

Chapter 8: Groups

Group – a collection of persons who are perceived to be bonded together in a coherent unit to some degree.

What Makes a Group a Group?

People at a Bus Stop vs. Sports Team

- Individuals are important to one another
- Members are similar to each other in some way
- Dependent on each other to be successful
- Share a common identity
- Possess structure (leader, people below you)
- Groups are quite small
 - Common Group Size: 2-6 people
- Everyone is very similar
- Groups work to maintain similarity
- Makes sure groups all act the same way

Benefits of Membership

- Self-Knowledge
- Self-Enhancement
 - Some groups make individuals look better
 - High Status Group
 - Ex. Psi Chi
- Self-Transcendence

- o Changing of the world for social justice
 - o Group status does not matter
 - Ex. Save the planet
- Resources
 - o Group members can offer their time, money, efforts
- Fulfills Needs
 - o To be accepted by other people
 - o Need for control
 - o Need for affection (open and positive relationships with other people)

Costs of Membership

- Restricts personal freedom
- Demands on time, energy, and resources

Studying Small Groups

- Statistical Problems
 - o Interdependence
- Running Group Experiments
 - o People do not show up for the experiment
 - o Longitudinal problems
 - o Very costly
- Measuring Behavior

- o Video cameras, but have to code everything
- o Surveys are not always direct
- College Samples
 - o Young adults have unique traits, more easily persuasion
 - Usually led by study norms
 - o Are college students different among average individuals?

Group Composition

- Tokenism
- Diversity and Faultlines
 - o Faultline is when differences in the group split the group in the same way
 - Ex. Group of 10 people (5 old men, 5 young women) – same difference, same people on either side of the line.
 - Popular to study because the more faultlines a group has, the easier it is to break the group apart.
- Socialization – a process of mutual adjustment that produces changes over time in the relationship between a person and a group (Moreland and Levine)
 - o Membership Phases

Composition: Group Diversity

- Heterogeneity is best when:
 - o Only one member must find the right answer
 - o New Solutions
 - o Flexibility