

CHAPTER 8: GROUP PROCESSES

1. DEFINING GROUPS

A. Types of groups

- i. Co-actors: working independently
- ii. Social categories: race, gender, political affiliations, ethnicity
- iii. Audiences: Red Sox game
- iv. Crows
- v. Team: working together
- vi. Family: genetic relationship
- vii. Clubs: shared interests
- viii. Minimal groups: perceived similarity

B. Non-Social and Social Groupings

- i. **Collectives:** two or more people who interact minimally
- ii. **Groups:** two or more people who have interactions over time and a shared identity, goal, or fate

C. Characterizing groups

- i. **Roles:** what am I supposed to do?
 1. *Ex: committee chair, member, secretary, etc.*
 2. *Formal: set meeting agenda*
 3. *Informal: encourage participation of peers*
- ii. **Norms:** what roles do I follow?
 1. *Formal: observe Robert's Rules of Order*
 2. *Informal: be polite, considerate*
- iii. **Cohesiveness:** how close do I feel to other members?
 1. *Strong or weak*

2. GROUP PROCESSES

A. **Risky Shift:** groups tend to take greater risks than individuals

- i. Term was eventually changed to...
- ii. **Group Polarization:** group discussion leads to an enhancement of individuals' initial inclinations

1. *If group starts out being more conservative, you will see more conservative judgments*
 - a. *Informational influence → matters of fact*
 - b. *Normative influence → matters of opinion*
2. *Enhancing the initial tendencies of the group. Why?*
 - a. *Persuasive argument exposure within group*
 - b. *Social comparison of beliefs or opinions*
 - c. *Social categorization leads to increased homogeneity*
3. *Only true if group is relative uniform/homogenous in opinions initially*
 - a. *Diverse groups are less subject to polarization*

B. **Groupthink:** excessive tendency to seek concurrence among group (group cohesion) rather than accuracy

- i. Highly cohesive groups
- ii. Particular group structure
 1. *High similarity to others*
 2. *Isolated from interacting with others*
 3. *Strong leader*
 4. *Lack of systematic procedures (formal norms)*
- iii. Stressful decision situations

C. **Brainstorming:** in groups it is not always as effective as we believe

- i. Production Blocking: ideas that people may “put out there” may block the production of ideas that are outside of the box
 1. *Limits range of opportunities and ideas that come up*
- ii. Free Riding: if someone else is coming up with ideas, you don’t have to
- iii. Evaluation Apprehension: when you are in a group of people, you are afraid of what other people may think of your ideas/questions and the ways that others evaluate you
 1. *May prevent the sharing of ideas*
- iv. Performance matching with others: look at other people and see what their performance looks like; you perform to an adequate level but do not necessarily go above and beyond because others are
- v. **Electronic Brainstorming:** having people do things individually but still as a member of the group to minimize social factors that can influence brainstorming; free from many downsides of group brainstorming

3. GROUP INFLUENCE

Thinking about the extent to which performance changes depending on whether or not people are in groups

A. Social Facilitation

- i. Old definition: the tendency of people to perform better when others are present
 1. Triplett (1897)
 - a. Found that bicyclists times were faster when racing together compared to when racing alone
 - b. Children told to wind string on a fishing reel as fast as possible would faster when working with a co-actor than when working alone
- ii. Other evidence showed that these findings were inconsistent, so Robert Zajonc came up with a new definition
 1. **Social Facilitation:** The strengthening of dominant responses due to the presence of others
 - a. Hard (novel) tasks become harder
 - b. Easy (learned) tasks become easier
 2. Why does it occur? **Drive Theory:**
 - a. Presence of co-actors increases arousal
 - b. Arousal facilitates the person's dominant response
 - c. Is the task well-learned?
 - i. Yes = improved performance
 - ii. No = impaired performance

B. How do others increase arousal?

- i. Psychological Mechanisms
 1. *Mere Presence: the presence of others (regardless of if they are watching) affects our performance*
 2. *Evaluation apprehension: learned fear of being evaluated*
 - a. *Increase in self-focus reminds people that they can fail and therefore motivate them*
 - b. *As the evaluative stakes rise, arousal increases*
 3. *Distraction-Conflict Theory: presence of co-actors distracts from task*
 - a. *Tendency to divide attention between task and co-actors*
 - b. *Distraction leads to conflict*
 - c. *Conflict increases arousal*

C. **Social Loafing:** a reduction in individual output among those working in groups

- i. **The Ringelmann Effect:** individuals pulling on a rope in a group exert less force than individuals pulling alone
- ii. When does social loafing occur? → The opposite of these things are good for performances
 1. *Large group size: "it's not my problem;" diffusion of responsibility*