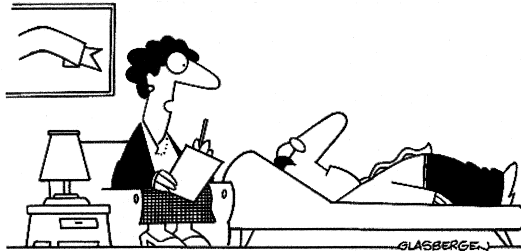# GROUPTHINK－Dealing with Conflict or Maintaining the Status Quo: Implications for Higher Education*

Alan Brady**

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"I'm going to use Hypnosis to help you confront repressed traumatic memories of your last staff meeting."

Ⅰ. INTRODUCTION

A. What is groupthink?

Groupthink refers to a process of group dynamics where when people work in groups they sometimes suffer illusions of righteousness and invincibility. Janis (1972) defines groupthink as a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive group, and when the members' striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action (P. 9). Groupthink is characterized by inward-looking, self-regulating, and stereotypical behaviour that can often lead to distorted and defective decision making. Some of the characteristic features of this defective decision making as defined by Janis (1972, 1982) are:

1. Failure to explore alternatives. Perhaps only one idea is focused on with scant attention to other ideas. Rejected alternatives are seldom re-examined.
2. The group fails to consider all available objectives, and the best may not be chosen.
3. There is insufficient exploration of costs and risks of options, where assumptions are made that can lead to discounting or overlooking negative outcomes.
4. Information searches are superficial and all possible data for a decision is not collected. There is selective/biased filtering and communicating of results to others. The group will dismiss valuable items of information which "do not fit their picture" of how things should be or should be done.
5. The group fails to work out the details of policy implementation, monitoring, and contingency plan and worst case scenarios. As a result, consequences and risks are ignored or glossed over.

Group decision making characterized by groupthink is dominated by conformism. Any member who disagrees with the opinions of the leader or group majority can be isolated, ridiculed, or otherwise expelled from the group. A non-conformist can be referred to as one who is "finished as an expert," rather than as an independent thinker. The group will cut off information that might cast doubt on a proposed course of action. This can be achieved by self-censorship, by the work of self-

**Associate Professor of Kwansei Gakuin University

appointed mindguards who encourage docility among group members, or by blocking vital information from reaching the group. Often the self-appointed mindguard or censor will be the group's leader. The resulting insulation of the decision group and its "leader" is bound to affect the quality of decisions.

Groups which engage in groupthink decision-making behavior suffer from an illusion of invulnerability and develop an impression that they can do no wrong. Stereotyping, sometimes of certain members of the group, also plays an important part in groupthink. This dangerous reliance on shared stereotypes that justify certain group member's needs and positions, can lead to premature and erroneous conclusions. Such groups also suffer from bounded rationality and tethered assumptions: members fall under the (mistaken) impression that they are right, even if evidence is brought forth that they may be wrong. The danger is that those who are "right" will ignore what they don't know or don't wish to know. One result of such righteousness may be a form of "inverted intelligence" evident e.g.:

> The actual information we have doesn't quite fit what we want to do but we know our customers (e.g. students) and what they want. The information must be wrong. The worst will never happen anyway. Being moral people we wouldn't let this happen would we? We have everyone's best interests at heart. If we communicate and present our message properly, people will come to understand. (BOLA: 2)

A group member may raise objections about the group's activities but on encountering a rebuff—opposition from the "leader" or the "leader's" supporters—withdraw and not press the point. The attempt to open up discussion is too thin and insubstantial to make a difference to a fierce argument. This "dissenter" then sticks out like a sore thumb, a situation which can be personally humiliating and stressful. If everyone in the group is against you the easiest approach is to "put up and shut up." Where objection is not generally shared it is easy to go along with group opinion and then complain about the group's decision afterwards. But from a decision-making perspective, if you know something is wrong, it is important to say it and keep on saying it. The problem is that this becomes a nuisance (e.g. "a waste of time") to dominant others, and the loner becomes more and more isolated and stereotyped.

Self-censorship may be evident where the group leader expresses the view that a consensus does indeed prevail—he or she may actually state that everyone has had the opportunity to express his or her views, hasn't he (or she)? Such an overhead (i.e. top-down) summary remark from a predominant member of the group may actually add to the possibility of a dissenter not voicing valid objections in the event that he or she is accused of rocking the boat or harrassing the group or any of its members. Janis (1972) uses the anecdote of President Kennedy agreeing to the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba fiasco and using the concurrence of then Defense Secretary Schlesinger as justification and support, although Schlesinger later voiced serious reservations he regretted not having expressed before the decision to invade was finalized.

Groupthink strengthens the group's cohesion and reinforces self-complacency among group members. In effect many group decisions become inferior to decisions (that could have been) made individually. What steps can be taken to limit groupthink and improve the quality of decision making? The key is to organize the group's work so as to stimulate critical thinking and evaluation. The group's leader should remain impartial (i.e. withhold his or her own views) until group members have voiced their opinions, however controversial they may be. It might even be possible for the group leader to suggest bringing in an outside expert whose task it would be to challenge the dominant views by pointing out weaknesses and pitfalls. Groupthink can also be minimized if leaders adopted courses of action such as the following:

　　　a . they encourage group members to raise objections and concerns,

　　　b．they split the group into sub-groups to separately generate alternatives, then bring the sub-groups together to hammer out differences,

　　　c．they call a meeting after a decision consensus has been reached to critically review the decision before final approval is given.

　B．<u>Irving Janis' conceptualization of the groupthink model.</u>

　Janis' view of groupthink involves an atmosphere which makes group members view the group as a warm or safe environment, and it is this atmosphere which makes members regard one another with mutual attraction. In other words, individuals come to view their group and their group membership as assets. Janis' main point is that group members stick together because they feel they should; every member—excepting dissenters or "harassers"—feels it necessary to have the same standing or opinion as other group members.

　Janis' analysis of four policy decisions—Pearl Harbor, the escalation of the Korean War by crossing the 38th parallel, the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the escalation of the Vietnam War from 1964－67, all of which resulted in fiascoes, provided the raw material for the development of his 1972 theory (Esser, 1998) Janis determined the identifying symptoms of groupthink as well as some of its antecedents and consequences by contrasting the four cases with two others which had not turned into fiascoes and which had yielded good results—the Marshall Plan and the Cuban Missle Crisis.

　Ten years later Janis (1982) reformulated the theory in order to test its generality. He analyzed decisions taken by President Nixon and Nixon's advisors to cover up the involvement of the White House in the Watergate burglary. As stated by Esser (1998) Janis concluded that groupthink had played a major role in the Watergate cover-up. In addition to the 8 symptoms of groupthink and 7 symptoms of poor decision making he had posited in 1972, he now added two more antecedents: the homogeneity of members' ideology, and high stress from external threats.

　Turner and Pratkanis (1998) report that:

　　　Janis' classic formulation (1972, 1982) and more recent formulation (1989) hypothesizes that decision-making groups are most likely to experience groupthink when they are highly cohesive, insulated from experts, perform limited search and appraisal information, operate under directed leadership, and experience conditions of high stress with low esteem and little hope of finding a better solution to pressing problems than that favored by the leader or influential members. (p. 105)

　Turner and Pratkanis (1998) further argue that when the above-mentioned antecedents are present, they are hypothesized to foster extreme consensus-seeking characteristics of groupthink (p. 106). The result is predicted to lead to two categories of undesirable decision-making processes: (1) groupthink symptoms such as the illusion of invulnerability and collective rationalization, and (2) symptoms of defective decision making such as selective information processing, and poor information search.

　McCauley (1998) argues that in his 1982 formulation of the theory Janis had offered the rudiments of a theoretical account of the model in terms of self-esteem. He reports that:

　　　The stress of an external threat is the anticipation of loss of self and social esteem if the group does not respond successfully to the threat and the group is more likely to anticipate failure when the current decision is perceived as difficult or morally ambiguous or follows recent group failures. (P. 143)

　McCauley (1998) further argues that the symptoms of groupthink have in common the fact that they all contribute to forming and maintaining a consensus that the group and its premature deci-

sion are reasonable, right, and likely to succeed against an external threat from a person or people who are unreasonable, wrong, and likely to fail.

As Turner and Pratkanis (1998) remind us (P. 105):

Groups provide us with the opportunity to reach heights far greater than any one individual might accomplish. Yet, groups also entail considerable risk for they also have the potential to produce unimaginable destruction. Explaining why these outcomes occur has been a daunting task for social and organizational researchers.

The purpose of this article is to revisit groupthink theory and understand its applicability in a specific higher education decision-making context that involves the English language education provision within a private university and one of its discipline-area faculties. Taking into account the socio-culture inherent in the institution and its wider society, to what extent is groupthink evident in one context of decision making? What evidence can be brought forth to possibly support (or refute), and/or refine the groupthink theory in this context of socio-educational thought and behavior?

Section II will review the history of groupthink research from 1972 to the present. In section III I shall report on one model of groupthink theory in particular that gives promise of exemplifying and validating many of the groupthink variables in a particular situation. This model, known as the Social Identity Maintenance Model or SIM, basically defines groupthink as the collective attempt of a group to maintain its positive image, and identifies certain conditions under which this form of concurrence seeking is likely to occur. It is hypothesized that taking into account certain noticeable features of Japanese socio-culture (e.g. the importance of harmony or WA), and features of higher education socio-culture (e.g. collectionism), the SIM model may contribute significantly to the explanatory, predictive, testability, and heuristic power and potential of the theory.

Section IV will review some characteristic features of Japanese socio-culture and Japanese university socio-educational culture that seem likely to nurture groupthink. Finally, in section V, I will review the main arguments of this paper and offer an agenda for future research that would necessitate a wider view for higher education faculty that would include an investigation into the decision-making apparatuses of their organization or institution. It is argued that without a clearer understanding of the decison-making forces operable within an educational organization, forces which may very well depend on a groupthink mentality of consensus-sharing, an individual is much less capable of effecting any educational change.

Ⅱ．TRACING THE HISTORY OF GROUPTHINK RESEARCH: 1972－Present
A．Interpretations and phases of the model.

Up to 1998 there have been but two dozen empirical investigations involving groupthink in spite of the fact that the theory has had overwhelming appeal and widespread impact (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 107). Two reasons for such limited research may be that the model involves relatively large numbers of variables, and its theoretical specifications are ambiguous. The strict interpretation of the theory maintains that groupthink occurs only when all antecedent conditions are present. An additive interpretation argues that groupthink becomes more evident when the number of antecendent conditions (e.g. illusion of invulnerability) increases. According to Turner and Pratkanis (1998), there is no published evidence that confirms either interpretation. They argue that a third interpretation, the liberal or particularistic interpretation, is more consistent with current research (1998: 108). This third interpretation suggests that groupthink outcomes depend on "unique situational properties invoked by the (my italics) *particular set of antecendent conditions found in each groupthink context*" (1998: 108).

There have been three phases of groupthink empirical research. Direct tests of the model such

as Tetlock's 1979 experimental study, were concerned with developing operationalizations of key dependent variables, most notably those built around the construct of cohesion. Other studies examined the role of directed leadership, and in general these two investigative avenues were able to offer equivocable support for the 1972/1982 model. Studies such as Courtwright (1978), Callaway and Esser (1984), and Leana (1985) concluded that cohesion, operationalized as mutual attraction, had limited effects on group decision-making outcomes. On the contrary, these studies also found that instructing group members to limit their discussion, whether done explicitly or implicitly, did indeed result in constricted discussions, and this constriction had greater effects on (faulty) group decision-making outcomes.

Studies also involved extensions of the groupthink model such as Fodor & Smith (1982), Kroon, t'Hart & Van Krevald (1991), and Kameda & Sugimori (1993). These studies examined the effects of power motivation, accountability, and gender on groupthink outcomes, and how decision rules might also affect groupthink processes and symptoms. More recent studies such as t'Hart (1998), McCauley (1989), Whyte (1989), and Turner et al. (1992), involved reformulations of the model. Turner et al. (1989) used the concept of social identity maintenance. McCauley (1989) considered the impact of conformity and compliance pressures, while Whyte (1989) examined the role of risk and choice shifts. t'Hart (1998) developed the concept of groupthink as collective optimism and collective avoidance. Yet, there has been no definitive evidence to support the hypothesized connections between the five groupthink antecedents, seven groupthink symptoms, and the eight defective decision-making symptoms (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 110).

Kramer (1998) suggests that other motivations (e.g. maintenance of political power) may produce groupthink in the government arena. Hensley and Griffen (1986) analyzed the controversial decision by the Kent State University Board of Trustees to build a gymnasium annex on the site of the informal memorial for the 1970 killings of university students. They concluded that the trustees' decision involved groupthink because most elements of the theory were found to be present, and suggested that three additional poor decision-making symptoms could be produced by groupthink: (1) failure to initiate or maintain contact with an opposition group, (2) lack of cooperation with third-party mediators, and (3) a failure to extend the time period for making a decision.

B．Collective avoidance and accountability.

Kroon et al. (1991) argued that in the collective avoidance type of situation groupthink can be minimized or even prevented by informing individual group members that they will be held accountable for the group decision. This same study also found that accountability has much less preventive effect on groupthink in the collective overoptimism type of situation. Park (1990) concluded that most groupthink symptoms cannot be easily assessed by outside observers because most groupthink symptoms represent private feelings or beliefs held by group members, and/or behaviors performed (only) in private (e.g. within closed committee meetings). Park reasons that the most appropriate way in which to study and measure groupthink symptoms is to ask group members directly.

Two studies have used questionnaires to assess the full set of eight groupthink symptoms, as recommended by Park (1990). Morehead & Montanari (1986) used a twenty-four item questionnaire they had developed earlier, and which was composed of three items for each of the eight symptoms- the exception being that they employed four items for illusion of invulnerability, and two items for collective rationalization. They were able to identify only four factors that impacted directly on groupthink and faulty decision making: (1) invulnerability with a negative view of outsiders, (2) morality with feelings of unanimity and rationalizations, (3) self-censorship, and (4) the discouragement of dissent. Richardson (1994) assessed all eight groupthink symptoms using a GROUPTHINK INDEX first developed by Glaser (1993), which was originally designed for use in management

training.

The Morehead & Montanari (1986) and Richardson (1994) studies both indicate that the eight groupthink symptoms proposed by Janis (1972) are difficult to assess using available questionnaires (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 138). Turner & Pratkanis argue that this difficulty could be ascribed to the fact that the symptoms are not conceptually distinct, or that there is some fault with the questionnaires themselves (1998: 138). They argue that a more ideal questionnaire would focus on the behaviors and attitudes of the subjects; the extent to which the group as a whole exhibits groupthink symptoms would then be based on the sum of self-assessments by the individual group members.

Esser and Lindoerfer (1989) argue that in its present form, groupthink can be considered as a syndrome more easily identifiable and observable when a large majority of groupthink elements (i.e. symptoms) are present. It is conceivable that in some contexts where there is the possibility of groupthink occurring, not all symptoms are relevant and/or necessary. Esser and Lindoerfer remind us that not all situations involve an "enemy" outgroup; thus, stereotyping of an outgroup may not be a valid indicator of groupthink. They also point out that when there are no or very few sources of information available to the group—on the basis of which they can make a decision—mindguarding may be less relevant.

C. Rationalizations of the groupthink model: quality decision-making as the primary or sole goal?

According to Turner et al. (1992)—as reported in Turner & Pratkanis (1998)—groupthink can best be conceptualized as a process whereby group members attempt to maintain a shared positive identity as a distinctive group. McCauley (1989) distinguishes two influence processes by which groupthink could operate: (1) compliance, and (2) internalization. t'Hart (1991) and Kroon et al. (1991) have argued that groupthink is based on collective avoidance and collective optimism, and that the elements of groupthink differ accordingly. McCauley (1998) reports that any theory of how decision making can fail must contain the seeds of a theory of how decision making can succeed. McCauley argues that the groupthink model does in fact offer a strong specification of what the ideal model should or could look like. McCauley states that:

> If groupthink is a disease of an insufficient search for information, alternatives, and modes of failure, the "cure" is better search procedures that would involve, (1) impartial leadership that encourages the airing of doubts and objections within the group, and searches for information and evaluation from sources outside the group, (2) procedural norms that support a systematic consideration of alternatives, (3) second-chance meetings after preliminary consensus, and (4) special attention to the motives and communications of threatening competitors. (1998: 144)

Thus, ideal decision making emerges as the inverse of the definition of groupthink and the specification of the failings of groupthink. The essence of the ideal is a maximization of search and evaluation procedures. The group must be better than the average individual within the group if group procedures ensure that information and ideas are pooled, and that evaluation averages away individual biases (e.g. change for the appearance or sake of change, or keeping things as they are to maintain stability and/or invisibility).

Aldag & Fuller (1993) note that arriving at the best quality decision is but one goal out of many for group decision making. They maintain that:

> Compared with more authoritarian decision-making styles, group decision making may also produce more satisfaction with and commitment to the decision for participating group mem-

bers, may consequently produce improved implementation by group members and (my italics) *may diffuse responsibility for poor decisions*. The importance of these goals may equal or even surpass the importance of getting to the best quality decision .... a significant limitation of the groupthink model is that it treats decision quality as the only goal of the ideal decision-making process. (cited in McCauley: 1998: 145)

Aldag and Fuller (1993) argue for an enlarged model of groupthink that considers many goals in ideal decision making such as: saving face, keeping things quiet, maintaining respectability, keeping more vocal or "troublesome" members satisfied and placated, and marginalizing "dissenters" and "troublemakers."

Ⅲ. A SOCIAL IDENTITY MAINTENANCE MODEL OF GROUPTHINK (SIM)
A. The SIM model defined.

The SIM model defines groupthink as the collective attempt to maintain the positive image of the group, and identifies conditions under which this concurrence-seeking is likely to occur. The model also specifies intervention tactics that can mitigate the detrimental consequences of groupthink for group decision outcomes. t'Hart (1990) defines groupthink as collective avoidance and collective optimism. Other researchers have underscored the unique role of conformity (McCauley, 1989), the influence of political concerns (Kramer, 1998), and the role of collective efficacy (Whyte, 1998). The SIM approach argues that groupthink can be a useful explanatory concept of group behavior if the specific conceptualization takes account of the unique contextual components inherent in it. The SIM perspective suggests then that there are multiple routes to groupthink (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 212)

The SIM perspective refines the conceptualization of groupthink as follows: group members actively attempt to maintain and even enhance their evaluations of the group and its actions (e.g. decisions). Groupthink thus is a process of concurrence seeking which is directed at the maintenance of a shared positive view of the functioning of the group. The group attempts to protect its collective identity, especially under threatening conditions. It may even be the case that an individual under threat may request that the group act on his or her behalf where the threat to the individual can also be construed as a threat to the group as a whole. Groupthink then will occur under identifiable specific conditions and can provide early insights into the process by which those antecedent conditions produce both groupthink processes and groupthink consequences.

Two assumptions underlie the notion that groupthink occurs when group members attempt to maintain a shared positive image of the group. First, group members must develop a positive image of the group and its functioning. Secondly, that image must be questioned (i.e. criticized) by a collective threat, either from another group, from an individual, or otherwise from "outside." Two antecedents are especially critical in producing and portraying groupthink as SIM: (1) cohesion that incorporates a social identity perspective contributes to the development of a shared positive image of the group, and (2) the collective threat is the catalyst for intragroup processes that promote concurrence seeking and defective decision making, both of which are hallmarks of the groupthink phenonmenon.

B. The development of a group positive image.

The question remains: how do groups develop a positive image? One route suggested by the SIM model involves the interplay of self-categorization processes and social identity maintenance. Group members must first categorize themselves as a group rather than, for example, as a set of individuals. In other words, *members must perceive the group as having a social identity* (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 213). One important consequence of this process of categorization is that the group

tends to develop positive images of itself, and this leads the group to seek positive distinctiveness for in-group behavior, and to exhibit motivational bias for positive collective self-esteem—as for example, proclaiming that, "we are professionals and the system is expert" (J.C. Turner, 1981 cited in Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 214). Group members tend to develop a positive image of the group and are motivated to protect that image at all costs.

Tajfel (1981) and Turner et al. (1987) had suggested that the perception of others as "group members," perhaps where such a perception had not previously existed, rather than as unique different persons, may be a precondition for group cohesion. Furthermore, categorization can also operate by reinforcing similarities between the individual and other group members, to the extent that the group identity becomes more attractive than the identity of any of the group members (as individuals). These consequences of categorization serve a critical purpose within the SIM model: they provide the basis upon which the collective threat operates (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 214).

The second condition highlighted by the SIM perspective is that the group has to experience a collective threat that attacks its positive image. Turner & Pratkanis (1998) define this threat as a potential loss to the group. The threat must be collective or perceived as being so; a threat to any single member can result in dismissal of that member from the group in order to maintain the group's (positive) image. Kahneman (1973) and Turner (1992) both report that individuals and groups tend to narrow their focus of attention to threat-related cues especially so where the collective identity is threatened. The group, or any of its individual members perhaps acting on behalf of the group, tends to focus on those cues that can help maintain a shared image of the group. An example could be the formation of a special committee by the "head" of an organization or institution, having official status that is invoked by categorization.

The overriding task of the (newly-formed) group becomes additional protection or even enhancement, and under certain specifiable conditions, this desire to protect and enhance can have detrimental effects for the functioning of the group. According to Turner & Pratkanis (1998) this is "especially the case when high cohesion coupled with a social, as opposed to individual, identity, exacerbates identity protection motivations" (P. 215). Categorization and the induction of a social identity—perhaps where none was in evidence beforehand—now motivate the group to protect its view of itself as an effective and well-functioning body. When group goals favor effectiveness and productivity, cohesion can enhance the accomplishment of those goals, but when there is a collective threat, goals can be fundamentally altered or changed (e.g. keeping things compartmental, invisible, and unaccountable).

The collective threat questions group identity. When the group is, or is forced to become, highly cohesive around that identity, it is also highly motivated to protect that identity. Whereas a main goal, for example, may have been keeping things as they are, and/or maintaining invisibility and unaccountability, that goal could be transformed or extended into one of enhancing a threatened image. Group members have an overriding need to engage in identity protection, and reports of their decision-making processes and outcomes (e.g. minutes of committee deliberations) are likely to reflect such a motivation. Lanzetta (1955) found that groups exhibit more variety in intragroup processes under threatening conditions than under non-threatening conditions, and can exhibit a variety of groupthink processes and indictors as "group members attempt to maintain the positive image of the group in the face of a threatening situation that already induces variability into group process" (cited in Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 216).

Ｃ．The protective instincts and behavior inherent in the SIM model.

The symptom of stereotyping of an outgroup (e.g. a person born into a culture different from that of other group members) resembles outgroup discrimination that can accompany the induction of social identities (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 215). The illusion of invulnerability and rationaliza-

tion could be similar to social identity maintenance strategies that involve the selective enhance-
ment of various group characteristics in order to achieve positive distinctiveness. Pressures toward
uniformity and self-censorship that are induced by groupthink can be similar to referent informa-
tional influence processes (J. C. Turner, 1982 cited in Turner & Pratkanis, 1998: 216). The collective
threat to the group's identity can also increase rationalization about group decision (Janis and
Mann, 1977), can produce denial (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), and can limit one's participation in
group processes (Hall and Mansfield, 1971).

Turner and Pratkanis (1998:) further argue that:

> Failure to produce full constellation of groupthink effects in both case and experimental re-
> search suggests that groups may employ a variety of techniques to protect identities .....
> groups can creatively manipulate their perceptions so that these identity protection pressures
> are resolved. Moreover, these evaluations are not likely to be trustworthy indicators of group
> processes. Indeed many studies demonstrate the fultilty of attempting to examine self-
> evaluations as anything other than social constructions of the group. (P. 219)

Turner and Pratkanis also argue that many investigations have failed to document the usefulness
of more "objective" measures (P. 219), and interpret this failure as a need to develop more clear
analyses of the relationships between groupthink antecedents and consequences.

In the estimation of Turner and Pratkanis (1998: 222), the SIM model is consistent with the
view of Janis (1982) that holds that one outcome of groupthink "seems to be the mutual effort
among group members to *maintain emotional equanimity*" (my italics). Groupthink can thus be
viewed as a SIM strategy in that there is a collective effort that is designed to protect the positive
image of the group. Turner and Pratkanis conclude (P. 223) that any interventions designed to pre-
vent groupthink must be formulated with a clear understanding of this motivation to protect iden-
tity. It is possible that an educational restructuring or intervention—see Brady (1997)—can be in-
stituted to counteract groupthink—like antecedents, or group behavior within an organization that
countenances a "leave me alone" mentality that masquerades as group solidarity and cohesiveness.

It is also possible that an intervention—or circumvention[1]—could be more easily dismantled
or discontinued when groupthink is operative, and the group perceives the intervention as a collec-
tive threat. A member of an organization who may feel coerced into giving up membership within a
group which adheres to a particular genealogy of professional knowledge (e.g. non-collaborationist
and disconnected pedagogy and research), and/or which practices collectionist behaviors—see Brady
(1998a, 1998b)—could conceivably use collective threat arguments to protect himself or herself, es-
pecially so if the threat can be perceived as a threat to the identity of the loosely-formed group as
well. In this view it no longer is the case, at least initially, that the group being threatened has an
explicit social identity to protect. Rather it is the case that threatening practices and behaviors (e.g.
integrationist and collaborationist pedagogy), initially threatening to one or two individuals, later
become threatening to the larger group, and help shape for it a more visible identity. It is also the
case that the group's social identity becomes more pronounced in the process of "confronting" the
collective or external threat. Section IV will more closely examine this line of reasoning.

D. SIM model interventions: warding off a negative image of the group.

The SIM model suggests three interventions that are likely to be capable of diminishing a col-
lective effort toward the warding off of a negative image of the group. Firstly, an excuse or "face-
saving" mechanism for potentially poor performance can be set up. Secondly, a structured discussion
situation known as risk technique (Maier, 1952) can be designed to facilitate expression and reduc-
tion of fear and threat. It is postulated that within Japanese socio-culture and university socio-
educational culture no such mechanism is possible. The discussion is structured so that members

openly talk about dangers and risks involved in an action or decision (e.g. an educational restructuring) and delay discussion of potential gains. This process focuses on a reaction/response or reflection of the underlying content of those risks associated with a particular decision or situation (e.g. the death of a key individual within an organization, the continued effectiveness and allowable functioning of another individual in the same organization).

The third intervention suggested by the SIM model that could diminish a collective effort towards warding off a threat to the group's image is known as multiple role-playing procedures. Group members assume the perspectives of other constituents/constituencies with a stake in a particular action or decision―e.g. the discontinuance of a state of coordination, or the establishment of a collectivity of coordination―see Brady (1997) and (1998b). The above strategies can be beneficial to decision-making groups, particularly if the main goal of such groups is to perform high quality decisions. These strategies can, argue Turner & Pratkanis (1998), "reduce the emotional impact of a threat to group social identity by *facilitating identification and salience of alterntive groups* (my italics). The establishment of procedures for protecting "minority" groups (e.g. outsiders or integrationists in the context of a university) are critical report Turner & Pratkanis.

Some groupthink research, for example Janis (1982) and Turner et al. (1992) has demonstrated that groups can generate high quality decision alternatives but very often fail to do so. Nemeth (1992) gives evidence that exposure to minority opinions can enhance the performance by increasing cognitive resources devoted to the task, and by increasing search and evaluation of novel solutions. The protection of minority opinions could be one method, argue Turner & Pratkanis (1998: 228) to facilitate evaluation and the adoption of effective solutions to decision making.

One drawback to these and similar strategies or procedures could be that group members are disinclined to divulge their honest opinions and are fearful of being marginalized or excluded from the group. It is thus necessary to combine strategies for protecting minority opinions with identity reduction strategies. Turner & Pratkanis (1998) conclude that the linking of social identity to a critical analysis provides a number of benefits two of which are:

1．it makes constructive conflict a second-nature response, and a response that may likely appear in a threatening situation,
2．it develops social identity which emphasizes a critical analysis that can be a source of self-esteem

The SIM model views groupthink as a collective effort to maintain a shared positive view of the functioning of the group in the face of a perceived collective threat. Group members are engaged in a struggle to protect a collective identity from a potential failure to adequately and openly handle that threat. This collective identity protection (CIP) can have very harmful consequences for both the group/organization, and others such as disenting or "powerless" faculty, or students, who may experience certain consequences of the group's actions and decisions.

Ⅳ．JAPANESE SOCIO-CULTURE, UNIVERSITY SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL CULTURE, AND THE SIM MODEL OF GROUPTHINK

A．Prominent features and values inherent in Japanese socio-culture.

What values inherent in Japanese socio-culture, and university socio-educational culture, might impact on the feasability of the groupthink model? Wierzbicka (1997: 243)), citing Lebra (1976) argues that a key cultural concept in Japan (i.e. enryo) can be thought of as the pressure for conformity which often results in a type of self-restraint, where a person will refrain from expressing disagreement with whatever appears to be the majority opinion. Smith (1983) maintains that a person subscribing to enryo―glossed as "self-restraint"―is expected to call little attention to self. Enryo thus is a conscious or semi-conscious attitude based on certain thoughts. It shows a perceived need

for self-restraint in particular relationships, and it applies to one's wants and expression of opinions. There is fear of hurting or embarrassing someone (i.e. "loss of face"), and this fear manifests itself in words and behavior (Wierzbicka, 1997: 248).

It is argued that this type of behavior may not readily manifest itself or surface in larger-scale, more visible social settings (e.g. university faculty meetings), but can occur in smaller-scale, less visible socio-educational settings (e.g. committee meetings) where there is closer contact, and thus more sensitivity to (one's) standing out within the group. One factor that could confirm or refute this hypothesis is the extent to which an individual subscribes to self-restraint, and the extent to which he or she will go out of his or her way to "not hurt" another. It may be easier for an individual to get what he or she wants if he or she can accurately intuit that others in a group-like setting may want the same thing. For example, a university may want its faculty members to have invisibility and unaccountability in pedagogy, or freedom to pursue their research interests divorced from course or class coordination obligations.

Others who may also feel threatened may together sanction group-like behavior that initiates a course of action to protect the group's threatened socio-educational identity. This is, of course, hypothetical, and the only way this hypothesis might be proved true is to elicit honest and true feelings and thoughts from individual group members. Given the importance and predominance of enryo in social settings within Japan, it might be impossible to "prove" this hypothesis. But the fact remains that if an individual can accurately predict that a threat to his or her interests could be construed as a threat to a group's social identity, it is conceivable that groupthink-like structures predicted by the SIM model could be established.

Lafayete Da Mente (1998) reports that historically the enigma and strength of Japanese society is its cultural homogeneity—similarities in attitudes and behavior. He argues that, added to its racial homogeneity, this cultural homogeneity presents a formidable image of programmed purpose and power, an image that the Japanese social critic, Michihiro Matsumoto, likens to a "swarm of ants." There is only one correct way to perform actions and deviations are not allowed. "Kataized"— i.e. acting like ants—behavioral conditioning is still practiced in schools, corporations, and a number of aesthetic pursuits argues Da Mente. Though Da Mente admits that Japanese in general now question a system that is designed to turn each of them into clones of one another (P. 18), this behavioral consciousness could contribute to groupthink mentality in the sense that everyone in a group will want to be like everyone else.

Batsu, glossed as "keeping the team together" (Da Mente, 1998: 46), originated in Japan when the compulsion to belong to a group grew out of the need for cooperation in the cultivation of rice in small adjoining fields in Japanese villages or mura. Da Mente argues that it is significant that throughout Japan's history, the rights of an individual were generally not recognized nor protected by custom or law. Individuals had obligations but no rights, and thus belonging to a group was the only practical choice that people had both socially and economically (1998: 46). Anyone who refused to belong to a group whether family, farming village, or craft guild, was subject to being ostracized. Japanese thus became conditioned to group orientation and group behavior to the point that they were unable to function effectively as individuals. Da Mente concludes that hundreds of years of cultural conditioning cannot be easily overcome, and "group orientation and behavior remain characterized traits of most formalized activities within Japan, *particularly in politics and in professional organizations*" (my italics—(1998: 46).

Da Mente (1998: 61) also states that:

> In attempts to explain characteristic attitudes and behaviors, anthropologists often note that until the mid-1960s Japanese society was primarily tribal—made up of people sharing a common ancestry, language, culture, and name, and concentrated in a specific and well-defined region. Laws were thus designed to bring uniformity to society and compel it to serve the interests of the shogunate. The lives of Japanese were so closely intertwined and so ruled by

convention causing them to think and act so much alike, that they often seemed to behave more by instinct (i.e. chokkan) than rational thought. The whole educational and economic system is designed to further this herd-like approach to life.

Da Mente concludes (P. 62) that this degree of cultural uniformity and social control so weakened the role of independent thought and behavior which resulted in intuition being dominant in society. In short, Japanese as a group knew what was right or wrong without having to apply rational or argumentative thought. There is still enough of this traditional cultural conditioning remaining in the make-up of the average middle-aged and older Japanese to cause them to react intuitively to virtually everything that confronts them, which may include argumentation that opposes certain of their interests and which may be otherwise based on logic and rationality.

Perhaps the most telling socio-cultural reality in Japanese society that could lend credence to groupthink-like behavior, particularly within the SIM model. is the concept of WA, glossed as "harmony" in English. Wierzbicka (1997: 235) characterizes WA as follows:

（1） a group of people want to be like one thing and all want the same
（2） this group doesn't want a situation where individuals say I want or don't want this
（3） this group does not want to say of any of them that they did either good or bad
（4） the group wants to do things because of the way they feel about each other (as individuals being members of the group), and as a result, they feel good
（5） the group can do many good things because of this
（6） the group could not accomplish these things if they didn't all want the same
（7） (other) people think this (action and behavior) is very good

Kawashima (1967) argues that:

In individualism there can exist co-operation, compromise, self-sacrifice, and so on, in order to adjust and reduce contradictions and oppositions, but in the final analysis there exists no real harmony (WA) .... the way of WA of our society is not mechanical co-operation, starting from reason, of equal individuals independent of one another, but the grand harmony (TAIWA) which maintains its integrity by proper statuses of individuals within the collectivity and by acts in accordance with these statuses ... After all, oppositions of opinions, as well as differences of interests deriving from (various) standpoints, are integrated into a unity of grand harmony proper to Japan and originating from a common source. Not conflicts, but harmony is final (cited in Da Mente, 1998: 248).

Rohlen (1947: 47) stresses the pre-eminent position of WA in the hierarchy of Japanese values and states that:

to achieve WA is certainly a major goal of any Japanese group, and is also an essential ingredient in the attainment of other goals .... in this regard it is something like "love" in American popular culture for it is both a major means to social improvement and an end in itself.

Honma and Hoffer (1989) argue that harmony within the group is a key value in Japanese society, and Japanese people tend to think and behave as a group. It is this emphasis on the group that often causes a Japanese to refrain from standing up to himself and to follow the group instead.

DeVos (1985) maintains that Japanese organizations are based on the implicit idea that members are somewhat merged in their collectivity and share the same goals. However, this collective sameness may conflict with university socio-culture which promotes ideas of autonomy, individual expertness, and specialization, and which also sanctions an invisibility in one's teaching and research endeavors. If it is true that there must or should be similar publicly-visible and interpersonal affective patterns operating within a university collectivity, then it may be problematic for there also to be any form of individualistic or conflicting mode of thinking or behavior made public,

for this could disturb true harmony. This contradiction, however, could be accounted for, given the fact that much of what university professionals think and practice in the course of their daily professional activity is isolated, private, and collectively unaccountable—see Brady (1998a, 1998b).

B. Protecting the inviolate thinking and practice of university socio-culture: groupthink as a protective mechanism for faculty.

If a university's harmony is "skin-deep" only, and structures that are set up to display that surface harmony predominate to cover up an underlying individualism and self-centeredness in both teaching and research, it may be true that groupthink-like elements significantly help an organization to keep inviolate both the process and goal of WA. The goal of any group constituted within such a society might then be to maintain harmony at all costs, and further maintain all structures within the organization that give the outward appearance of a collective sameness. WA, as manifested in groupthink-like thinking and practice, can, in effect, help constitute an effective block to any thought or behavior that does not promote conformism and uniformity.

Individuals (i.e. faculty) would be allowed to think and practice independently in their classroom teaching and in their research as expert specialists, out of sight and out of mind so to speak. However, any attempt to publicly hold people accountable for what they think and/or practice in their pedagogy or research could or would trigger a collective protection strategy. While it might be proper to have conflicting ideas and practices in the system unseen and/or unaccounted for, any attempt to make visible these conflicts would upset harmony.

Naotsuka et al. (1981) quoted in Arima (1991: 46) states that:

> Since group decisions are made on the basis of unanimous consensus ... and since open and direct confrontation is avoided where possible in the interest of WA and smooth functioning (i.e. no trouble) any plan for decision needs NEMAWASHI (i.e. pre-discussion usually private) ... so that a group consensus gradually emerges before a final decision takes place.

The university system however excludes many people, even those who may be directly affected by a decision, from privately participating in NEMAWASHII due to the system's hierarchical power and governing arrangements. For example, only full professors are able to fully participate in many formal faculty meetings—i.e. committees—that might later result in more private NEMAWASHII-type consensus sharing. People who are known to be dissenters and critical thinkers, and who often use logic and rationality to support their arguments, are also often excluded from private discussions. Since the main goal of the socio-culture is to maintain harmony, mechanisms need be put in place, within the institution, that would make it very difficult if not impossible for dissenters to voice conflicting arguments.

C. Groupthink as internalized influence and cooperation defined as compliance.

Groupthink can be conceptualized as internalized influence. Janis (1982: 247) states that:
> in a cohesive group of policy-makers, the main danger is not that each individual will fail to reveal his or her strong objections to a proposal made or favored by the majority, but that he or she will think the proposal is a good one without attempting to carry out a critical scrutiny that could lead him or her to see that there are grounds for strong objections.

McCauley (1998) maintains that group influence that only produces public acceptance of an idea or decision or course of action can not answer to the stress of uncertainty; the social reality value of the group depends upon the internalization of group influence toward uniformity and conformity. Japanese socio-culture seems well positioned to accomplish this internalization, and is coupled with a professional socio-educational culture that champions invisibility of individual performance and

accomplishment in both teaching and research (Brady, 1998a, 1998b). The pressure to conform and be like everyone else is particularly strong when an external and collective threat is at hand that questions the contradictory nature of university life.

A collectivity of same-thinking group members, existing alongside a collection of individual and separated specialist individuals, whose higher education values and beliefs are bound to conflict when made public and visible, can create disharmony in the extreme. Some might even term this disharmony chaotic for the continued well-functioning of the university socio-educational system. Unless groupthink-like structures are (put) in place to prevent a collision of public cohesiveness with deeper-rooted and potentially damaging private conflicts, a basic contradiction might become evident.

An institution may continue to proclaim and verbally promote higher-order critical thought and the beneficial emergence of conflicting views in order to arrive at truly objective solutions to policy-making (e.g. program development that would help nurture higher learning for the benefit of students as well as faculty). In actual practice, however, faculty may fail miserably to publicly and openly acknowledge their differences, and seek ways and means of bridging their differences. A system that allows faculty to teach and research in "ivory towers", perhaps supported by a mentality and practice (i.e. groupthink) that either elicits, or worse, coerces internalized influence and compliance―the latter otherwise defined as "cooperation"―could discredit the organzation's claim to being an institution of open and critical thought.

Research and theory in group dynamics links high cohesion with both high compliance and high internalization. Whether labelled groupthink or something else, compliance in order to maintain position in a high status decision-making group does occur (McCauley, 1998). However, high cohesion, states McCauley, is insufficient to produce compliance. No matter how attractive the group may be, a "deviant" will not suppress his opinion unless he or she feels insecure in his or her position in the group (e.g. only he or she is upsetting harmony). When (individual) group members feel confident in being accepted or appreciated as individuals then Janis may be correct that group members are less likely to comply (McCauley, 1998: 148).

Harmony and the absence of visible conflict are the main goals of group activity within Japan, and individuals are strongly inclined not to think or act individually but as congenial members of the group who comply with the majority or "leader" consensus. There is then a strong element of internalized influence and compliance in group settings in Japan, and this would certainly make it easier for a group to engage in other groupthink practices such as looking inward, stereotyping, rationalizing, and self-regulation.

Groupthink maintains that there is a special connection between poor decision making and cohesion, which is based on the attractiveness of group members (McCauley, 1998: 150). However, McCauley states that the nature of opposition between personal attractiveness and poor search and evaluation is not made very clear. For example, why is it that premature consensus should be more likely when cohesion is based on personal attractiveness rather than when it is based on group prestige or a group goal consensually arrived at? One possibility may be that if the goal is to avoid failure, perhaps defined as not maintaining harmony and/or doing something which looks good, any uncertainty about a decision should or could be very unpleasant. In this line of reasoning, premature consensus built upon congeniality and "friendliness" (i.e. groupthink), could offer a very tempting end to any unpleasantness (i.e. the reimposition of harmony).

Back (1951, cited in McCauley, 1998: 152) found that only when cohesion was based on personal atrractiveness was it the case that individuals within a group downrated others who resisted their attempts at influence. Where "A" accepted the influence of "B" but where "B" did not accept the influence of "A," "B" was less liked. Back (1951) found there to be interpersonal costs associated with resisting influence based on personal attractiveness; these costs, however, did not appear when attractiveness was based on group prestige or group goals. This leads one to wonder what the pres-

tige and goals of any one group might be within the university system (e.g. what prestige and what goal-directedness might the English language education group have within a discipline department such as sociology?).

Back concluded that: (1) ideas have individuals attached to them, (2) evaluation of a suggestion or argument is unavoidably evaluation of the individual, (3) high cohesion based on personal attractiveness leads group members to expect mutual support and respect, but (4) frank criticism of an individual's idea is inconsistent with the maintenance of friendly relations especially when criticism and influence are assymetric. If what Back has concluded is true, then it may be the case that in any group decision-making situation or setting, the predominace of friendly relations, while desirous in an ideal social setting , might make it impossible for people to have frank discussions or participate in goal-directed consensual and argumentative quality decision making. In Japan, and especially within a collectionist high-status maintenance socio-culture (as in the university), it may be near impossible to have optimal decision making since it threatens cohesion (i.e. friendliness) based on personal attractiveness, or value internalization, both qualities readily accepted and acceptable in visible Japanese socio-culture.

It may be the case that personal attractiveness is of more concern than program-building or the establishment of a visible system that makes pedagogy and research accountable to others (e.g. students and the wider society). When cohesion is based on personal attraction, or what personal attraction can offer in a situation where someone can, for example, be officially released from a nonbinding yet necessary obligation built upon his or her ability and willingness to engage in practiced coordination, the most relevant issues then become those of interpersonal esteem and respect. The group seeks consensus in positive evaluations, and assymetries of respect—either earned or not—and influence will undermine the basis of the group.

To the extent that cohesion is based on prestige or group goals, not solely or primarily the maintenace of harmony for harmony's sake, the relevant issues will concern the preservation of group status and its benefits or decisions about group activities and the means to group goals. Personal unpleasantness can be tolerated in those groups that focus on status or task because it does not undermine the basis of the group. If the group has little or no status aside from that which it has given itself, and if it is not goal-directed or task-directed, but rather prides itself on maintaining harmony and a friendly atmosphere above all else in order to look as though it is "doing something," then personal unpleasantness will not be tolerated, especially if it results from the airing of conflicting views.

Ⅴ．CONCLUSION

A．Warning signs of groupthink: two major concern areas

Does an organization or group suffer from groupthink? According to Castro (1996) the particular behavioral symptoms to watch out for are two in particular:

1 ．An illusion of invulnerability, shared by most or all members of the group, which creates excessive optimism, and which encourages taking extremely risky courses of action.
2 ．Confronted by any information that might challenge sacredly-held beliefs, the groupthink subscriber will react by not talking to you.

Using the example of the Findhorn community in Scotland, Castro elaborates on these two themes. There are, he asserts, collective efforts to rationalize in order to discount warnings which otherwise might lead group members to seriously reconsider their shared assumptions before they commit to policy decisions (e.g. deciding it is impossible to make official an overseas higher education study program that many acknowledge is of great benefit to the students as well as the prestige of the institution providing those students). There is also an unquestioned belief in the group's inherent mo-

rality, to the extent that group members ignore certain ethical or moral consequences of decisions (e.g. the "forced" removal of an individual from her or his hired responsibility). There will also be direct pressure on any group member who might express strong arguments against any of the group's stereotypes (e.g. "native" speakers of English), illusions (e.g. "we can do no wrong"), or commitments (e,g, "we aim for a well-developed curriculum), thus making it clear that such dissent is contrary to what is expected of loyal group members.

There will also be a shared illusion of unanimity where none actually exists, concerning judgements conforming to either a majority view or a view imposed by a directed "leader" acting on behalf of the group. Such "unanimity" may also be strengthened by keeping little if any record of meetings or deliberations, and/or by producing minutes or records of such meetings which give no indication of conflict or any dissenting views. Self-censorship of any deviations from the apparent group consensus is also an indication of groupthink. Members will be disinclined, if not outright discouraged, to minimize to themselves any doubts or counter-arguments they may have about any of the courses of action or decisions "unanimously" adopted by the group (e.g. changing of teachers for classes from one semester to the next).

More disturbingly perhaps will be the emergence of self-appointed mindguards, members—often the "leaders"—who protect the group and themselves from any adverse information that shatters their shared complacency about the effectiveness and morality of decisions. Castro reports that one ex-Findhorn community member was quoted as saying, "what is presented to the outside world, and what actually goes on inside the (Findhorn) Foundation are poles apart." One main complaint made about the Findhorn Foundation, states Castro, is that Findhorm systematically expelled people without first giving them the right of appeal and then tried to make them into non-persons, ignoring them whenever confronted by them (e.g. "go to the office for 'that' information, "we've already discussed among ourselves your arguments").

　　Ｂ．The consequences of groupthink.

There are many indications that point to the development of group norms that will bolster morale at the expense of critical thinking. One most common norm seems to be appearing to be loyal to the group and its leader(s) by sticking with the policies to which the group has already committed itself, even when those policies are obviously working out badly and/or have very negative, perhaps unintended, consequences that may critically disturb the conscience of each or any member. In the context of newspeak vocabulary that Orwell used in his book, 1984, groupthink assumes an invidious intended connotation. The term groupthink itself refers to a kind of mental efficiency deterioriation. "Group members go out of their way to be "kind" to their leaders or their colleagues' ideas, and adopt a soft line of criticism even in their own thinking" (Migliore, 1996). At meetings all members are amiable and seek complete concurrence on every important issue; there is no bickering tolerated, or any conflict that might otherwise spoil the cozy, "we-feeling" atmosphere.

A number of social-psychological studies give evidence that, as members of a group feel more accepted by others, they display less overt conformity to group norms. Thus, it might be expected that the more cohesive a group becomes, the less members will feel any constraint to censor what they believe out of any fear of being socially punished for antagonizing the group (i.e. harassment) or the leader, or any of the group's members. However, groupthink-like conformity tends to increase as group cohesiveness increases. This is due to the nondeliberate, but nonetheless real, suppression of critical thoughts as a result of the internalization of group norms, which, in the context of Japanese and university socio-culture critically depends on the maintenance of harmony at all costs.

The more cohesive the group, the greater the compulsion on the part of each member—including eventually even "dissenters"—to avoid creating disunity. This can easily result in the unquestioned belief of the soundness of whatever proposals are on offer, most notably those that emanate

from the "leader." When groupthink becomes dominant, there is considerable suppression of deviant thoughts, though it takes the form of each member's deciding that misgivings are not relevant and should be set aside in favor of group consensus.

C. Implications of groupthink for organizations and organizational effectiveness.

Encouraging the open airing of objections might lead to prolonged and costly debate when a "crisis" requires more immediate resolution. It could also result in rejection, depression, even anger, where someone might really "get hurt." A leader's failure to set norms might create some cleavage between he or she and group members that could develop into a kind of power struggle especially if the leader looks on the emerging consensus as anathema to his or her way of thinking. Setting up outside evaluation groups might jepordize security and make things too visible. Let us also not forget how many of the remedies cited above might upset the overall process and goal of harmony which we have seen is a very important part of any organization's culture in Japan, educational or otherwise.

We are reminded also that getting to the best quality policy decision is not necessarily one of the possible goals of group decision-making (Aldag and Fuller, 1993). Meyer and Zucker (1989) also maintain that organizations are places where there are many competing interests, and where a state of more or less permanent stagnation or even failure to change fundamentally may be acceptable. Especially if there is an inward-looking view that predominates, or if the group remains unaware and/or uninterested in what outsider stakeholders such as students, parents, businesses, or the wider society believe is beneficial, there is less possibility of decisions being taken with wider, more deviant and dissenting, interests in mind.

It is argued, however, that the presence of groupthink-like antecedents and symptoms within the decision-making apparatuses of an organization can have very harmful effects on the ability of that organization to operate as a critical thought enterprise. It may be particularly disturbing that, given the prominence of harmony, conformity, uniformity, and uncritical shared consensus within Japanese socio-culture, there are ample seeds for groupthink to flourish. And if it is true that groupthink does in fact critically contribute to an absence of critical thought and behavior within an institution such as the university, there is further disturbing news.

First, if the university proclaims to be a place where higher learning goes on, and where creativity and originality should blossom, then what are the implications for this blossoming if people within that organization are structurally, and perhaps also systematically, prevented from engaging in thought and behavior that encourages creativity and originality, including the right to be and think differently. Secondly, is it not hypocritical for an educational institution to proclaim that its faculty are expert specialists who practice creative thinking, and who wish to help nurture such cognitive and affective behavior in students, if they do not themselves wish to be critical of one another?

Thirdly, any organization, particularly one that espouses to engage in higher thought freely expressed, which can only respond to conflicting viewpoints by imposing groupthink-like consensus mechanisms upon its personnel, risks not being able to make important decisions that need to be made as a result of wider, more diverse thinking in society. If there is a real need for universities to take the lead in fostering critical thought and behavior in order to ensure a more globally competitive citizenry and workforce, then the antecedents, symptoms, and consequences of groupthink are an obstacle.

Collective decisions can frequently be superior to those made by individuals. But if certain individuals are able to manipulate structures which are based on groupthink, and which may lead to groupthink outcomes, primarily for their own interests rather than in the interests of others, there is real danger of an authoritarian-style pseudo-consensus ruling the decision-making organizational apparatus. Harmony, both as a process and as an end, should not be ignored. Nevertheless, if har-

mony is used as an excuse or cover to stifle free and creative thought when groups are expected to make important policy decisions, there will be no true harmony.

It is also important to note that all human decisions, whether made individually or in groups, are contingent upon social factors. Acting within a group obligates a decision-maker to accept a course of action he or she might be hesitant to adopt acting alone. Evidence obtained from studies of risky shift explains how the risk-taking tendency is reinforced in people who are members of groups. Groupthink can induce people to advocate and uncritically support more risky actions than when acting individually. Collective decision making is burdened with specific biases, and frequently a group composed of otherwise competent and able people will embark upon a foolish course of action. A special term of bias can be explained in terms of groupthink. To assert that a group decision is superior to an individual decision is untenable in light of this evidence; to uphold this claim would mean to disregard the interests of the wider society.

Groupthink-like behavior, whether explicitly practiced or implicitly tolerated and nurtured within an organization, gives evidence of the aims of that particular organization. If groupthink becomes a basic strategy of decision making so as to support a socio-culture which does not easily admit of dissent or deviance from the official line, then it may be true that the organization's main aim is to maintain the status quo, otherwise glossed as "harmony." In the words of Bertrand Russell, "institutions (e.g. universities or discipline departments), will ultimately be judged by the good or harm they do to individuals" (cited in Meighan and Siraj-Blatchford, 1998:122).

NOTES

１．An intervention is defined as an action (or set of actions) that when introduced prevents or interrupts something else. That something else could be (a set of) practices within a particular organization or institution (e.g. a higher educational experiment that necessitates changed thinking and behavior). A circumvention differs in the sense that it may intentionally avoid creating a situation that prevents or interrupts something else (e.g. a higher educational experiment that is territorially compartmentalized and marginalized).

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ABSTRACT

　　Groupthink is characterized by inward-looking, self-regulating, and stereotypical behavior that can lead to distorted and defective decision making. Japanese socio-culture, and university socio-educational culture may contribute to the nurturing of groupthink within an educational organization. However, getting to the best quality policy decision is not necessarily one possible goal of group decision-making. If groupthink behavior and groupthink-like structures are a basic strategy of decision-making within an institution or organization, the main aim of that organization may be to maintain the status quo, arguably interpreted as an overriding concern for harmony, at the expense of a wider view towards educational change.