

English abstract

The objective of this dissertation is to contribute empirically and theoretically to an illumination of work-organisational adaptation processes, which take place when autonomous working groups are introduced. More specifically the objective is to shed light on the complex social-psychological problems that are in play in a work-organisational adaptation to autonomous working groups.

The dissertation draws attention towards the fact that the adaptation process of an autonomous working group is more contradictory and ambiguous than is usually presumed. Through the adaptation processes of the organisation's different actors – collective as well as individual – contradictions and ambiguities that can be considered both as a medium for and a result of organisational control and resistance perform conversely to the organisational-working adaptation claims.

Empirically, the dissertation bases itself on a single working group's experience with an adaptation process to an autonomous-working-group work-organisation. This group was followed over a period of approximately eighteen months. Thus, the investigation represents a detailed and in depth analysis and interpretation of a working group and its members experiences with adaptation and the group's work as an autonomous working group. A central aim of the dissertation has been to come in close contact with the group and the world of its members in order to be in a position to interpret that world and its problems from the inside, so that problems could be defined, understood and felt by the group and its members. This has been done because such experiences are essential for the interaction, practices and aspirations that play out in the working collective, which is what an autonomous working group is. This is an approach that is rare within the research that deals with organisational-working-adaptation processes.

A central motive behind the dissertation's empirical and theoretical analysis is to give a more in depth and satisfactory insight into organisational-working-adaptation processes through the involvement of lower-ranked organisation members by seeing these as actors of change in their own right. These organisational actors of change are characterised through their own perspectives, motives, understandings and adaptation strategies opposite of the organisational-working changes that have been enforced by actors more powerful and influential within an organisation.⁵ The dissertation's basic assumption is that organisational working adaptation ought to be viewed as a political process, where the organisation's various internal agents of change all play a central role

⁵Ackroyd & Thompson 2000, s. 3.

in relationship to the adaptation's course and the result of that course.⁶ In this, the aforementioned empirical and theoretical analysis separates itself from the way in which a large share of organisational theories set the themes of organisational-adaptation processes and obstacles where conflict and opposition only include explanations of why changes have not been as intended. As it has been expressed by Ackroyd and Thompson, the following applies: "*Resistance and conflict is frequently dealt with under "change", as a means to explain why the latter doesn't happen. Such action is seen as a defensive or irrational response – the psychology of fear rather than the sociology of oppressing interests. Meanwhile change itself is assumed to be benign and change agents the purveyors of valid knowledge. ... Conflict itself and its causes are quickly leapt over to get to conflict resolution*" (Ackroyd & Thompson, 2000, s. 9).

Instead of laying out an approach where the workers' and group's behaviour is assessed from the management's objectives and expectations, this approach analyses the workers' organisational behaviour and self-organisation in their own right and as an expression of the workers' perceptions, motives and attempts to attend to their own interests.

Therefore, a central matter in the aforementioned empirical analysis and interpretation has been to move oneself from a perspective where the implementation of autonomous working groups is viewed theoretically from a perspective of the management – in other words, away from a matter of creating a more effective or healthy work-organisation that is empirically based upon the manager's accounts or expectations. Set in this light, a central matter within the aforementioned dissertation gives a voice to those who are usually ignored in the accounts of work in autonomous working groups.⁷

1. The Dissertation's Empirical investigation

The empirical component of the dissertation includes a time period of approximately eighteen months. More specifically, the data collection contained data generating in connection with the start up of the autonomous production groups in January of 1999, a second data generating phase one-half year within the adaptation process and a third phase one-and-one-half year within the adaptation. Interviews were conducted not only with group members, but also with representatives

⁶ It applies here as stated by Ackroyd, "... different groups of participants have differential room for manoeuvre, for securing outcomes in their favour and for shaping the attributes of the broader pattern of relationships to redesign the organizational structure itself: to decide how a company will be organised, what activities will be undertaken and how many people will be employed. Nevertheless the structure of an organization will not be precisely as one group decrees that it will be". (Fleewood & Ackroyd 2004, s. 148)

⁷McGabe 2000; David Knights and Darren McCabe 2000.

of the management and representatives for the workers within the company. In connection with the start up, and a year within the adaptation, a questionnaire survey was carried out. Both of the last two research methods are involved only sporadically in this dissertation. In other words, the analytical and interpretive weight is placed upon the interviews that were conducted with members of the groups. This is done in order to see the transition from the perspective of the workers.

With this, the research design of the dissertation is not developed in retrospective, but is more indicative of a progressive description, analysis and interpretation of the group's formation and constitution as an autonomous working group and a power and role structure. The various time-related points of impact are designated as *the group's start-up phase, the middle phase and the final phase*.

2. The dissertation's construction and reading guide

The thesis is divided into six sections:

- A presentation of the project's problem formulation, the research design and the methodological foundational assumptions.
- An empirical section that is divided into three main sections, which describe the form and content of organisational working adaptation as well as various time-related periods in the group's development and constitution as an autonomous working group.
- A summarising analysis where the adaptation is illuminated from a complex power administration and power development perspective, and it is illuminated from a complex role-adaptation and role-imperative perspective.

2.1 The dissertation's first section:

In chapter 1, the project's research design, research methods and data analysis strategies are described. The section begins with an account of the history and genesis of the research. The project was originally carried out within the boundaries of the "Project on Research and Intervention in Monotonous Work", which is an interdisciplinary and cross-professional research project that was initiated in 1993 by the Danish government and its employment market partners concerning the

reduction of the scope of One-Sided Repetitive Work.⁸ The originally aim of the is project was to illuminate barriers and promoting factors for an adaptation of autonomous working groups in the textile industry and the effect thereof in relationship to the psychological working environment. The project was performed through the usage of broad-spectrum of methodologies, which span from individual interviews with all workers to group interviews with specified groups. It also included a questionnaire survey and interviews with key organisational individuals, which include for example leader representatives, workers union representatives and representatives from other cooperation committees. The research was prepared as a longitudinal research course, where adaptation was followed from the beginning to eighteen months into the adaptation.

The chapter then explains why there is an exclusive focus on a single working group in the analysis and interpretive stages. Simultaneously, this chapter explains why the individual interviews with the group's members are the dissertation's primary data foundation and why group interviews and questionnaires are only involved sporadically as supplementary data material in the dissertation's analysis and interpretation. The project's analytical and data delimitation to a single case study is substantiated because it gives a great chance for the illumination of the complex organisational, social psychological and psychological processes to which an adaptation is linked. In this the choice of a case study can be argued by the wish to have the possibility to go in depth in the analysis and interpretation of the adaptation and thereby gain insight within the complex social psychological and psychological mechanisms that were in play in relation to the group's formation and constitution as an autonomous group.

This explains that the aforementioned research project has the particular character that deals with the research participants who make up a formal organisational-working unity. That real-world alliance is an essential strength in the research because it gives the possibility to interpret the research participants' accounts of adaptation within the limits of the social and organisational context, which they produce and reproduce internally. There is argument for, however, that the research participants were embedded in the same organisational, social and work-related tasks, where their reports and stories were characterised with both likeness and difference. This likeness and difference is due to the fact that workers have different rankings, roles and status in the group's collective power and role stratification.

⁸ The following research institutes took part in the PRIM project: 1) Work-Environment Institute 2) Work-Medicine Clinic, Copenhagen Regional Hospital in Glostrup 3) Work-Medicine Clinic, Herning Central Hospital 4) Work-Medicine Clinic, Aarhus Municipality Hospital 5) CASA 6) The Institute for Working Environment, DTU 7) Denmark's High School for Physical Exercise 8) Work-Medicine Clinic, Hillerød Hospital.

Even though the individual interviewed are closely-connected individuals within the same organisation, the organisational reality is described from the different social and organisational rankings and perspectives. When those interviewed are understood as psycho social agents embedded in a social and organisational context, accounts and histories about adaptation also reflect relationships of power in that social and organisational context. That is partly in the form of power's various discourses that are available in the form of diverse interpretive repertoires to which the individual can relate and use, partly in the form of the social recognitions and negative relations in which the individual is embedded, via his role, status and power within the group. Simultaneously, it can be argued that the research participants also must be understood as seemingly defensive, self-identity-preserving subjects. When seen collectively, this means that the accounts of those interviewed should not be taken at face value and are viewed as having a clear perception of the truth in relationship to the determination of the events and processes that play out in their collective and organisational world. Simultaneously it is argued that a naïve interpretation of the interviewees' accounts means that the self-deception, illusions and self-justification that they contain cannot be captured. In this, it is not possible to illuminate the psychological and social mechanisms that are in play in the individuals' and group's adaptation strategies. It can be argued that the interpretation of the interviewees' statements surrounding specific problems in relationship to the adaptation of the group's work as a autonomous working group can only happen in a plausible way when these specific theme settings are wholly related to how they unfold themselves, where they more concretely mean that the collective interview with the individual group member and the interviews with the other group members become a context for the analysis and interpretation of the data material.

2.2. The dissertation's second section:

In chapter 2, the background, objective and form of work organisational adaptation are reported. Moreover, the organisation's understanding of adaptation and its implementation strategies are illuminated. One of the central aims of this chapter is to illuminate what characterises the broader organisational structure and practises within which a group should act as an autonomous working group. The motive for this analysis is to show that the group's development and constitution as an inner power and role structure cannot be adequate unless it is related to the broader organisational structures, practices and discourses in which the group is embedded and working within.

This chapter primarily presents what characterises the manager and the organisation as an agent of change. This account also includes a determination of the conflicts and oppositions of the actions that are involved in adaptation to a working group's organisation and the implementation of it.

The chapter builds an encompassing perspective of the group-based work organisation with reference to the determination of the elements that the collective working design is compounded by as well as a description of the interplay between these. The analysis shows that a distinct incongruity exists between the changing work-related role imperative and the incitement and control system in which self-management is embedded. This is an incongruence and opposition that means that the working organisational adaptation represents both continuity and change in relation to the earlier organisation of the work.

This chapter also explains the understanding and practice of adaptation that exists among the management as the organisation's central actor of change in relation to the structuring and implementation of adaptation to autonomous working groups. There is a position that the management is a characteristic of a clear contradiction and inconsistency in relationship to the various discourses that lay behind different aspects of the formation of the relationship between these different discourses and practises that surround the subject of rationality. An inconsistency and key difference in the practices and discourses of the management that indicates that organisational adaptation is penetrated by system-immanent conflicts and opposite interests between the management and workers can be seen in management fluctuations, i.e. HRM embedded empowerment discourse, on the one hand, and a more traditional control discourse on the other. This is an inconsistency and key contrast that again generates tensions, conflicts and ambivalence surrounding the adaptation's various changes and role imperatives.

The analysis of the inconsistency and contradiction between adaptation's practices and discourses and the various discourses that exist within the organisation's central agents of change are motivated by an assumption that an illumination from this makes up an important foundation for an understanding of the adaptation process's course and result. When confronted with an organisational reality seen more as an every day experience, the management, as a central agent of change, has a clear ambivalence, reservation, scepticism and insecurity against the adaptation and adaptation's visions and rhetoric.

2.3. The dissertation's third section:

Chapter 3 to chapter 13 are the third section of the dissertation.

This part of the dissertation contains the description and analysis of the group in its start-up phase. The term start-up phase indicates that the focus is on the initial phase in the transition to a group-based work organisation. The term start-up phase also indicates that the group does not begin fully developed, but it goes through a collective clarification and formation process. This is a phase in which the group's members mutually attempt to become acquainted with each other's attitudes and motives to begin clarification of the group's aim and organisation as a power and role structure. This process is usually characterised by disorder and confusion. In this phase, the group's members are partially focused on making themselves familiar with the other group members and their attitudes and motives, and they are partially keen on making a good impression and making a mark of mutual consideration and identity protection.

In chapters 3 to 12, the opportunity to present the people the group is composed of is employed. This gives a portrayal of the group members' hopes, worries and reservations in contrast to the upcoming adaptation to autonomous working groups.

The portrait of the group members' hopes, worries and reservations condemns the individual member's opinion of redemption or compensation opportunities for his own interests and motives compared with the pattern of interests and articulation of motives of the other group members and an assessment of individual interests and power-management possibilities given the alliance formation that characterises group members in their motive articulation. Moreover, the description and analysis anticipates the compensation requirements that are available from the group's other members and those that are available from the broader organisational context.

The illustration of the group member's hopes, worries and reservations also involves an analysis of whether or not membership of the group is connected with fear, hope or ambivalence. That as a question about a worry about oppression and suppression or a hope that membership increases the possibility for the redemption of one's own and one's collective interests and needs.

After the illustration of the individual group member's hopes, reservations and worries, the group as a whole is the centre for the measure of analysis in chapter 13.

Here the analysis of the group takes a point of departure in a more collective description of the broad palette of different hopes, reservations and worries in the group due to the impending adaptation in relation to work, the group and the broader organisation. Next, the characteristics of the group as a target and a strategy-determining collective are sketched. This shows that the group

constructs a task-specific adaptation strategy as a strategy of adjustment that is both an expression for resistance and conformity against the adaptation's role imperatives.

The work-organisational adaptation involves a foundational departure in the social order and structure that has established itself in light of the earlier work-organisation regime. At the point of departure for the group's organisation and self-organisation, the implications are a distinct status and power stratification that is anchored in various adaptations and protective systems in relation to work, work's burdens and the social and organisational environment. This shows that the historically-embedded stratification and heterogeneity intensifies and accentuates with the force of the new production regime's inherent tensions and contrasts. The importance of this status and power stratification in relationship to the group's development and constitution as a leadership and authority structure is a focus hereafter. There seems to be a field of tension and a gap between the wish for the establishment of an equal and just involvement and commitment and the unequal status and role stratification that plays out the historically-embedded stratification and the stratification-generating aspects within a new system of production. A central focus of analysis is simultaneously an assessment of the relationship between the group's collective objectives and intentions as an actor of change and the group's constitution as an interactive and structural order.

2.4. The dissertation's fourth section

Chapters 14 through 22 are the fourth section of the dissertation.

This part of the dissertation concerns the group's work and constitution as a social system and structure one-half year within the adaptation's course. Among other things, the description and analysis deals with the individual group members' experiences with adaptation's strategies and practices in relationship to the self-management's production regime and group. The analytical perspective exists in the individual group member's experience, and practice mirrors their relationship of belonging to the social structure and order in which they are imbedded. This is a relationship that refers to both the collective work organisation and to the group as a social structure and order. The assumption is that the experiences and practices that attach themselves to the individual group member have their background in the group as an entire system and structure.

In chapters 14 and 21, the individual group member's experience with work in an autonomous working group is analysed. This includes experiences concerning the work-related challenges and

implications of the adaptation, and adaptation's implications and consequences in relation to their original motives, hopes, worries and experiences with the group's development as a power and role structure.

A relevant focus point surrounding the group member's experiences is simultaneously the dilemmas, differences and conflicts to which the adaptation of the groups' constitution as a power and role structure and individual adaptation strategies are connected.

In chapter 22, the group's adaptation strategy and constitution as a power and role structure is analysed. This is an analysis that concerns the differences, dilemmas and conflicts of the adaptation's various and contradictory organisational imperatives as well as the group's orientation and self-organisation that the adaptation is connected with among other things. A relevant aim of this analysis is to illuminate the question of how the tensions, dilemmas and conflicts that play out in the group are handled. A problem that concerns power's administration contributes to the development or stagnancy of the group including the connection with centrifugal or centripetal group processes.

In order to analyse the group's development as a force and role structure, a conflict perspective is used where the group is viewed as a political action arena. It signals that a group as a power and role structure has developed into a role system where there is only a lesser sample of the group's members who are involved in self-management's daily care. The group is characterised by the inclusion and exclusion among the group's members in relation to the power existence and authority. The group is also characterised by the absence of role administration, which can contribute to a procurement of a connection and convey a meaning between the group's various groupings and orientations.

This shows that group formation must be understood as a "reduction of possibilities". Thus, some possibilities and actions are emphasised as relevant – and others are ignored. What is determined to be irrelevant or ignored is not just decided by internal factors in the group, but these things are also decided by the context within which the group works and attempts to develop an adaptation strategy.

2.5. The dissertation's fifth section

Chapter 23 to 30 is the fifth section of the dissertation.

This part of the dissertation is a description and analysis of the group after it had worked and existed as an autonomous working group for approximately eighteen months.

The central focus for the analysis is what characterises the group's development as a power role and authority structure. It begins with a presentation and analysis of the individual group member's description and accounts of the group's development as a power and role structure, as well as a separate work and its involvement in relation to the group and self-management's role imperatives. Subsequently, it is finished with an analysis of the group as a whole.

The illustration of the individual member's experiences in relation to the self-management working organisation and the group is presented in chapters 23-29. In these chapters the individual member's adaptation strategies are described and analysed within the field of tension between self-management and the group's organisational role imperatives. This is an analysis that partly deals with the social and organisational processes, in which the group members' adaptation strategies are embedded, partly deals with the development spirals that these adaptation strategies are connected to on a more collective level.

A year within the adaptation, a central change in the group's conditions of existence was the introduction of a new individual salary system. This is a change that partly results in liberation from the social control and surveillance of the group members' productive efforts and which partly results in the liberation from the tensions and conflicts to which the group's piecework payment system is connected. The analysis shows here that the emancipation and changing of the group's structurally-embedded conditions of existence for the majority of the group's members are not connected to the changes and development toward the greater sympathy and contribution to the autonomous management.

In chapter 30 the group's development as a power, role and structure of authority is analysed. The question of the group's development as a power and role system is central after the group's conditions of existence are changed with a transition from a collective to an individual salary system. Also central to the analysis is the group's constitution of a power and role system in relation to the self-management's organisational role imperatives and the group's constitution as a role system with a complementary claim in the cooperation between the different role players. This shows that the group is characterised with a steadfast inalterability in relation to the members' participation and involvement in and the influence of the management of the group. This is an inalterability that remains a problematic and dysfunctional interaction between the authority and authorisation in light of the group's constitution of a power

and role structure. This interaction means that the power's administration does not contribute to a broad authorisation and thus does not generate sympathy, cooperation or involvement for the majority of the group's members in relation to the autonomous management.

The group is simultaneously characterised by a discrepancy between the normative role changes and the actual performance. This discrepancy manifests itself in the group's collective consciousness through the accounts that the group's weaker members are involved in a number of illegitimate role distancing or role performance failures among other things. Additionally, the analysis shows that there are problems in relation to their involvement and sympathy in connection to organisational role-changing imperatives. Therefore, there are also problems surrounding the group's development as a role system that become an expression that unfolds complementarily in the different role holders' interactions.

2.6. The dissertation's sixth section

Chapter 31 is the dissertation's summarising analysis. Here two central analytical perspectives concerning work-organisational adaptation and adaptation process are laid out: the first is a power-management and a power-development perspective and the second is that of a role-adaptation and role-imperative perspective.

A central matter in the summarising analysis is to analyse the mutual connections, interactions and exchanges between the different power-management strategies and power-management practices that exist within and between the organisation's various interests and agents of change in relation to adaptation. This simultaneously illuminates how the different power-management strategies and practices within the organisation's various actors are contrast-filled and inconsistent. For example, these contradictions and inconsistencies manifest themselves in the field of tension between discourse and practice as the adaptation is facilitated. From a manager-power-management perspective, this is a contradiction and inconsistency that, for example, comes to express that it is both the starting discourse and the starting control practice that lead to inflexibility with reference to generating flexibility.

In other words, the power-management practises stand in a mutually-opposing relationship to one another and simultaneously generate adaptation and power-management strategies in the group. This results in inflexibility and a lacking of fulfilment and distance to the self-management's role changes and demands.

Moreover, this illustrates how the adaptation's implementation is generated from a complex conflict and power-management perspective because the adaptation's practical implementation and formation dynamic should be understood simultaneously from the power asymmetries that are available in the organisation. The power asymmetries lie between the management and workers as well as between different segments of the group's members. This shows that the adaptation's complex power management contributes simultaneously to segmentation and the sharpening of power asymmetries among the groups members.

An essential aspect of the analysis is to shed a light over the meaning and complexity of the workers' interests and power management where that power management can be viewed as a combination of opposition and conformity. This shows how the power management's multiple and inconsistent character generates role ambivalence and role conflict. Additionally, the group's development as a role structure and role differentiation is characterised by the development of a role repertoire or a role matrix that is dysfunctional in relation to the concern of the group's integration of social interaction between the group's central and peripheral members.

Finally the dissertation contain a conclusion and perspectivation

3. Analysis movements and presentation forms in the dissertation

In the end, it is relevant to make some overall comments to the analysis movements and their representation in the dissertation.

The individual chapters are constructed in a way that begins with cases consisting of the individual group member's reports and stories about the group and their own work within it. These cases follow the same chronology that was made valid during the interview process. This means that the first interviews, both in conversation, analysis and interpretive perspectives constitute the context for the succeeding interviews. Thereafter, the main chapters end with the group as the primary analysis and interpretation unit.

The structure of the dissertation is not an expression of a point of view that the collective has a side effect of psychological conditions in some individuals. On the other hand, as pointed out by Durkheim, the collective cannot be explained outside of some individuals who are compounded by it, but only from "the conditions that societal life in its wholeness are founded and conditioned by." As Durkheim further expresses it, "Of course it can be realised if the individual nature does

not oppose this, but this constitutes only an indefinite material that the social factors determine and convert. (Durkheim 2000, p. 134 – 135).

It starts out with an analysis and interpretation of the individual group member’s self-management and identity management laid out in relation to the forced membership of an autonomous working group. This is not because it is the writer’s interpretation that the individual or their motives, attitudes and behaviour are the ultimate explanation of the social and societal relationship rather than the contrary. The assumption is that they are expressions of the mechanisms and relationships that are established in the social system and the social system’s relation to other social systems. The individual’s self-management and identity management are an expression of the collective relationship. As pointed out by Park (1967): *“It is due to the intrinsic nature of society and of social relations that we ordinarily find our social problems embodied in the persons and in the behaviour of individuals. It is because social problems so frequently terminate in problems of individual behaviour and because social relations are finally and fundamentally personal relations that the attitude and behaviour of individuals are the chief sources of our knowledge of society”* (Park 1967, p. 12).

Another perspective of the dissertation’s analysis movements aside from the aforementioned moments from the individual towards the group that are the analysis’s unity and focus can be described with the point of departure in the study’s longitudinally data-generating design where the project is structured as a progressive description analysis and interpretation of the group’s formation and constitution. This perspective of the dissertation's analysis movement represents a time-related course with three separate focus points in the eighteen months in which the group was followed. During the dissertation’s method of presentation, a time-related course is described as a movement from the group’s start-up phase past the middle phase towards the group’s final phase as represented in figure 1.

Figure 1: The adaptation’s time-related course

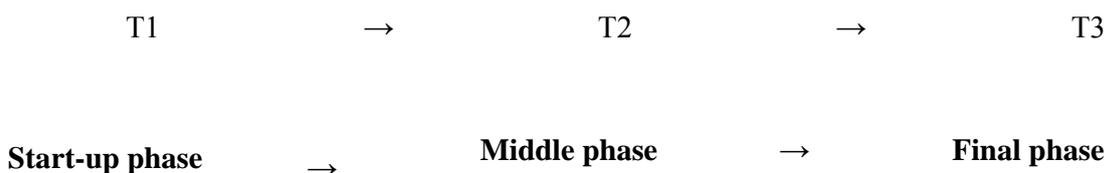
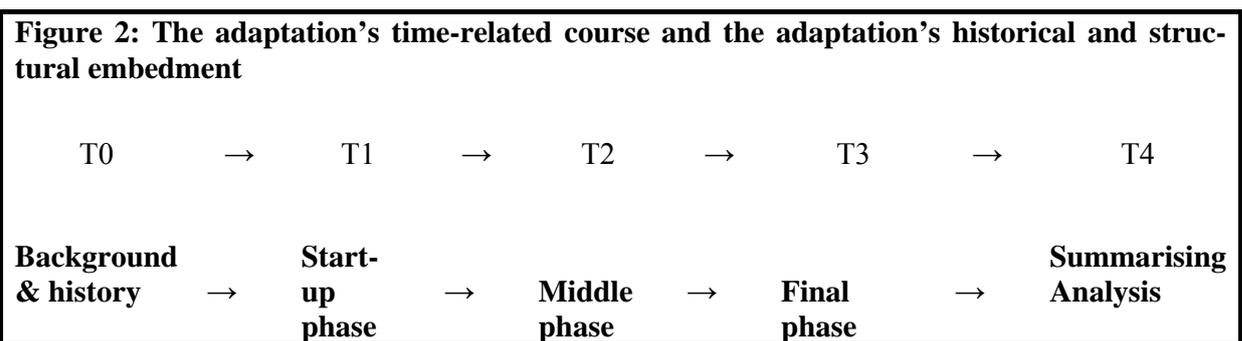


Figure 1 represents the study's analysis movement as a time-related course of development with Times 1 + 2 +3. This is a time-related course that unfolds in the dissertation's analysis movement as a dramaturgic and chronological production and report of a consecutive course and as a progressive description of development partly in that the group and its member's activities in relationship to the autonomous leadership and partly in the development of the group as a power and role structure.

Figure 1 represents the research phenomena's development course in its most elementary form. It is simultaneously important to be precise in the fact that figure 1 does not represent a thorough or adequate determination of the aforementioned project's combined analysis movement and form of representation. Therefore, figure 2 is an attempt of a more thorough description of the analysis movement in the dissertation. The central matter in figure 2 when compared to figure 1 exists in an indication that the project's analytical basis assumptions are human actions that are individual as well as collective, and they are always embedded in the structural conditions that they unfold within, and these actions are both a condition and an expression of these structural conditions.

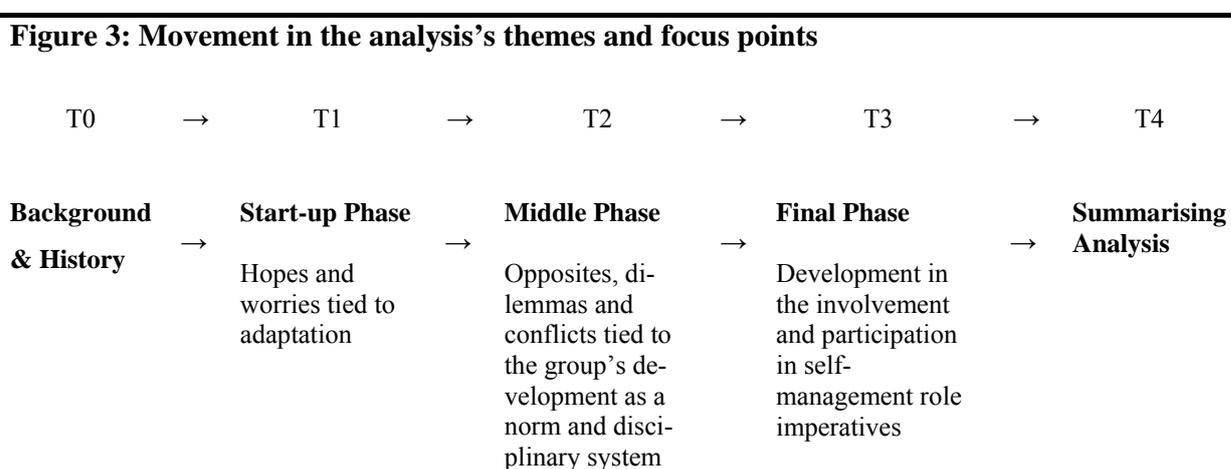


As a course of development and an analysis movement the relationship between T0 + T1 + T2 + T3 + T4 is an indication that the workers' self-management as organisational actors always unfolds with a background in definite historical conditions and within frames of structural circumstances. Time 0 indicates that life's more episodic and fluid phenomena always unfold within the frames of a historic and institutionally-constituted structural reality that is characterised by social roles and power stratifications and therefore can only be analysed and interpreted adequately within the frames of the societal and institutional order in which they unfold. Such a perspective implicates an analytical obligation to identify the structural conditions of existence that set parameters for the phenomena that unfold at the level of the actors' daily activities.

More concretely, T0 partially deals with a description and analysis of the adaptation's background and purpose. It is also partially a description and an analysis of the work-organisational design and the control and discipline practices that were there. This refers to a description and analysis

level that has an aim to link and thereby contextualise the workers – who are themselves an individual and collective reception and management of the adaptation – in relation to the structural conditions of existence that were established for the group’s work. Moreover, a central matter in T4 is to give a summarising analysis of the adaptation both in a structural perspective and in an actor perspective. There has been an attempt to establish a summarising analysis from multiple power-management and power-development perspectives as well as a multiple role- adaptation and role-imperative perspective.

One last movement in the dissertation’s analysis and presentation form is named here as a movement in the themes and theoretical focus points that occur between the time-related different phases in the adaptation. This is a movement in the themes that as an overall objective can be described as a movement from the start-up phase, which focuses on the hopes and worries that the workers tie to the adaptation, towards the middle phase, which focuses on the opposites, dilemmas and conflicts to which the adaptation was connected. Finally, in the final stage, the focus is on development in the involvement and participation in the self-management role imperatives, and therefore the group’s development as a norm and discipline system. Simultaneously, in comparison to the middle and final phases, it remains valid that the group’s development as a power, role and structure of authority are themes that can be seen throughout.



This movement and shift in the conceptual and analytical focus reflect the themes that developed naturally in the convergence with the empirical field. An analytical and interpretive strategy has been implemented in the dissertation where theoretical understanding and explanation are in agreement with the research phenomena’s momentary unfolding. The aim of reciting the theory had a goal of reporting and illuminating the behavioural, social and organ-

isational phenomena and processes that are relevant or problematic for the actors who are involved in the adaptation. The project's analytical and interpretive angle and shift of focus is reminiscent of the data analysis and the interpretive data strategy that is recommended and applicable within Grounded Theory as it has been formulated and developed by Glaser and Strauss (1968). A central advantage with such an analytical and interpretive angle is that the complexity of the phenomenon being studied is not violated. This is an analytical and interpretive matter that presupposes proximity to the empirical data in the development of the theory through the detailed, intensive and microscopic analysis. This analysis is carried out with reference to an illumination of the substance in light of the consequence of the psychological and social mechanisms that play themselves out within the group and through the members' strategies of adaptation in relationship to the work-organisational adaptation.