



# EGATIN Study Days

April 25–27, 2025 in Berlin



**EGATIN**  
European Group Analytic Training  
Institutions Network



**Berliner  
Institut für  
Gruppenanalyse**

# Working with polarization in our groups and in group-analytic training

**Presenters and Presentations**

**Kathrin Albert** is a psychoanalyst and group analyst in private practice in Berlin. She works as a training group analyst, lecturer and supervisor in the group analytic institutions BIG, SGAZ and GRAS. She is a member and former chair of the Berlin Institute for Group Analysis. Her theoretical and practical focus is on spontaneous communication in groups and the social influences of large group processes.

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**Kathrin Albert**

## **The choir and the conductor in the here and now: Opportunities of Foulkesian group analysis in dealing with dissonance and resentment**

Foulkes' metaphor of the group leader as the conductor of an orchestra offers stimulating opportunities to reflect on group analytic ideas of leadership.

Under what conditions does a polyphonic choir sing? How can spontaneous sounds and noises enrich the space without destroying it? Does the conductor's baton have to dictate the beat? Can free jazz and twelve-tone music also be interesting as an amateur event? What is the difference between rehearsal and performance?

Seven principles for outpatient practice will address group analytic attitudes, instructions and impulses that promote openness in exchange and create space for aggressive feelings.

**Mirela Bregu**

## **Balancing my group's and my polarities while trying to become a therapist**

This paper delves into the therapeutic process and challenges faced while working with an elderly group analytic therapy group in a post-communist Western Balkan country, with a focus on two main sources of polarization: ideological conflict and personal shame.

The group was deeply divided over which political ideology – communism or democracy – was better, and these divisions were further complicated by a pervasive fear of being perceived as unfaithful women, mirroring broader societal tensions and personal insecurities. Reflecting on my own experience as a training therapist, I found myself navigating a personal polarization – surprised by the group's positive view of the communist regime and challenged by the task of managing the group's internal conflicts during our sessions.

Interestingly, almost by accident and without fully realizing it, I began to adopt a motherly attitude and nurturing approach. This shift brought me closer to the group and unexpectedly supported the therapeutic process.

**Mirela Bregu** is an organizational consultant & group analyst, soon to receive final accreditation from IGA, UK. Founding member and treasurer of Group Analysis in Albania. Over 25 years of experience divided between organizational dynamics, internal structures, operational agility, negotiations, team coordination, and group analysis. From 2024 working in private practice in Tirana, conducting clinical and organizational staff reflection groups.

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**Maja Brkić** is a group analyst, supervisor and educator from Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is a member of the Association of Group Analysts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AGA), as well as a member of the Institute for Group Analysis in Zagreb. She is a delegate in EGATIN on behalf of AGA. Maja was engaged several times as a small group conductor at the study days of IGA Zagreb. She participated in the 2023 EGATIN study days in Budapest as a conductor of a discussion group. She further participated in the GASi Symposium 2023 in Belgrade as a lecturer and conductor of a small group. As a psychotherapist, Maja is employed full time in the psychiatric day hospital of the University Clinical Center Tuzla. She has a special interest in groups in general, as well as in identities.

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**Maja Brkić**

## Gender identity through the lens of group analysis

Gender identity has been discussed since the beginning of psychoanalytic theories. Among other things, rapid social changes also imply changes in the concept of gender identity, considering that it differs significantly from its concept of ten or twenty years ago.

The aim of this lecture is to provide an overview of how the theory and practice of group analysis understands the development of gender identity and how group processes enable the expression, understanding, acceptance and empowerment of the unique gender identity of each member of the group.

Language, culture and the social unconscious, together and separately, enable but also deny space for the understanding and expression of gender identity.

The lecture questions whether group analysis keeps pace with social changes and whether it manages to meet today's challenges related to gender identity.

**Ido Peleg**

## Working with polarities in a psychiatric hospital: Hopes and boundaries

Psychiatric hospitals are inhabited by people in extreme situations. Sanity and insanity, freedom and restriction, dialogue and silencing are some of the polarities characterizing them.

A person working in such a milieu must find his place between these polarities, a choice influenced by personal history and world view, organizational climate and the social unconscious.

For that to happen, processing these polarities is essential, followed by changes in the permeability of boundaries between sub-groups and individuals.

A clinical example will describe how a psychiatric department located at a culturally diverse area in Israel, negotiated its boundaries and polarities after the hospitalization of a transgender person.

**Dr. Ido Peleg** is a psychiatrist, group analyst and open dialogue practitioner. He is assistant manager of Mazor Mental Health Center in Acre, Israel. Dr. Peleg is a member of the Israeli Institute of Group Analysis and lectured in its diploma course in group analysis. He is a clinical lecturer-educator at the Rappaport faculty of medicine, Technion IIT, Israel. He is currently leading the development of the first public open dialogue clinic in Israel.

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**Susanne Raetzer** is a clinical psychologist, licensed psychodynamic psychotherapist, and group analytic trainee at BIG, Berlin, working in private practice with individuals and groups as part of public health care.

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**Susanne Raetzer**

## About desire for sameness and fear of standing out

The talk is about my reflections and thoughts on difficult, polarizing group processes during my training. Group members did not necessarily seem to be ›struck by differences‹, as Foulkes writes, but by an assumption that everyone thinks alike and a tendency not to differ or as much as possible: a ›desire for sameness‹.

I will talk about how difficult it was for me to position myself here, to seek diversity as a conductor and to stand up for it time and again – how I sometimes felt inhibited to speak freely and to encourage it in others.

How do we understand such processes? Did my idealization of groups and an optimistic ›trust the group‹ lead me to overlook anti-group processes? How do current social developments, such as an ›either with us or against us‹ morality, relate to this?

**Hanna Reinhardt-Bork**

## Groups create enemies: A side-effect of cohesive groups

Our brain – like nature in general – tries to avoid time-consuming work. We tend to be either for or against something. And the more emotionally charged the topic is, the more uncompromising we act.

This mechanism is amplified in groups. After all, a group only exists by setting boundaries to others. Without boundaries there is no group. The others can be people/groups outside, or the rift goes through the group itself. Groups that are as homogeneous as possible could be a solution. However, we benefit most from the confrontation with the other, the stranger, because it also conceals our repressed self.

Harmony at the expense of impoverishment and isolation versus confrontation with the danger of indissoluble fronts? Group analysts have a tricky job.

**Hanna Reinhardt-Bork** studied sociology and psychology and has worked in psychiatry and in prisons, while practicing as a psychoanalyst since 1988 and as a group analyst since 1993. She co-founded the Berlin Institute of Group Analysis (BIG) in 2003. She works there as a lecturer, training group analyst and supervisor. She leads seven therapeutic groups and four supervision groups in her private practice. Her interests include questions of sociobiology and ethnology, especially the topic of violence in and by groups.

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