and Human Resource roles, as is common in old Spanish companies.

- the operational dissociation of roles (the way in which a sociodramatic role is played, as part of a systemic net of roles, without contamination by other non-pertinent personal role contents); An example would be a Change Office Director who couldn't separate her sociodramatic role in the project Manager's Office from the rest of her work in the Project Committee so that it contaminated the whole work of the Committee.

- complementary roles; –

- role mutuality; is where the degree to which one role can assume for a while some functions of a weak role in a role matrix and also the degree to which a role can mutually facilitate another's role performance.

- forming of partial self roles (inner doubles);

- role congruency (integration of thinking, feeling and action) is when a team reaches the point when it can share its vision and mission so role identity is no longer based on the individual members of the team

- degree of roles developing; For example in a family sociodrama of a psychotic patient we could work with the undeveloped parental roles which had an ancestral traumatic origin.

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- the sociometric choices of movement towards-away-against of the social coping roles;

- the degree of equilibrium between social team task roles and maintenance roles in group role clusters;

- the operational links between roles of a cluster that allow the development of new roles; for example, in a Mobile Telecom Organization, by using sociodrama we could enhance the operational links between hardware engineer roles and marketing roles bunched in an "disruptive innovation" investigative role cluster, and allow the emergence of a new software service role demanded by the market.

- the past history of that cluster in the psychological stream of influence that comes from the ancestors, in the family or organization.

THE "NEAR SOCIOMETRIC" CRITERIA PROBLEM

Moreno wrote about "**near sociometric**" criteria, when facing the manner in which the criterion-questions, once the criteria are chosen, will be worded. When the criterion-question is worded in a *hypothetical* manner putting the respondent into an imaginary situation or in a *level of recall,* i.e. asking the respondent to report on their past associations with others, it results in "pseudo-sociometric" or " near sociometric" data.   In contrast, each criterion-question may be worded on the *actuality level,* that is anticipation on the part of the subjects of actual realistic associations. The respondent realizes that his choices and rejections may affect a real situation in the near future.   That is "actual action sociometric criteria".   These concepts can be *applied not only to sociometric test but to actual new choices and rejections made by group members into the sociodramatic stage situation* (Moreno, 1941; Moreno, 1960, pp.88-93, Nehnevajsa, J. 1956)

When the group was faced with an urgent task in the actuality level, a "near sociometric" criteria ɨwas used, the director misunderstood the group sociodynamics by using hypothetical criteria about interactions that neither he nor the group had any real possibility of achieving in the concrete social here and now. So there was no real active participation in a real actual situation by group members. That kind of "near sociometric" questions or "pseudo-sociometric" sociodramatic

assignment, does not give the members the opportunity to begin an immediate action into their real social context.

When "near sociometric" phenomena occur, there are serious distortions of the sociometric configurations of the group. It becomes more difficult to achieve real, highly developed and cohesive sociometric and sociogenetic levels of group communication and interactivity. Such phenomena frequently result in poorly thought through strategies, roles and actions.

From my experience, these phenomena can be minimized, when working sociodramatically with an established group that meets frequently, by focusing on actual and urgent roles and task group problems. We have to be aware that only groups, which meet regularly, can enable people to use "actual action sociometric criteria" in their choices, rejections and indifferences at the first sociodramatic stage and in their real group and social context later.

Having said that, however, these "near sociometric" phenomena can still arise, even when working with an established group. They may sometimes be seen in organizational or family systems: powerful but dysfunctional relationships at the top of the hierarchy are reflected throughout the system and result in resistance, with individuals becoming fearful of openly declaring their choices and rejections around specific actual actions. These cases may paradoxically compel the sociodrama director, in a first approach, to use "near sociometric" hypothetical criteria as the unique acceptable way to help the group. This occurs when using "intermediate fantasy situations" enacted in Family Sociodramas or "family metaphors" to deal with hidden agendas in team coaching.

On the other hand, the active exploration of action sociometric criteria spoken about on the *actuality* level, usually propels the members to release their spontaneity into an immediate new social situation. An example of this would be the sociometric choices and potential role development that need to be made while putting together a new project team in an organization.

SOCIODRAMA AND MODERN SOCIAL THEATRE – THE SOCIODRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

There are some approaches to sociodrama that come from modern theatre, though **modern social theatre** has itself been greatly influenced by sociodrama and psychodrama.

In social theatre, the way of finding the group theme can be sociodramatic when it is used not only to perform a classical 'Theatre of

Spontaneity' enactment, but also to make a **sociodynamic progress analysis**, both during the performance and at the end. This is where the theatre of spontaneity can reach a transformation of group dynamics through:

- an experience of group creation where process is more important than product;

- opening up the senses, going beyond the cultural conserves;

- discovering the artistic potential of art creation as an instrument to enhance life quality;

- changing the perceived perspective from personal dysfunctional roles to working with the collective situation.

A **sociodynamic progress analysis** at the end of the performance will fully put social theatre into the sociodramatic framework. It does this by looking at:

- how the attraction and rejection forces, that were organized in different ways during the work, have changed the sociometric configurations;

- how the process of creating roles and rehearsing encourages the development of new sociometric criteria in the group, thus reducing isolation and altering the intensity of the choosing;

- how any "near sociometric" difficulties can be minimized whenever social, group and dramatic contexts are articulated;

- how events in the group context are reflected in the dramatic context, in the theme the group finally chooses and in the roles people choose to enact;

- how the social implications of the play are integrated into the concrete social network of the group and the related audience;

- how the beliefs, assumptions, attitudes and preferences of the participants are related to their experiences, roles and sociometric status;

- how the assumptions in the performance are socially and personally created in a specific historical and cultural context.

Modern social theatre performances (and other dramatic approaches to action learning for social groups and organizations) can be enriched by incorporating some of the sociodramatic techniques that so greatly

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influenced theatre during the second half of the twentieth century (Álvarez Valcarce, 1993; 2007). Here are some possible techniques for dramatic production, which are available to the sociodrama director.

- Link the on-stage dramatic conflict to the vision of the audience, to achieve some degree of audience participation;

- Perform an enactment with two subgroups in concentric circles, exchanging in turn their subjective perceptual impressions of each other, followed by any objective reflections to let down the communication barriers between social subgroups and resolve conflicts;

- Use the concept of 'Happening' (Kaprow, A. 1966) as an intermedia event and environmental theatre (Schlemer, O., Moholy-Nagy, L. & Molnar, F. 1961) with its intense visceral effect on all concerned, to enhance the sense of belonging;

- Include social and cultural rituals, looking for the analogies between them and for any symbolic implications. The symbols have to be situated between the drive that stimulates and the reaction that is provoked.

- Introduce a chaotic phase into the dramatic context, to force transgression of actual cultural conserves, and to creatively develop new ones;

- Focus on the processes by exploring the ways in which role behaviors affect others in the social and community environment of the participants

- Use masks to express cultural myths and enact them through psychodance (dance theatre techniques with live improvisation music) (Alvarez Valcarce, P. 1997, 2001) Enacting a Hero Myth is a way to elevate the ego to perform effective socially-conscious actions;

- Perform two scenes simultaneously, to relate symbolic scenes to actual social scenes;

- Uncover the family, team, organization or community generational myths, to cure the underlying trauma;

- Use fantasy to transgress and break the rules of the technical theatre roles; (for example when part of the audience decides where to illuminate the scene–with the use of lighting effects; or

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when masks are distributed to the audience and they are asked to improvise while actors make approving or disapproving comments from the role of "Greek chorus")

- Create a theatre that rebels against its usual role of 'communicator of acceptable social attitudes to achieve social conformity';

- Produce a theatre that urges the audience to act;

- Use a sudden slow down of rhythm and simplicity to allow reflection on our collective responsibility;

- Enable actors and audience to find their own place in the whole space as a spontaneous occurrence.

- Focus on the group tempo or inner rhythm that creates the atmosphere in the here-and-now: For this, spectators must be on stage, experiencing the rhythm with their own bodies.

- Help actors go beyond creating a piece which is simply beautiful and aesthetically coherent, yet avoids challenging spectators' fears and expectations – help actors to find a way of showing what truly needs to be expressed.

- Create a context of freedom;

- Help actors and spectators understand that, in order to create freedom, they must act spontaneously in the constant stimulus-response play rule;

- Make use of any unexpected event to add even more dynamics to the plot; (for example in an accompanied team reunion during a team coaching process, the department director suddenly comes into the room demanding the urgent preparation of a reporting to for a Head Officer due in just two hours time. This gives even more dynamics to the "plot" as the director is invited to remain and plays roles in the sociodrama.)

- Give value to the chaotic part of the performance: - chaos will remain chaos unless actors and spectators have found a way to find a meaning in it .

- Experiment with all the roles, without identifying with any particular one;

- Focus, during the performance, on the dynamics between roles, positions, parts of an image, vectors and zones;

- Develop a theatre of spontaneity piece with a spontaneous actor who looks for a spiritual and social compromise without being afraid of confrontation. This is where the actor reflects on the meaning of life and the human condition in society.

Elsewhere, I have described ninety-five different sociodramatic techniques for use with established groups (family, team & community) (Álvarez Valcarce, 1995).

COMMUNITY SOCIODRAMA EXPERIENCE

There are many types of community sociodrama (Álvarez Valcarce, 1984, 1988, 1993, 1997), any of which may happen in a big open space or indoors, where a community lives. This is a description of the way that I and my colleagues usually perform community sociodrama, when the subject to be enacted is the social exclusion and integration of minorities.

This kind of community sociodrama must be done in a part of the city where there are real and actual issues of social exclusion and lack of integration. We contact social workers, immigrant collective leaders and migration mediators in the area, to make an initial sociological and sociometric study of the neighbourhood. Then we design a drama incorporating the essential and actual scenes of social exclusion and lack of integration in such an area. We are careful to include, in our short plays, all the stakeholders in the local social structure that have an impact on the issues raised from a wider systemic perspective, so that citizens will be able to identify with the situation, and hidden agendas about local political contradictions will appear.

Once we have the scenes prepared, for use initially as a warm-up, we need a group of actors with experience in street theatre (such as a selected group of highly spontaneous auxiliary-egos from local theatre groups). If possible, we will contact a local, popular music, street band (called *charanga* in Spain). Then we will choose a good day and hour to go into the neighbourhood with the music playing and our street actors (jugglers, giants, masks, clowns etc.). When we have gathered an audience, we begin to perform our prepared scenes, to warm-up the audience and gain their attention. At any point during the performance, the director (in a very active and formally directive role) can invite people to come into the scene and perform any role, introducing changes. Here is where we may use some of Boal's techniques (Boal, 1964, 1980) and other ones (Álvarez Valcarce, 1993). At this point the director's experience, training and spontaneity is all important. We try to allow the participation of all

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who want to come onto the stage, but in a directed and ordered form, keeping focus, always in short scenes.

We can stop the scenes when necessary, to highlight and focus on any creative and meaningful finding and to ask open reflective questions of the audience. We particularly ask people to look for different endings. At the end (after two or three hours), we have a short sharing, focused on what we all can do as a first step towards improving the social integration of minorities into established local groups. Then we invite everybody to have a soft drink and some snacks to promote informal sharing in small spontaneous subgroups. This is the end and the time for us to disappear. Social agents will make use of the effects of the sociodrama in their regular work over subsequent weeks.

Community sociodrama can be applied in primary prevention (Álvarez Valcarce, 1997) in both social and mental health settings with many types of community groups around the city – the elderly, teenagers at social risk, widows, young mothers, social minorities, etc.

It is important to warm-up the audience in community sociodrama, with actors showing a model of the participation expected of the audience, and the director merging with the audience, not only seeing their perspective but also stimulating them to agree or disagree with the warm-up plays, as they are being performed. It is helpful for the actors to use microphones, so the director can talk with the audience while still being able to hear the performers. Alternatively, the director can stay on stage, freezing the action from time to time, to ask the audience who agrees or disagrees with the actors and their arguments, all the time noting who in the audience is warmed up to perform. The cue to freeze the scene comes from the director identifying the moments of high interest. For this, the director has to be a very energetic master of ceremonies, in order to keep focus. Spontaneity will do the rest.

THE PROBLEM OF HIDDEN AGENDAS IN SOCIODRAMA

In my experience, when working with sociodrama in organizations, communities, families and other established groups, the most difficult but most effective work is often done at the point where hidden agendas, secrets and taboos can be made explicit and brought onto the sociodramatic stage.

French and Raven (1959) talked about six types of social power:

1. power to coerce ;
2. power to recompense;
3. sociometrically-elected power or referred power

4. expert power;
5. power of information
6. the power of other superimposed groups or subgroups (legal power)

In my experience, this last type of power is based in a hidden dysfunctional role: the role-holder is upholding the values and ideologies of other groups to which he belongs and then superimposing such values and ideologies onto the actual, here-and-now group, structure or team. This is what happens in a family psychogroup, when the official leader, mother or father, belongs to an extremist ideology, religious grouping or political party, whose values force the family sociogroup to remain at a low sociogenetic level. Another example would be the CEO of an organization who represents the power of a superimposed capital-risk group of stockholders, who want to make money in the short term and then sell the company out.

The specific sociodramatic action that is appropriate here is to turn these sociometric power dysfunctions into concrete social group structures, so as to achieve change and innovation, cohesion and the development of a socioemotional matrix.

Hidden agendas may be concretised in space or brought to light by using intermediary situations to show their existence. One may also, paradoxically, 'enhance the symptom', by letting the team stew in its' own discomfort, perhaps overnight in a two-day workshop, before tackling the issue. Wiener (2008) has worked specifically in this way.

A poorly understood group history will often underpin the existence of hidden agendas. Sometimes I invite team members to perform the sociodramatic history of the company/team. Old and unprocessed injuries appear and can be aired. At other times, I ask members to write down taboo themes on anonymous pieces of paper, after which they have to defend any paper randomly assigned to them, as if it were their own. Then I can work sociodramatically with the now-acknowledged taboos.

Another common cause of the existence of hidden agendas may be seen when teams mirror the environment and sociometric status of the different team roles that exist in the upper levels of the organization.

"Hidden agenda" is a well-defined sociodramatic concept, that introduces a distortion into the socioemotional matrix and generates role conflicts and team inefficiency. Sociodrama has to deal with a concretised hidden agenda, working sociometrically with the power relationships of the system.

SOCIODRAMA AND TEAM COACHING

Some of the purposes for which I may use sociodrama and related methods in working with teams are:

- to develop a diagnosis of the role structure and sociogenetic levels of teams;

- to set out the organizational constellations of teams;

- for team-building, where 'the age' and maturity of the team will influence my chosen intervention

- to create specific action techniques for specific transitional moments in teams;

- for enacting the power relations within a team and in inter-team conflicts;

- to make explicit, explore and aid the process inside real team meetings;

- to explore issues of time management;

- to enable change in role dynamics and role boundaries;

- to bring about changes in team culture and values, using axiodrama;

- to build new project teams, using sociometry;

- to develop triangle and circular relationships, in order to overcome stereotyped 'us-and-them' polarities;

- to surface transference, counter-transference and family metaphors, using team sociodrama;

- to develop team creativity and innovation.

Team coaching using sociodrama focuses on developing the collective efficiency process of the group as a whole and as a role system with well-defined boundaries, on its journey to experiential maturity. The types of interaction between different task roles (for achieving goals) and maintenance roles (to foster emotional stability) are the immediate targets of sociodrama when applied to team coaching (Álvarez Valcarce, 2008).

The basic procedures of a team coaching sociodrama are to look at actual meetings to focus on the roles in the communication system, coupled with workshops for the development of procedures and the

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resolution of any difficulties in the team's situation and its relationship to its' environment.

Sociodrama applied to team coaching uses tools from the theories of roles, sociometry, psychodrama, group dynamics and systemic constellations to help the team in its strategy. It is the team that takes, organizes and directs the process and content of the team coaching, based on an awareness of the unresolved issues in their role interactions, at both a cognitive and an emotional level. The aim of the work, using the emotional impact of action learning, is to help the team implement cognitive and behavioural changes that facilitate the achievement of team goals.

REPORT ON A SOCIODRAMATIC TEAM-COACHING WORKSHOP WITH THE MANAGEMENT TEAM OF AN INSURANCE COMPANY

I was asked to create a workshop,

- to foster motivation for personal development and active learning
- to bear in mind both individual and group needs for change inside the company
- to change habits and implant new tasks;
- to activate skills in the leaders, as motivators and activators of teams;
- to achieve balance between effective team role functioning and individual motivation;
- to create the systems and methodologies required by work teams;
- to improve communication techniques and the quality of communication in the workplace;
- to introduce people, in an engaging way, to personality models and psychological theories about how people function;
- to give feedback about individual communication skills.

The workshop began with various sociodramatic techniques applied to:

- the recognition and analysis of the different role task functions (using sculpting and the dramatization of real scenes, incorporating doubling, mirror and role reversal);

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- accessing other bases of knowledge and their models together with a "sociodramatic discussion" of questions such as 'what have you learnt about your way of thinking, perceiving, evaluating ,etc. from each role".

- creating the different team roles and their structural relationships – setting out the system.

It emerged that the Financial Operations Manager had a special link to the CEO, but was distant from his peers. This was crucial and became the focus of the sociodrama. The team created different scenes, aimed at finding strategies to achieve a change in the relationship with this team member. This was done by inviting the group to reflect on questions such as:

- How can you create a new type of interaction with...?

- What ideas can you add to...?

- How is this team structure a parallel to other areas of company functioning?

- What solutions would you suggest to...?

- Why is this so significant to you?

- Can you design a new...?

- To what extent is this situation responsible for the excess of complex products?

The team acted out scenes about confidence, distrust and cheating in the communication processes. Then they discussed sociodramatically the psychological contract established in the team, finding a new group stimulus to change and look for global solutions inside the team.

Then they explored sociodramatically the question *"what would happen if we did something differently?"*

A hidden agenda appeared, related to the privileged information gained by the CEO from his special link with the Financial Operations Manager (a sociometric isolate within the team) and the pseudo-cohesive phenomena related to this clique.

The team developed proactive functions to promote integration and co-operation between team members through future-focused sociodramatic scenes.

The CEO changed his leader role as motivator and activator of the team. Sociodrama helped the team to diminish their anxiety around delegated leadership. Fears of rivalry, of being attacked by followers, of accountability etc. were diminished through the use of family metaphors

and sociodramatic techniques to explore power status. The team compared the relative merits of making individual and group decisions, through sociodrama scenes.

On returning to the real team meetings, they could experiment with strategic changes of role. In the next workshop, management team members asked for a sociodramatic analysis of their own fearful imaginings as leaders of their own teams. This way, the change spread out through the organization. Similar processes of sociodramatic team coaching were then followed with financial, new business, marketing, operations and information teams.

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