Chapter 10

BEHAVIOR IN GROUPS

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Basic features of groups

- **A group** involves multiple people who are:
  - interdependent
  - have emotional ties
  - interact on a regular basis (face to face)
  - different from a *social category*

- **interdependence:**
  - depend on each other to achieve group goals
  - events that affect one member affects others
Social cohesiveness

- forces that cause people to remain in groups
- "groupiness"
- people think, act, feel more like group members and less like isolated individuals
- desire to maintain membership
- more influence on members
- greater productivity
Joining groups

- two principle functions of groups:
  - accomplish instrumental tasks
  - satisfy socioemotional needs

- some groups are **task-oriented** (e.g., work groups)
- **socioemotional** groups (e.g., friends and family, neighbors)
- almost all groups engage in a degree of both
Group structure

- regular, stable patterns of behavior b/w members
- develops quickly, changes slowly

1. social norms:
   - shared rules / expectations about how members should act
   - norms for appearance (e.g., army), opinions (e.g., liberal views in env’t l orgs), etc.
Group structure

2. **social roles:**
   - norms that apply to people in particular positions in a group
   - division of labor

3. **status system:**
   - reflects the distribution of power among members
   - position based on prestige and authority (even in informal friendship groups)
Group Influence on Individual

two types of influence:

1. performance in the presence of others
2. performance as part of a larger group of performers

• presence of others sometimes enhances and sometimes impairs performance. Why?
I - Presence of others

- **social facilitation**: perform better in the presence of others
  - not only humans (also in dogs, rats, birds, fish, even cockroaches)
- **social inhibition**: perform worse in the presence of others

- sounds a bit contradictory?
Zajonc’s Theory

Presence of others (either as an audience or as coactors) → Heightened arousal

If dominant responses are correct in the present situation, → Enhancement of dominant responses → performance is enhanced.

Enhancement of dominant responses

If dominant responses are incorrect in the present situation, → performance is inhibited.

= Social Facilitation

= Social Inhibition
Social facilitation & inhibition occur WHEN a person’s performance is individually identifiable.
2- Performing with others

- **Social Loafing**: working less hard in a group than individually
  - contribution to collective activity not identifiable
  - diffusion of responsibility
  - e.g., Latane et al., 1979
2- Performing with others

- Social loafing (cont’d)
  - both in individualistic and collectivistic cultures
  - reduced when individual effort becomes identifiable
  - *collective effort model*
2- Performing with others

- **Social Compensation**: work even harder in a group to compensate for others
  - others are performing poorly
  - person cares about the group product
Social Loafing vs. Compensation

- Presence of others creates a situation in which an individual’s performance cannot be evaluated.
- If group’s performance is unimportant to individual, reduced effort = SOCIAL LOAFING.
- If group’s performance is important to individual and others are believed to be untrustworthy, lazy, or incompetent, increased effort = SOCIAL COMPENSATION.
Social Impact Theory

- amount of influence others have in a given situation is a function of:
  - number of people present
  - strength or importance of these people
  - immediacy (nearness) to the target person
The Psychology of Social Impact

Box A

Sources

Target

Box B

Source

Targets
Deindividuation

- crowded, anonymous situations
- loss of individual identity & responsibility for actions
- loosening of normal inhibitions
- engaging in behavior inconsistent with personal standards
- expression of aggressive / sexual impulses (violent, immoral acts)
- lack of self-awareness crucial
Crowding

- subjective feeling of having too little space
- social density: objective number of people in a given space

Why?
- sensory overload
- loss of control
- attributions
- culture
QUESTION:

When & Why do groups perform better (or worse) than the sum of its members?
Group Performance

• Comparing potential group performance to actual

• Types of group tasks:
  ◦ additive: brainstorming, pulling a rope…
  ◦ disjunctive: problem solving, decision making, math…
  ◦ conjunctive: mountain climbing, keeping stg confidential, precision work…

• How would group size influence potential performance?
Group Decision Rules

- number of people required for the whole group to adapt a position:
  - majority rules
  - truth wins (i.e., unanimity)

- Issues of opinion vs. issues of fact

- consequential for group functioning
Group Decision Biases

- advantage of groups: pooled sharing of information of members to arrive at better decisions
- do groups engage in this systematic information sharing?
- e.g., 3 job applicants to a department
- “common knowledge effect” occurs
  - easier social interaction
  - regarded more competent and knowledgeable
- confirmation bias:
  - seek out / prefer information that supports initial beliefs
Brainstorming

- group members work together to generate many new ideas or solutions to a problem
- very popular
- “What should be our slogan for our campaign to encourage drivers to wear seatbelts?”
- people ACTUALLY produce more and better ideas working ALONE than in groups.
Group Polarization

- Do groups make more conservative or riskier decisions than individuals?
  - typical finding: the risky shift
  - but also found more cautious decisions

- group discussion leads to more extreme decisions, enhancing the attitudes of people who initially agree
  - “group polarization”

- especially on important rather than trivial issues
Groupthink

- poor group decision making based on inadequate consideration of alternatives.
- A drop in:
  - mental efficiency
  - reality testing
  - moral judgment
- because of an excessive desire to reach consensus
- pleasant social atmosphere becomes more important than making the best decision
Groupthink: 3 Factors

1. High group cohesiveness:
   - increased conformity
   - accept influence of others

2. Threatening context:
   - stress / threat – choose speed over accuracy
   - stress – ppl more dependent upon others
Groupthink: 3 Factors

3. Structural and procedural faults:
   ◦ no sympathetic procedures for making and reviewing decisions
   ◦ isolation of group from others / reality
   ◦ strong directive leader
GROUP VS. INDIVIDUAL
COMPETITION VS. COOPERATION
SHORT TERM VS. LONG-TERM GOALS
Social Dilemmas

- any situation in which the most rewarding short term choice for individual will ultimately cause negative consequences for the group as a whole.
- resource dilemmas
- free-rider problem
- prisoner’s dilemma
Social Dilemmas

- In order to solve social dilemmas, cooperation is necessary:
  - sanction cooperative behavior
  - education
  - group identification (“a sense of community” rather than competitors)
  - promote a cooperative orientation (as a value) as opposed to an individualist or competitive orientation
  - promote group discussion
Group Interaction

- the reward structure influences:
  - competitive interdependence
  - cooperative interdependence
  - Individualistic reward structure
- increasing communication helps
- norm of reciprocity
Leadership

- **Social influence is the central attribute**
- The person with the most impact on group behavior and beliefs
- Could be appointed or elected; or gradually emerge within time.
- **Task leadership**: about accomplishing goals
- **Social leadership**: attention to interpersonal aspects of groups
Leader oriented approaches

- focuses on the personality characteristics and behaviors of leaders
- “leader as a hero” view
- focus on leader traits
  - **task**: efficiency, directiveness, knowledge about task
  - **social**: friendliness, empathy, conflict mediation skills
Contingency approaches

- leadership as a quality attributed to ppl as a result of their interrelations with others
- rather than possession of certain qualities, it is a match between task, circumstances, and person
Transformational Leaders

- **transactional leaders** focus on the proper exchange of resources
  - i.e., give followers stg in exchange for the thing they want

- **transformational or charismatic leaders** go beyond meeting needs and inspire hope and new possibilities
  - provide a vision of a better future and inspire