CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

This dissertation examines the systems psycho-dynamic manifestations in a self managing corporate group from a department at a South African financial institution.

The background to and motivation for this study, the problem formulation, the objectives of the research, the paradigmatic perspective of the research, and the research design and methodology are presented in the following pages. Also presented are the chapter division and chapter summary.

1.1   BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Human beings have always functioned both independently and as members of groups. In fact one of the first biblical stories, that of Adam and Eve and their sons Cain and Abel, is possibly the earliest documented example of a family. According to Freud, the family is the basis for all groups (Young, 1992). Indeed, it would seem that all societies, whether they exist in the developed or in the developing world, are characterised by the groups that comprise them. And, these groups, in turn, are moulded by the societies in which they exist.

Human beings may therefore be described as a group-orientated species (Bion, 1961). Evidence for this may be found in every facet of human existence. Individuals are born into a culture, a society and a family. They are educated at schools, they become members of sporting and recreational groups, they form social, economic and community groups, and most individuals earn a living in some type of business or organisational grouping. In all groups, individuals play a specific role or various specific roles in order to satisfy a specific need or set of needs. Thus, the group has the potential to profoundly affect the individual's behaviour, motivation and needs (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1993).

Organisations are also, by their very definition, "group orientated" (Cilliers & Koortzen, 1997). A characteristic of organisations, both past and present, is subdivision into departments, divisions, work groups, self-managed groups, and project and management groups, among others. In the past, such groupings were constructed with the ultimate goal of achieving a highly specialised division of labour and tight, bureaucratic controls (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1993). Today, however, with the growing emphasis on efficiency, competitiveness and productivity, the focus in organisations is on groups that are thought to be more innovative, and empowered and are seen to assist in streamlining processes, reducing costs and promoting higher levels of commitment and motivation among employees (Passmore, 1994). Thus, organisational groups, whatever their goal, function or orientation, are required to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. With the democratisation of the workplace, groups of individuals are, of necessity, empowered to make important, strategic decisions on behalf of the organisation. This is clearly evident in the greater use that organisations are making of project groups and specialist consultant groups (Cleland, 1996).

The above indicates that the phenomenon of the efficient group is becoming more and more prevalent and important in organisations today and that groups have a powerful impact on the effectiveness of organisations (Liebowitz & De Meuse, 1982). Groups have even been called the "building blocks of the organisation" (Cilliers & Koortzen, 1997, p. 2). They have the power to facilitate organisational success or to cause organisational failure. An example of one such group is the organisation's management group or groups. Management groups are found in most, if not all, organisations and are responsible for managing and coordinating the work of others in order to improve work performance.

In order to manage effectively, managers, and management groups must communicate and interact effectively. They must do this on an intragroup basis with each other, as well as on an intergroup basis with important stakeholders

outside the management group. Such stakeholders may include clients, staff, or suppliers. Holding management group meetings is one method of facilitating intra-group communication and interaction.

Management groups usually hold regular meetings for various reasons. Some of these reasons include (Cleland, 1996):

a) sharing information

b) providing status or progress reports

c) facilitating joint planning and goal setting

d) facilitating joint problem-solving

e) making decisions of a strategic and operational nature

Thus, to a greater or lesser degree, the overall effectiveness of any organisation is based on the nature and effectiveness of these group interactions. Organ and Bateman (cited in Cilliers & Koortzen, 1997) have found that the average manager devotes approximately 80% of his or her time to group activities. As a result of the amount of time spent on group activities, it is important that management groups function as effectively as possible.

Bion (1961) was of the opinion that, on both the intragroup and the intergroup levels, the individual needs to function effectively, in order for the group to function effectively. Bertcher (1994, p. 9) adds to this by stating: "If members of a group devote all of their interaction to goal achievement and fail to pay attention to their conflicts, hurt feelings, and tensions, that are a natural part of problem solving, sooner or later some members will find the group unattractive and leave or cease active participation." Thus, this research aims to study the underlying dynamics that are manifesting in a self-managing group that forms part of the Commercial Department of a large South African bank.

1.2   PROBLEM FORMULATION

The concept of the self-managed group is defined below and the problem formulation is discussed.

1.2.1   Self-managed groups

Hicks and Bone (1990, p. 15) define a self-managed group as:

> . . . a work group that operates with varying degrees of autonomy and without a visible manager. It assumes management responsibility in addition to performing its specific jobs. These responsibilities include planning, organising, directing and monitoring both their jobs and the administrative functions that support them. The team learns and shares jobs usually performed by a manager. In a fully functioning [self managing group] control comes from within the group, rather than from outside it.

Cleland (1996, p. 161) defines a self-managed group as "generally a small, independent, self-organised, and self-controlling group in which members flexibly plan, organise, determine, and manage their duties and actions, as well as perform many other supportive functions. [The group] may work without immediate supervision and can often have the authority to select, hire, promote or discharge its members". Cleland (1996) adds that group members usually rotate task assignments and that the advantage of using self-managed groups lies in their diversity, capability, adaptability and flexibility.

Hicks and Bone (1990) state that organisations that have structured themselves into self-managed groups have reported increased levels of productivity, greater autonomy for employees, higher levels of employee motivation, increased cost effectiveness, improved communication and increased levels of creativity. Another clear advantage of using self-managed work groups is that such groups

can effectively bypass the bureaucracy of hierarchical organisations. Cleland (1996, p. 177) states that "the evidence is clear that [self-managed groups] can enhance an enterprise's ability to remain competitive in the constantly changing global marketplace". Self-managed groups are on the increase as a form of organisational design, but the following conditions need to be present to ensure the group's success (Cleland, 1996):

a) a clear vision and mission statement

b) expected behavioural guidelines

c) specific objectives and goals

d) performance standards

e) a clear definition of authority, responsibility and accountability

f) a means to develop and use feedback to evaluate performance

1.2.2 The meetings of the Western Cape Commercial Department's self-managed group

In the Western Cape, the Commercial Department managers meet on a bi-weekly basis as a self-managed group. The meetings are attended by PDM: Regional General Manager, WET: Area Sales Manager, SS: Area Credit Manager, AB: Area Operations Manager and the relationship and credit managers from each of the six, smaller self-managed subgroups.

Every second Friday morning, the meeting begins at seven o'clock sharp and is chaired by WET. No formal agenda is compiled or distributed prior to the meeting and WET is the only person with any knowledge of what will be discussed at the meeting. The meeting usually lasts for two hours and is adjourned at around nine o'clock.

The first hour of the meeting is normally dedicated to a presentation of the sales figures or a lecture by WET on various issues relating to sales and the sales strategy. At eight o'clock, various subject matter experts, external to the department, arrive and present information related to their particular focus area.

For example, HS talks about factors impacting on the South African economy and DvdN presents information relating to Electronic Banking. Once the subject matter experts have completed their presentations, they leave the meeting.

The remainder of the meeting is usually dedicated to discussion and to feedback from the relationship managers regarding sales that they have made, problems that they are having or potential clients that they plan to visit. The relationship managers are often reluctant to give information and hardly contribute to the meeting at all. The credit managers are seldom asked to comment on any of the issues that are raised.

No minutes of the meetings are taken and rarely is any follow-up action planned regarding any of the issues that are raised or discussed. Once the meeting has been adjourned the relationship and credit managers often complain that the meeting has been a waste of time and that they "have more important things to attend to".

Mouton and Marais (1990) make the point that the research problem is usually formulated as a series of questions. Kerlinger (1986) states that categories should be established according to the demands of the research problem, as without such categories, there could be no adequate answers to the research questions. Thus, in terms of this study and given the characteristics of the self-managed group meetings as explained above, the following problems have been identified:

a) What are the systems psycho-dynamics that manifest in groups?

b) What are some of the examples of the research that has been conducted relating to the dynamics manifesting in groups?

c) What are the systems psycho-dynamics manifesting in this self-managed group's meetings?

d) How do these systems psycho-dynamics influence the intergroup and intragroup relationships of this group?

1.3   OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The objectives of this research are discussed in terms of general and specific objectives.

1.3.1   General objective

The general objective of this research was to explore the system psycho-dynamics manifesting in the weekly meetings of the Commercial Department's senior self-managed group in the Western Cape and to formulate hypotheses regarding the influence of these dynamics on the group's intragroup and intergroup relationships.

1.3.2   Specific objectives

The specific *literature* objectives of this research were:
a) to conduct a review of the relevant literature to explore the system psycho-dynamics manifesting in groups
b) to review some of the examples of research that has been conducted relating to the dynamics manifesting in groups

The specific *qualitative* objectives of this research were:
a) to conduct a qualitative study to explore the ways in which these system psycho-dynamics were manifesting in this self-managed group
b) to explore the ways in which these system psycho-dynamics were influencing the intragroup and intergroup relationships of this self-managed group

1.4 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

With reference to the paradigm perspective of this research, the relevant paradigm, the metatheoretical statements, the market of intellectual resources and the methodological assumptions will be discussed.

1.4.1 Relevant paradigm

Kuhn (as cited in Audi, 1995, p. 557) uses the term "paradigm" to describe a set of "scientific and metaphysical beliefs that make up a theoretical framework, within which scientific theories can be tested, evaluated and . . . revised". Kuhn (cited in Audi, 1995, p. 557) further explains that the term "paradigm" denotes:

a) a complete view of reality or way of seeing

b) a framework relating to the social organisation of science in terms of schools of thought connected with specific kinds of scientific achievements

c) a framework relating to the concrete use of specific tools and texts for the process of scientific puzzle solving

Mouton and Marais (1990, p. 17) explain that "individual research projects are conducted within the broader contexts of particular paradigms and disciplines". This may be represented in the following manner:

Figure 1.1 *Contexts within which a research project is embedded* (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p. 18)
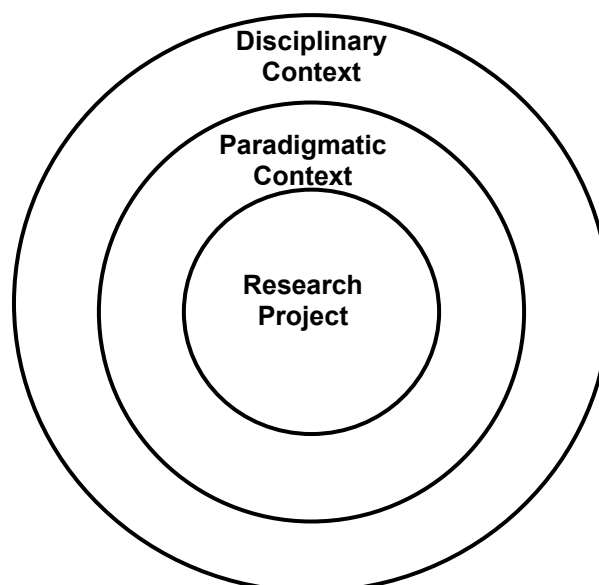
This research study is embedded within the discipline of psychology and more specifically within the subdiscipline of industrial psychology. The literature review and the qualitative study are presented from the psychodynamic paradigm. This includes both the Systems Theory and the object relations perspectives. These are discussed below.

1.4.2 The psychodynamic paradigm

The following are the basic assumptions of the psychodynamic paradigm:

a) *The mental apparatus*

i. The focus of psychoanalysis, as the origin of psychodynamics, is on the unconscious and its dynamic nature (Möller, 1995).

ii. Freud hypothesised that personality comprised the *id, ego* and *superego* and that in normal individuals these operate as a unified whole (Lundin, 1991).

iii. The *id* is the most basic part of personality and desires immediate gratification. The id represents *the pleasure principle.* The id has no knowledge of right or wrong and has to be restrained and contained by the ego. The id functions mostly in the unconscious (Lundin, 1991).

iv. The *ego* controls both the demands of the id and the superego and is representative of the *reality principle.* The ego functions partly in the conscious and partly in the unconscious and it serves to find ways of satisfying the demands of the id (Lundin, 1991).

v. The *superego* develops out of the ego as the individual learns what is socially acceptable and what is unacceptable. The superego comprises two subsystems, namely the *conscience* (what one should and should not do) and the *ego ideal* (what is right and proper). Thus, the superego represents the *morality principle* (Lundin, 1991)*.*

b) Instincts

i. Biological energy or instincts motivate all behaviour. This is known as the *principle of biological determinism* as everything humans do is determined by unconscious motivation (Kovel, 1978).

ii. Instincts have their origin in the id. Instincts are wishes or desires that are psychological representations of bodily needs. Therefore, the motivation of behaviour takes place unconsciously (Möller, 1995).

iii. Freud believed that instincts produce tension and the individual continually strives to reduce this tension. Thus, the root of personality motivation is the satisfaction and transformation of the id instincts (Lundin, 1991).

iv. Instincts are categorised according to whether they are primarily concerned with survival (life instincts) or with violence and destruction (death instincts). Death instincts are most often manifested as aggression (Möller, 1995).

c) Anxiety

When the ego is threatened with danger, anxiety is experienced. Freud differentiated between three types of anxiety (Lundin, 1991, p. 304-305):

i. *Reality or objective anxiety.* This is nothing more than normal fear in cases where the threats come from the external world.

ii. *Neurotic anxiety.* This relates to threats that come from the id. The ego experiences these threats as "free floating" (not knowing why one is anxious)or as phobias or panic reactions.

iii. *Moral anxiety.* This relates to threats that come from the superego. The ego experiences these threats as feelings of guilt or shame.

d) Defense mechanisms

In order to cope with anxiety, which is painful, the ego may develop various defensive reactions (Möller, 1995):

i. *Repression.* This refers to the process by which certain memories and thoughts are repressed in the unconscious because they are unacceptable.

The ego represses these in order to protect the person against the anxiety they can bring. Repression also refers to the process whereby unacceptable urges are prevented from reaching consciousness. Repressed material is never destroyed and can play a powerful role in motivation.

ii. *Denial.* When anxiety comes from a very serious threat it can lead to denial, which is used when the threat cannot be escaped or eliminated any more.

iii. *Reaction formation.* This refers to the process whereby the person inhibits the conscious expression of an unacceptable impulse by emphasising the opposite.

iv. *Substitution.* This refers to the process that occurs when the object that could satisfy the id instinct is unavailable or forbidden and alternative objects are found. However, the substitute does not achieve the same degree of tension reduction as the original object.

v. *Sublimation.* When substitution leads to socially acceptable behaviour, it is known as sublimation.

vi. *Fixation and regression.* A child, during his or her psychosexual development, may remain fixated at a certain stage. This may occur as a result of too much anxiety at a certain stage or too much fear of a subsequent stage. A person may use regression to return to behaviour which is characteristic of an earlier stage of development.

vii. *Projection.* A person can alleviate the anxiety produced by socially unacceptable thoughts by unconsciously attributing them to someone else. Undesirable traits are also attributed to others by means of projection.

viii. *Rationalisation.* This is a type of justification of behaviour and occurs when a person attributes his or her behaviour to motives or causes other than those that really apply.

ix. *Compensation.* A person may make up for a weakness in one area by excelling in another. Thus, he or she rids himself or herself of the anxiety that the shortcoming causes.

x. *Identification.* This occurs when a person makes another person's traits part of his or her own personality.

e)   *Systems thinking*

General Systems Theory emerged under the influence of Von Bertalanffy (1968), who distinguished between open living systems and closed physical systems. Rice (1963) describes living systems as being able to maintain their existence only by exchanging materials with their environment. The system has to import, convert and export materials in order to live. That is, a living organism can only survive by exchanging materials with its environment. It takes in materials such as food, sunshine or oxygen, and transforms these into what is required for survival, excreting what is not used as waste. This requires that the system has an external boundary across which these exchanges can occur (Roberts, 1994).

By contrast, closed physical systems are self-sufficient and have no need for to import or export materials. Alternatively, an open living system may become a closed system if its boundary becomes impermeable. In such instances, the open living system will die (Roberts, 1994).

In terms of group dynamics, Rice (1969) wrote that an individual may be seen as an open system as he can only exist through processes of exchange with his environment. Rice and Miller (Roberts, 1994) provide a framework for studying organisations as open systems, and for studying the relationships between the parts and the whole in organisations, and also between the organisation and the environment.

f)   *Object relations*

The initial proponent of the object relations school of psychoanalysis was Melanie Klein (Krantz & Gilmore, 1991). Klein attempted to explain the mental processes that take place in the mind of the infant from birth. She maintained that the world of the infant is extremely basic and comprises only one object; the mother's breast. Thus the first relationship that the child experiences is with

the mother's breast, and not with the mother as a whole person (De Board, 1978). This is the primal relationship that influences the formation and development of all future relationships. Klein's hypothesis is that these early processes, that take place very early in the life of the infant, continue to operate in adult life and can be used as the basic explanation for both normal and abnormal behaviour (Klein, 1970a).

1.4.3 Metatheoretical statements

The metatheoretical statements represent an important category of assumptions that underlie the theories, models and paradigms that form the context of the research. Metatheoretical values or beliefs create the intellectual climate of a particular discipline in the social sciences (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p. 21). In terms of this research, metatheoretical statements regarding the following are presented:

1.4.3.1   Industrial psychology

Industrial psychology refers to a branch of applied psychology (Reber, 1985, p. 352). It is defined as that section of applied psychology that focuses on human beings within the work environment (Plug, Meyer, Louw & Gouws, 1986, p. 36). In essence it is an umbrella term that covers organisational, military, economic and personnel psychology and includes such areas as tests and measurements, the study of organisations and organisational behaviour, personnel practices, human engineering, human factors, the effects of work, fatigue, pay and efficiency, consumer surveys and market research (Reber, 1995, p. 352).

McCormick and Ilgen (1987, p. 2) state that industrial psychology includes both scientific and professional concerns. Its scientific aspect is rooted in research that provides the knowledge that is a prerequisite for any practical application.

This knowledge is frequently applied in organisations in order to minimise the human problems that inevitably arise.

1.4.3.2   Psychodynamics

According to Möller (1995) the basic assumptions of the psychodynamic paradigm may be summarised as follows:

a) All behaviour, both normal and abnormal, has a cause that is fundamentally biological and instinctual in nature.

b) These causes are unresolved conflicts that can be traced in order to assist an individual in understanding his or her own behaviour.

c) The causes of behaviour are unconscious. Once these repressed causes are remembered and brought into the conscious mind, understanding is attained and the individual is "cured".

1.4.3.3   Tavistock model

According to Lawrence (1979, p. 2) the term "Tavistock Model" refers to a heuristic framework for identifying and understanding what conscious and unconscious processes take place within and between groups. The Tavistock Model was initiated and is still practised at the Tavistock Institute in London. It is also practised at the A. K. Rice Institute in the United States of America as well as elsewhere around the world. The Tavistock school of thought attempts to understand organisational behaviour from a psychodynamic stance (Cilliers & Koortzen, 1998, p. 9).

The Tavistock approach to training in group dynamics usually takes the form of a conference or institute that includes several distinctive types of groups are organised (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974, p. 164). The Tavistock Model is not a psychotherapy model but is geared towards relatively healthy people wishing to learn more about group dynamics, especially as they involve problems of leadership within bureaucratic organisations.

The Tavistock approach views the "organisation as a system [that] has its own life which is conscious and unconscious, with subsystems relating to each other and mirroring one another" (Cilliers & Koortzen, 1998, p. 9). The focus is on how unconscious elements influence the individual as the micro-system, the group as the meso-system and the organisation as the macro-system (Bion, 1961; Hirschorn, 1993; Miller, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Thus, when Wilfred Bion developed this approach he believed that it is important not to consider the individual in isolation, but rather to consider the group to which the individual belongs. This approach may be applied to many different group situations but is primarily intended to teach group dynamics and to increase awareness of group phenomena (Sandigo, 1991).

In this approach organisations and groups are not viewed as rational, decision-making bodies and an employee's attachment to work is considered to be the result of the gratification of conscious and unconscious fantasies associated with occupational and career aspirations (Czander, 1993). When these aspirations are not met, the organisation precipitates psychic conflict. The way in which this conflict is handled dictates whether the employee is able to sustain the absence of gratification and is capable of either seeking alternative gratification or utilising various defense mechanisms.

1.4.3.4   Group effectiveness

An effective group is one that comprises two or more individuals who interact over time to achieve one or more common, group goals or to achieve individual goals that are valued by each member who believes that the group can help him or her achieve them. Further, effective groups interact in such a way that each member must be dependent on the other to some degree as they try to achieve either group or individual goals and each feels that they have been able to influence the other to some degree (Bertcher, 1994, p. 5). In an effective group the statuses and roles of each member and the values and norms that guide the behaviour of each member are well known and generally accepted.

Effective groups are characterised by a high level of interdependence between group members (Bertcher, 1994). The more members rely on each other for the achievement of group goals, the more effective the group will become, as long as each member performs acceptably well in relation to the expectations of the other members. Bertcher (1994) provides the following generalisations regarding the relationship of members to group effectiveness:

a) A group is more likely to be effective if a new member feels that he or she is warmly received by other group members.

b) Marginal members – members who are denied full access to the rights and responsibilities of group membership – are likely to be hostile or indifferent towards the group. Effective groups make a clear distinction between members and non-members.

c) Effective groups tend to involve senior members in the recruitment and selection of new members.

The above generalisations may be even more pronounced in self-managing groups than they are in groups that are not defined as self-managing (Harris & Harris, 1996).

Cilliers and Koortzen (1997) make the point that effective groups are cohesive. Groups characterised by internal disagreement, lack of co-operation, and high levels of mutual dislike between members are not likely to be effective. Group cohesion is a function of the amount of time the members spend together, the severity of new member initiation, the size of the group, the gender of the member, the severity of external threats and past group successes. If the group is small and group members are able to spend a lot of time together, if it is difficult to become a member of the group, if the group's members are of the same gender, if the external threats are severe and if the group has experienced previous successes, the group cohesion is likely to be high, as is group productivity. In self-managing groups, the importance of group cohesion is even more pronounced as in self-managing groups there is a high need for mutual trust and local autonomy (Molleman, 2000).

1.4.3.5   Management

The role of management can be summarised in terms of the four management functions: planning, organising, leading and controlling (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1993).

a) The <u>planning</u> function involves determining organisational strategy and goals and how such goals are to be achieved (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991).

b) The <u>organising</u> function involves translating the various required planned activities into a structure of tasks and authority (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1993).

c) The <u>leading</u> function, according to Ivancevich and Matteson (1993, p. 40) dictates that individuals in management roles must have "knowledge of ways to influence individuals and groups to accept and pursue organisational objectives."

d) The <u>controlling</u> function includes all the activities that managers undertake in order to ensure that the actual outcomes are consistent with the planned outcomes (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1993).

Robbins (1991, p. 4) says that management is the activity that gets "things done though other people". Managers make decisions, allocate resources, and direct the activities of others to attain goals. Mintzberg (in Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991, p. 21) identified ten management roles which he grouped as follows:

a) *Interpersonal roles*: All managers are required to perform roles of a ceremonial and symbolic nature. These roles are categorised as consisting of figurehead, leadership, and liaison activities.

b) *Informational roles*: To some degree, all managers receive and collect information from organisations and institutions outside their own. They also act as conduits to transmit information to other organisational members. The informational roles include monitoring, disseminating and spokesperson activities.

c) *Decisional roles:* These roles are related to making choices and decisions and include those of entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator and negotiator.

In self-managing groups, the role of management is performed by the whole group. Cleland (1996, p. 161) states that the group members "plan, organise, determine and manage their duties and actions".

1.4.4 The market of intellectual resources

The market of intellectual resources refers to the collection of beliefs that have a direct bearing on the epistemological status of the scientific statements (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p. 22). The following types may be identified:

a) theoretical beliefs about the nature and structure of phenomena

b) methodological beliefs concerning the nature and structure of the research process

1.4.4.1 *Theoretical statements of this research study*

Theoretical statements about the nature and structure of phenomena concern beliefs regarding which testable statements about social phenomena can be made. Theoretical beliefs may, therefore, be regarded as assertions about the what (prescriptive) and the why (interpretative) aspects of human behaviour. This would include all statements that form part of hypotheses, typologies, models or theories (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

1.4.4.2 *Central statement*

The central statement of this research may be formulated as follows:
The system psycho-dynamics manifesting at the weekly meeting of the Commercial Department's senior self-managed group in the Western Cape are relevant to this dissertation. These dynamics, when studied by means of the

Tavistock Approach, allow various hypotheses to be formulated regarding the influence of these dynamics in the intragroup and intergroup relationships.

1.4.4.3 Theoretical model

A model is part of a conceptual framework which, in addition to classification and/or categorisation, attempts to represent the dynamic aspects of the phenomenon by illustrating the relationship between the major elements of that phenomenon in a simplified form (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

The Tavistock Model (Miller, 1993) will be used in this research for the purposes of study, interpretation, and hypothesising to understand the nature of the system psycho-dynamics manifesting in this group during their meetings and to understand the influence of these dynamics on the intragroup and intergroup relationships.

1.4.4.4 Conceptual description

The terms "system psycho-dynamics" and "group dynamics" refer to certain behaviours or concepts that are manifested in groups. These concepts include assumptions such as dependency, fight/flight and pairing (Bion, 1961), me-ness and we-ness (Lawrence, Bain & Gould, 1996), and concepts such as anxiety (Menzies, 1993), defense mechanisms, boundaries (Czander, 1993; Hirschorn, 1993), roles (Czander, 1993), representation (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), authorisation (Czander, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), leadership (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), relationship and relatedness (Shapiro & Carr, 1991), counter transference (Halton, 1994), and the group as a whole (Wells, 1980). All of the above are relevant to this research and will be explored further in chapter 2.

1.4.5 Methodological assumptions

Methodological assumptions are beliefs concerning the nature of social science and scientific research. Methodological beliefs are more than methodological preferences, assumptions and presuppositions about what ought to constitute sound research (Mouton & Marais, 1990). As there is a direct link between methodological beliefs and the research findings, and because these beliefs can be traced to the concept of scientific praxis, they are included as a component of the market of intellectual resources (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

Research methods may be classified as either quantitative or qualitative. This research may be classified as a qualitative descriptive study. Mouton and Marais (1990, p. 160) describe qualitative research as open and broad regarding the way in which the research problems are tackled. They also say that in qualitative research:

> The phenomenon, as it exists, should reveal itself and the researcher should register it. A system is not imposed on the phenomenon. The qualitative researcher becomes involved with the phenomenon. The researcher has the openness to observe forms of behaviour as and when they occur.

Both the literature review presented in chapter 2 and the qualitative study presented in chapters 3 and 4 are descriptive in nature. The single common element in descriptive studies is that the researcher's goal is to describe what exists, as accurately as possible, by collecting accurate information on the domain of phenomena under investigation (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

The unit of study in this research is the senior self-managed group of the Commercial Department of a bank in the Western Cape. That is, N = 1.

In terms of person roles, the following are relevant:

a) The first person is used to denote the researcher, who is both the observer and the interpreter, through the study of relevant subject literature as well as in the results of the qualitative study.

b) The second person is a staff member, a member of the group whose behaviour in the work group is being studied.

c) The term "the group" refers to the senior self-managed group of the Commercial Department of a bank in the Western Cape, which is   the unit of study in the qualitative study in chapter 3.

1.5   RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton and Marais (1990, p. 33), the "aim of a research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a manner that the eventual external and internal validity of the research findings is maximised".

1.5.1 Validity

In this research, internal validity on a contextual level is ensured through the use of models and theories that have been chosen in a representative manner and presented in a standardised format. The method of measurement used, behaviour observation and recording by means of a video tape recording, was chosen in a responsible way and was used with the permission of the participants and the banking authorities. The material gathered via the video tape recording will also be shown to an expert, a psychologist to whom the model is known, in a further attempt to ensure validity.

1.5.2 Reliability

Reliability was assured by making a video tape recording of the behaviour of the group as it happened. This ensured that the behaviour was reliably captured and as real as possible. The material gathered was also shown to an expert in the field of behaviour observation from the Tavistock stance, thus ensuring that

the problems associated with "agreement among observers" (Mouton & Marais, 1990) would be minimised, as the expert has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the constructs being measured. The research has been structured according to the research model in such a way that the disturbance variables are limited. The research context has been respected at all times (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p. 79). Disturbance variables have been minimised through the gathering of a large quantity of data over three different meetings.

1.6   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in two phases, each with different steps.

Phase 1   LITERATURE REVIEW

The relevant theory and literature pertaining to the constructs was reviewed as follows:

Step 1   **Group dynamics**

Group dynamics was conceptualised within the psychodynamic paradigm, based on a review of different theoretical elements advanced by various theorists and researchers.

Step 2   **Research on group-related concepts**

Related studies included relevant group-orientated studies conducted by various researchers within the psychodynamic paradigm.

Phase 2   QUALITATIVE STUDY

Step 1   **Selection of the population**

The population under consideration in this study was the senior self-managed group of the Commercial Department of a bank in the Western Cape. This group comprises twenty managers who were collectively responsible for sales and credit in the Western Cape.

Step 2   **Discussion and justification of the method of measurement**

The method of measurement was discussed and substantiated to ensure that specific concepts relevant to the research were measured. The techniques of observation and video recording, which allowed the researcher to study both the verbal and the non-verbal behaviour of the group, were used.

Step 3   **Data gathering**

The method and procedures for gathering data were discussed. Data were gathered via observation and video recording to capture the group's behaviour as it occurred in the here and now.

Step 4   **Data processing**

The behavioural information gathered was organised so that it became manageable and meaningful in terms of the group dynamics that were manifesting in the video taped meetings. The researcher transcribed the contents of the video tapes and viewed the transcribed material for interrelated elements. Themes were then formulated that described the nature of the systems psycho-dynamics manifesting in the group.

Step 5   **Reporting and interpretation of the results**

The results of the processing of the information were presented in order to compile a holistic picture of the dynamics that existed within the group and to form hypotheses regarding the influence of these dynamics on intragroup and intergroup relationships.   These theses were then interpreted using the Tavistock Model

Step 6   **Conclusion**

The conclusion was based on the results and presented per specified aim and various hypotheses were generated.

Step 7   **Discussion of the limitations of the research**

The relevant limitations were discussed with reference to the literature review and to the qualitative study.

Step 8   **Recommendations**

Recommendations were formulated with reference to the literature review, the qualitative study as well as to the group concerned and to the field of industrial psychology.

1.7   CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapters of this dissertation were presented as follows:

Chapter 1   Introduction to the research
Chapter 2   Group dynamics
Chapter 3   Research on group dynamics related concepts
Chapter 4   Qualitative study

Chapter 5   Results

Chapter 6   Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.8   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the background to the research and outlined the reasons why it was undertaken. It also presented the problems that this research attempts to address as well as the general and specific objectives of the research. The paradigmatic perspective and the research design and methodology were discussed and the chapter division was presented. Chapter 2 will discuss the theoretical foundations of group dynamics with reference to relevant literature.