

Unit-3 18BPS62C

GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

Group involves people who perceive themselves to be part of a coherent unit that they perceive as different from another group (Dasgupta, Banaji, & Abelson, 1999; Haslam, 2004).

The basis of this perceived coherence differs in different types of groups (Prentice, Miller, & Lightdale, 1994). In common-bond groups, which tend to involve face-to-face interaction among members, the individuals in the group are bonded to each other. Examples of these kinds of groups include the players on a sports team, friendship groups, and work teams. In contrast, in common-identity groups the members are linked via the category as a whole rather than to each other, with face-to-face interaction often being group.

ROLES: DIFFERENTIATION OF FUNCTIONS WITHIN GROUPS Think of a group to which you belong or have belonged—anything from a sports team to a sorority or fraternity. Now consider this question: Did everyone in the group perform the same functions? Your answer is probably no. Different people performed different tasks and were expected to accomplish different things for the group. In short, they played different roles. Sometimes roles are assigned; for instance, a group may select different individuals to serve as its leader, treasurer, or secretary. In other cases, individuals gradually acquire certain roles without being formally assigned to them. Regardless of how roles are acquired, in many groups, someone often serves as the “good listener,” taking care of members’ emotional needs, while another person tends to specialize in “getting things done.”

To the extent that people internalize their social roles—those roles are linked to key aspects of the self-concept—they can have important implications for psychological well-being. Indeed, enacting a role well can lead people to feel that their behavior reflects their authentic self. Consider students in one study whose key self-perceptions were first measured and then they were randomly assigned to fulfil a particular role in a class task (Bettencourt, Molix, Talley, & Sheldon, 2006). The behaviours called for when assigned to the “idea generating” role are rather different than the behaviours required when assigned to the “devil’s advocate” role. The results showed that for those people whose traits were consistent with whichever role they were assigned, they perceived their behaviour during the task as authentically reflecting themselves, exhibited more positive mood, and enjoyed the class task more than people for whom there was a discrepancy between their self-perceptions and the role they had enacted.

NORMS: THE RULES OF THE GAME

Groups powerfully affect the behavior of their members via norms—implicit rules that inform people about what is expected of them. We want to consider how different norms can operate in different groups, and what happens when we deviate from what is normatively expected of us. Have you ever considered the possibility that there might be “norms” that guide our emotions? Sometimes those are explicit **feeling rules**—expectations about the emotions that are appropriate to express (Hochschild, 1983). For example, as shown in Figure 11.5, many employers demand that service providers (cashiers, restaurant servers, and flight attendants)

“always smile” at customers, no matter how annoying or rude they may be! In this case, norms for displaying positive feelings are specific to these kinds of employment settings.

An important norm that varies considerably across cultures, but can also apply differentially to groups within a culture, is collectivism versus individualism. In collectivist groups, the norm is to maintain harmony among group members, even if doing so might entail some personal costs; in such groups, disagreement and conflict among members are to be avoided. In contrast, in individualistic groups, the norm is to value standing out from the group and be different from others; individual variability is to be expected and disagreeing with the group is often seen as courageous. Therefore, greater tolerance might be expected for those who deviate from group norms in individualist groups than in collectivist groups. Of course, people do differ in how much they value being a member of any particular group. Considerable research has illustrated that when being a member of a particular group is important to our self-concept (we highly identify with it), we are more likely to be guided by its norms, but ignore or even act contrary to its norms when we are not identified with that group

COHESIVENESS: THE FORCE THAT BINDS

Consider two groups. In the first, members like one another very much, strongly concur with the goals their group is seeking, and feel that they could not possibly find another group that would better satisfy their needs. They have formed a group identity, and as a result are likely to perform their tasks well together. In the second, the opposite is true: members don't like one another very much, don't share common goals, and are actively seeking other groups that might offer them a better deal. They lack a shared identity and are less likely to successfully perform tasks together. The reason for this difference in the experience and performance of these two groups is what social psychologists refer to as cohesiveness—all the forces that cause members to remain in the group (Ellemers, de Gilder, & Haslam, 2004). Cohesive groups have a sense of *solidarity*; they see themselves as homogenous, supportive of ingroup members, cooperative with ingroup members, aim to achieve group goals rather than individual goals, have high morale, and perform better than non-cohesive groups .

The Benefits—and Costs—of Joining

If you consider how many different groups you belong to, you may be surprised at the length of the list—especially if you consider both common-bond (face-to-face) and common-identity (social categories) groups. While some people belong to more groups than others, most of us put forth effort to gain admittance to and maintain membership in at least some groups. Why, then, if we work hard to get in and the benefits of group membership can be great, do we sometimes choose to leave groups? Withdrawing from a group to which we have belonged for months, years, or even decades can be a stressful experience. Here's what social psychologists have found out about why we join groups and the processes involved in leaving them.

THE BENEFITS OF JOINING: WHAT GROUPS DO FOR US

That people sometimes go through a lot to join a specific group is clear: membership in many groups is by “invitation only,” and winning that invitation can be difficult! Perhaps more

surprising is that once they gain admission, many people will stick with a group even when it experiences hard times. For instance, consider some sports fans and how they remain loyal to their team when it has a miserable season, even when it is the target of ridicule and gains a reputation as “the worst of the worst.”

First, we often gain *self-knowledge* from belonging to various groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Our membership in them tells us what kind of person we are—or perhaps, would like to be—so group membership becomes central to our self-concept. The result? Once we belong, we can find it hard to imagine not belonging because it makes our life meaningful by defining to some extent who we are. Indeed, to be rejected by a group—even one we have recently joined—can be among the most painful of experiences.

Another obvious benefit of belonging to some groups is that they help us reach our goals. One important goal is attaining prestige. When an individual is accepted into a certain type of group—a highly selective school, an exclusive social club, a varsity sports team—self-esteem can increase. Just how important is this boost from joining and identifying with particular groups? As you can probably guess, the more an individual is seeking *self-enhancement*—boosting one’s own public image—the more important will a group’s status be to that person and the more strongly he or she will identify with it.

Another important benefit of joining groups is that doing so often helps us to accomplish goals we could not achieve alone (i.e., social change). How can members of groups that have been the target of oppression attain equal rights? One way such groups cope with the discrimination they experience is to increasingly turn to and identify with their group (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). As a result of recognizing shared grievances, people can develop a politicized collective identity, which prepares them to engage in a power struggle on behalf of their group.

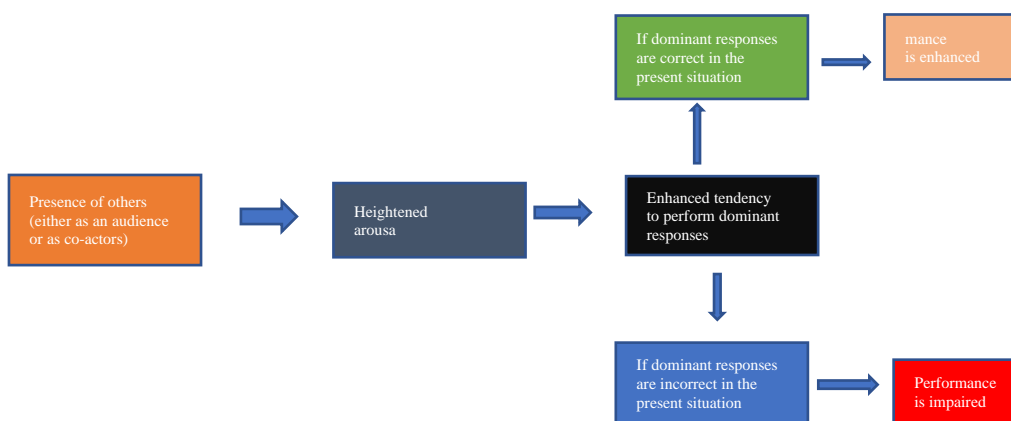
Effects of the Presence of Others: From Task Performance to Behavior in Crowds

The fact that our behavior is often strongly affected by the groups to which we belong is far from surprising; after all, in these groups there are usually well-established norms that tell us how we are expected to behave. Perhaps much more surprising is the fact that often we are strongly affected by the *mere presence of others*, even if we, and they, are not part of a formal group. So clearly, we are often affected by the mere physical presence of others. While such effects take many different forms, we focus here on two that are especially important: the effects of the presence of others on our performance of various tasks, and the effects of being in a large crowd.

Social Facilitation: Performing in the Presence of Others

Sometimes, when we perform a task, we work totally alone; for instance, you might study alone in your room. In many other cases, even if we are working on a task by ourselves, other people are present—for instance, you might study at a café, or in your room while

your roommate also studies. the presence of others increases physiological arousal (our bodies become more energized) and, as a result, any *dominant response* will be facilitated. This means that we can focus better on something we *know* or have *practiced* when we're aroused, but that same physiological arousal will create problems when we're dealing with something *new* or *complex*. This reasoning—depicted in Figure 11.13—became known as the *drive theory of social facilitation* because it focuses on arousal or drive-based effects on performance. The presence of others will improve individuals' performance when they are highly skilled at the task in question (in this case their dominant responses would tend to be correct), but will interfere with performance when they are not highly skilled—for instance, when they are learning to perform it (for their dominant responses would not be correct in that case)



The Drive Theory of Social Facilitation

According to the drive theory of social facilitation (Zajonc, 1965), the presence of others, either as an audience or co-actors, increases arousal and this, in turn, strengthens the tendency to perform dominant responses. If these responses are correct, performance is improved; if they are incorrect, performance is harmed.

Social Loafing: Letting Others Do the Work

You have probably had the experience of seeing a construction crew in which some appear to be working hard while others seem to be standing around not doing much at all. This pattern is quite common in situations where groups perform what are known as additive tasks—ones in which the contributions of each member are combined into a single group output. On such tasks, some people will work hard, while others goof off and do less than they would if working alone. Social psychologists refer to such effects as social loafing—reductions in effort when individuals work collectively compared to when they work individually.

Social loafing has been demonstrated in many different task contexts. For example, in one of the first studies on this topic, Latane, Williams, and Harkins (1979) asked groups of male students to clap or cheer as loudly as possible at specific times, supposedly so that the experimenter could determine how much noise people make in social settings. To make sure participants were not affected by the actual noise of other participants, they wore headphones, through which noise-making was played at a constant volume. Furthermore, they could not see the other participants, but were only told how many others they were shouting with. They performed these tasks in groups of two, four, or six people. Results indicated that although the total amount of noise rose as group size increased, the amount produced *by each participant* dropped. In other words, each person put out less and less effort as the size of the group increased. Such effects appear to be quite general in scope, and occur with respect to many

different tasks cognitive ones as well as those involving physical effort (Weldon & Mustari, 1988; Williams & Karau, 1991). As anyone who has worked as a server in a restaurant knows, tips are proportionally less as the size of the group increases, which may be one reason why a standard tip is often added by the restaurant when there are six or more in a party. To ask whether social loafing occurs in school settings might elicit a “duh” response from students. Englehart (2006) suggests that social loafing can explain patterns of student participation as a function of the size of the class; students participate less in larger classes. Likewise, social loafing occurs among students working on team projects. Price, Harrison, and Gavin (2006) identified several psychological factors that affect students’ social loafing on team projects. First, those who felt “dispensable” to the group were more likely to loaf. Second, the more fairness that was perceived in the group generally, the less likely students were to loaf. What determined these two perceptions—dispensability and fairness? When participants had substantial knowledge and skills relating to the task, they felt less dispensable. So, in effect, being able to offer task-relevant help to the group served to counteract loafing. In addition, dissimilarity from the other group members led participants to feel more dispensable, and thus more likely to loaf. So what can be done to reduce social loafing?

REDUCING SOCIAL LOAFING: SOME USEFUL TECHNIQUES

The most obvious way of reducing social loafing involves making the output or effort of each participant readily identifiable (Williams, Harkins, & Latané, 1981). Under these conditions, people can’t sit back and let others do their work, so social loafing is reduced. When people believe their contribution matters, and a strong performance on the part of the group will lead to a desired outcome, individuals also tend to try harder (Shepperd & Taylor, 1999). So, pooling contributions to a task—such as co-writing a paper—will be effective only to the extent that each writer’s contribution is clear; even better is when each person feels uniquely skilled to write their own part.

Second, groups can reduce social loafing by increasing group members’ commitment to successful task performance (Brickner, Harkins, & Ostrom, 1986). Pressures toward working hard will then serve to offset temptations to engage in social loafing. Third, social loafing can be reduced by increasing the apparent importance or value of a task (Karau & Williams, 1993). Fourth, people are less likely to loaf if they are given some kind of standard of performance—either in terms of how much others are doing or their own past performance (Williams et al., 1981). An interesting study with students in a marketing class showed that group members themselves can provide such feedback to each other over the course of a joint project and that doing so reduces social loafing (Aggarwal & O’Brien, 2008). Together, use of these tactics can sharply reduce social loafing—and the temptation to “goof off” at the expense of others.

Effects of Being in a Crowd

Have you ever attended a football or basketball game at which members of the crowd screamed insults, threw things at the referees, or engaged in other violent behavior they would probably never show in other settings? Most of us haven’t, since such extreme events are relatively rare, although, interestingly enough, this is part of the “stereotype” of how people behave in crowds, particularly those at sporting events. English soccer fans have become especially famous for

hooliganism—incidents throughout Europe of serious disorder at matches involving England’s team (Stott, Hutchison, & Drury, 2001). Such effects in crowds—where there is a drift toward wild, unrestrained behavior, were initially termed deindividuation because they seemed to stem, at least in part, from the fact that when people are in a large crowd they tend “to lose their individuality” and instead act as others do. More formally, the term deindividuation was used to indicate a psychological state characterized by reduced self-awareness and personal identity salience, brought on by external conditions such as being an anonymous member of a large crowd. Initial research on deindividuation (Zimbardo, 1970) seemed to suggest that being in a crowd makes people anonymous and therefore less responsible or accountable for their own actions, which encourages unrestrained, antisocial actions. More recent evidence, though, indicates that deindividuation leads to greater normative behavior, not less. When we are part of a large crowd we are more likely to obey the norms of this group—whatever those may be (Postmes & Spears, 1998). For instance, at a sporting event, when norms in that situation suggest that it is appropriate to boo the opposing team, that is what many people—especially highly identified fans—will do. Certainly that seems to have been the norm that was active for “English hooligans” at soccer games in the past. However, recent evidence indicates that, as a result of social psychological intervention with police agencies, those norms can be changed (Stott, Adang, Livingstone, & Schreiber, 2007). As a result, at more recent soccer matches, England’s fans no longer defined hooliganism as characteristic of their fan group; they self-policed by marginalizing those few English fans who attempted to create conflict, and no violent incidents have taken place.

Overall, then, being part of a large crowd and experiencing deindividuation does not necessarily lead to negative or harmful behaviors; it simply increases the likelihood that crowd members will follow the norms of the group. Those norms might be of “showing respect” by silently crying—behaviors demonstrated at the immense gatherings following Diana, Princess of Wales’ death, or at the vigils that took place on the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg following the shooting deaths that took place there in 2007. Or, the critical norms might involve working together for a purpose—coordinating efforts to save people from crumbled buildings after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, or praying and singing joyously together at huge Christian revival meetings. When people are in large crowds, as shown in Figure 11.15, what behavior they will exhibit—for good or ill—will depend on what norms are operating.

Coordination in Groups: Cooperation or Conflict?

Cooperation—helping that is mutual, where both sides benefit—is common in groups working together to attain shared goals. As we discussed in the beginning of this chapter, by cooperating, people can attain goals they could never hope to reach by themselves. Surprisingly, though, cooperation does not always develop in groups. Sometimes, group members may perceive their personal interests as incompatible, and instead of coordinating their efforts, may work against each other, often producing negative results for all.

This is known as conflict, and can be defined as a process in which individuals or groups perceive that others have taken, or will soon take, actions incompatible with their own interests (DeDreu, 2010). Conflict is indeed a process, for, as you probably know from your own

experience, it has a nasty way of escalating—from simple mistrust, through a spiral of anger, to actions designed to harm the other side. Let's see what social psychologists have learned about both patterns of behavior.

Working with Others via Computer-Mediated Communication

Students prepared for working in this sort of environment, some universities require students to work on a cooperative project with other students in the same course at another school. All the work has to be done on the Internet. So, now, imagine that you've been given this assignment. You are one of two students at your school who was assigned to work on a paper with two students at another school who you had never met. When you did briefly meet face-to-face with the other student at your school, she said she thought you all could work well together over the Internet and the professor required that you do the task this way. Part of what makes for good cooperation is social embeddedness, which is a sense of knowing the reputation of the other parties involved, often by knowing someone else who knows them (Riegelsberger, Sasse, & McCarthy, 2007). Although the student you would be working with at your home university happened to know from high school one of the students at the other university, no one knew anything about the other student. Aside from your partner believing that the student she knew had a reputation for being a team player, you were sort of in the dark about what these other people would be like to work with. Because social embeddedness was low, none of the students would be likely to trust their virtual workmates all that well. And the communications were going to be strictly written—text only—at least initially! You wonder how do you judge a workmate's response to an idea if you cannot see his or her face? Research has shown that people communicating via video are more likely to develop trustworthy relationships than people communicating via voice alone (i.e., over the phone). However, both these methods guarantee greater trust developing than communicating only by text-based chat (Green, 2007).

Naturally, you are wary of communicating by text only. Something you might say could be misunderstood, and it might be difficult to gauge the effect of what you say about the other students' work. Kruger, Epley, Parker, and Ng (2005) found that the *apparent advantage* of asynchronous forms of communication—communication in which people have a period of time during which to think about their response, as in e-mail and other forms of text messaging—can cause problems in people being accurately understood by others. In their study, pairs of friends were separated and told their task was to identify which of their friend's 20 statements about general topics were sarcastic or serious. Then, using other friend-pairs, these same statements were communicated either via instant message (*continued*) or over the phone. Because tone of voice, a nonverbal expression that helps detect sarcasm, is absent in the text condition (but text writers fail to appreciate this important point), they will think others understand them when they do not. Thus, the senders of the message thought they were equally likely to be understood, regardless of the method of communication, but the text message's sarcasm was lost on the message receiver (i.e., it was less likely to be accurately detected in the text condition compared to the voice condition).

Cooperation: Working with Others to Achieve Shared Goals

Cooperation is often highly beneficial to the people involved. So why don't group members always cooperate? One answer is straightforward: because some goals that people seek simply can't be shared. Several people seeking the same job or romantic partner can't combine forces to attain these goals: the rewards can go to only one.

Social psychologists refer to this situation as one of negative interdependence—where if one person obtains a desired outcome, others cannot (DeDreu, 2010). Likewise, if I want to look “good,” I might not want to cooperate with others because that would mean I would have to share the glory (the exact opposite of the two authors of this textbook!).

In many other situations, however, cooperation could develop but does not. Social psychologists study these kinds of situations with the aim of identifying the factors that tip the balance either toward or away from cooperation. Often the people involved in such conflicts don't realize that a compromise *is* possible. Consider the following example. Suppose we wanted to go on vacation together. You say you want to go to Switzerland, and I say I want to go to Hawaii. Does this conflict seem solvable, without one person losing? Yes, it could be. One thing conflict mediators do know is that to solve this kind of conflict—without one person simply capitulating to the other—we have to get to the essence of what lies behind each person's demands. Now suppose your “real” goal is to see some mountains (which Switzerland certainly has, but so do many other places), and my “real” goal is to be by the sea and swim in warm water. Once this underlying goal of each party is known, it can often be settled, with the help of a little imagination. In this case, we could go to Greece—visit some mountains *and* the beach on some lovely Greek island! Of course, all social conflicts are not solvable by this method, but many are. Let's examine now classic research on dilemmas where a lack of cooperation frequently results in poor outcomes for all parties involved.

SOCIAL DILEMMAS: WHERE COOPERATION COULD OCCUR, BUT OFTEN DOESN'T

Social dilemmas are situations in which each person can increase his or her individual gains by acting in a purely selfish manner, but if all (or most) people do the same thing, the outcomes experienced by all are reduced (Komorita & Parks, 1994; Van Lange & Joireman, 2010). A classic illustration of this kind of situation is known as the *prisoner's dilemma*—a situation faced by two suspects who have been caught by the police. Here, either or both people can choose to cooperate (e.g., stay silent and not confess) or compete (e.g., “rat the other person out”). If both cooperate with each other, then they both experience large gains. If both compete, each person loses substantially. What happens if one chooses to compete while the other chooses to cooperate? In this case the one who competes experiences a moderate gain, while the trusting one loses. Social psychologists have used this type of situation to examine the factors that tip the balance toward trust and cooperation or mistrust and competition (Insko et al., 2001; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). It might be reasonable to suppose that decreasing the attractiveness of competition should increase cooperation. One way to do this would be to

increase the sanctions given in a social dilemma for non-cooperative choices. But doing so might change how people perceive such situations—from one involving trust in others to one based on economic self-interest. When seen as based in trust, cooperation should be higher than when the dilemma is seen as a situation in which people act on their own self-interests. To what degree, then, does the presence of sanctions for non-cooperation undermine people's subsequent cooperative behavior—the exact opposite of its intended effect? Mulder, van Dijk, De Cremer, and Wilke (2006) addressed this question by first telling their participants about a “game” that “other participants in a prior study” were said to have engaged in. All participants were told about a situation in which four group members had to decide whether to keep chips for themselves or donate them to the group. The total number of chips that were donated by the members to the group would be doubled in value by the experimenter and then equally divided among the members.

This information phase of the study was included so that the presence of sanctioning for non-cooperative group members could be varied. The crucial manipulation was whether a sanctioning system—applied to the two lowest chip-donating people—was said to have been operating or not. Later, when the participants took part in a different social dilemma where no sanctioning was mentioned, the influence of exposure to the prior sanctioning system for non-cooperation could be assessed.

The reduction in cooperation among those exposed to a sanctioning system stemmed from changes in participants' perceptions of the extent to which they could trust that others will behave cooperatively. So, having sanctions be present, over time, has the opposite effect on cooperation than might be intended! In fact, recent research has revealed that merely thinking about the law as a sanctioning system fosters people's beliefs that others are competitive, that they cannot be trusted, and leads people to make more competitive choices during a prisoner's dilemma game (Callan, Kay, Olson, Brar, & Whitefield, 2010).

Responding to and Resolving Conflicts: Some Useful Techniques

Most definitions of conflict emphasize the existence of incompatible interests. But conflict can sometimes occur when the two sides don't really have opposing interests—they simply believe that these exist (DeDreu & Van Lang, 1995). Indeed, errors concerning the causes of others' behavior—*faulty attribution*—can play a critical role in conflict (Baron, 1990). How do you feel when someone misunderstands your actions? Do you attempt to make him or her “see the light” or do you “simply withdraw,” assuming there is nothing you can do to change his or her mind no matter how hard you try? “Feeling misunderstood” by others leads to different responses in members of various ethnic groups. In a series of studies by Lun, Oishi, Coan, Akimoto, and Miao (2010), electroencephalogram (left prefrontal) brain activity was measured when group members were subjected to a “misunderstood or understood by others” manipulation. Because European Americans were expected to feel challenged and be prepared to confront others when they felt misunderstood, whereas Asian Americans were expected to be motivated to withdraw from the same situation, brain activity in the area reflecting approach motivation should be differentially observable in these circumstances.

European Americans showed elevated activity reflective of approach motivation when they were misunderstood, while Asian Americans showed reductions in such activity in this case. Conversely, Asian Americans' brain activation was especially high when they felt understood, whereas European Americans appeared not to be motivated to approach when they felt understood. Conflicts within groups are often likely to develop under conditions of scarce resources where group members must compete with each other to obtain them. What begins as a task conflict can rapidly generate into relationship conflict. Imagine that you and your sibling are told you have to clean out the garage and you are told that whoever completes their half of the task first gets to use your parent's car for the weekend. Both of you can't have the car—a desirable resource—so conflict is likely to happen! And, you can easily imagine how conflict over who gets to use the vacuum cleaner first and so on could rapidly deteriorate into name calling and other actions that would ultimately harm your relationship. So, a variety of social factors can play a strong role in initiating and intensifying conflicts. Because conflicts are often very costly, people are often motivated to resolve them as quickly as possible. What steps are most useful for reaching this goal? Two seem especially useful: *bargaining* and *superordinate goals*.

BARGAINING: THE UNIVERSAL PROCESS

By far the most common strategy for resolving conflicts is bargaining or *negotiation* (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). In this process, opposing sides exchange offers, counteroffers, and concessions, either directly or through representatives. If the process is successful, a solution acceptable to both sides is attained, and the conflict is resolved. If, instead, bargaining is unsuccessful, costly deadlock may result and the conflict is likely to intensify. What factors determine which of these outcomes occurs?

First, and perhaps most obviously, the outcome of bargaining is determined, in part, by the specific tactics adopted by the bargainers. Many of these are designed to accomplish a key goal: reduce the opponent's *aspirations* (i.e., hopes or goals), so that this person or group becomes convinced that it cannot get what it wants and should, instead, settle for something less favorable to their side. Tactics for accomplishing this goal include (1) beginning with an extreme initial offer—one that is very favorable to the side proposing it; (2) the “big-lie” technique—convincing the other side that one's break-even point is much higher than it is so that they offer more than would otherwise be the case; for example, used-car salespeople may claim that they will lose money on the deal if the price is lowered when in fact this is false; and (3) convincing the other side that you can go elsewhere and get even better terms (Thompson, 1998).

A second, and very important, determinant of the outcome of bargaining involves the overall orientation of the bargainers to the process (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). People taking part in negotiations can approach such discussions from either of two distinct perspectives. In one, they can view the negotiations as “win-lose” situations in which gains by one side are necessarily linked with losses for the other. In the other, they can approach negotiations as potential “win-win” situations, in which the interests of the two sides are not necessarily

incompatible and in which the potential gains of both sides can be maximized. This approach produces more favorable results in the long run—and is typically what is used when negotiating national conflicts such as the one between the Israelis and Palestinians or the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Such peace agreements, when achieved, are known as *integrative agreements*—ones that offer greater joint benefits than would be attained by simply splitting all differences down the middle, or one side simply giving in to the demands of the other side. This is very much like the situation we described earlier in which there was a conflict between two individuals about picking a vacation destination. When the two parties communicate clearly about their underlying needs, a new option that satisfies both parties' needs can often be found. This technique—called *bridging*—is one of many techniques for attaining such integrative solutions to conflicts.

Often negotiators believe that displaying anger at the other party will further their interests (i.e., lead the other party to make larger concessions). However, there are cultural differences in the norms concerning the appropriateness of expressing anger in negotiations, so this strategy must be used with care. In a series of studies on this issue, Adam, Shirako, and Maddux (2010) found that expressing anger in a negotiation resulted in greater concessions from European Americans, but smaller concessions from Asian Americans. These researchers showed that this difference stemmed from the adherence to different cultural norms. When the relevant norms were directly manipulated so that members of both cultural groups perceived anger expression as appropriate to the negotiation context, both cultural groups made concessions to the apparently angry opponent. So the effectiveness of different bargaining strategies involving displays of emotion appear to depend on cultural norms.

SUPERORDINATE GOALS: WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Members of groups in conflict often divide the world into two opposing camps—"us" and "them." They perceive members of their own group (us) as quite different from, and usually better than, people belonging to other groups (them). These tendencies to magnify differences between one's own group and others and to disparage outsiders are very powerful and often play a role in the occurrence and persistence of conflicts. Fortunately, they can be countered through the induction of superordinate goals—goals that both sides seek, and that tie their interests together rather than driving them apart (Sherif et al., 1961). When opposing sides can be made to see that they share overarching goals, conflict is often sharply reduced and may, in fact, be replaced by overt cooperation.

Perceived Fairness in Groups: Its Nature and Effects

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt that you were getting less than you deserved from some group to which you belong? If so, you probably experienced anger and resentment in response to such *perceived unfairness or injustice* (Cropanzano, 1993). Were you ready to act to rectify it and attempt to get whatever it was you felt you deserved, or were you afraid of potential retaliation (Miller, Cronin, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009). Social psychologists have conducted many studies to understand (1) the factors that lead individuals to decide they have been treated fairly or unfairly and (2) what they do about it—their efforts to deal with perceived unfairness (Adams, 1965; Walker & Smith, 2002). We now consider both of these questions.

Basic Rules for Judging Fairness: Distributive, Procedural, and Transactional Justice

Deciding whether we have been treated fairly in our relations with others can be quite tricky. First, we rarely have all the information needed to make such a judgment accurately (van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Second, even if we did, perceived fairness is very much “in the eye of the beholder,” so is subject to many forms of bias. Despite such complexities, research on perceived fairness in group settings indicates that, in general, we make these judgments by focusing on three distinct aspects or rules.

The first, known as distributive justice involves the *outcomes* we and others receive. According to the equity rule, available rewards should be divided among group members in accordance with their contributions: the more they provide in terms of effort, experience, skills, and other contributions to the group, the more they should receive. For example, we expect people who have made major contributions toward reaching the group’s goals to receive greater rewards than people who have contributed very little. In short, we often judge fairness in terms of the ratio between the contributions group members have provided and the rewards they receive (Adams, 1965). While people are concerned with the outcomes they receive, this is far from the entire story where judgments of fairness are concerned. In addition, people are also interested in the fairness of the procedures through which rewards have been distributed, what is known as procedural justice (Folger & Baron, 1996; Tyler & Blader, 2003). We base our judgments about it on factors such as (1) the extent to which the procedures are applied in the same manner to all people; (2) there are opportunities for correcting any errors in distributions; and (3) decision makers avoid being influenced by their own self-interest.

Evidence that such factors really do influence our judgments concerning procedural justice has been obtained in many studies (Tyler & Blader, 2003). For instance, in one investigation, when people perceived authorities as holding attitudes that are biased against them, and when they believed they lack “voice” (e.g., cannot complain or won’t be listened to), the more they report procedural injustice (van Prooijen, van den Bos, Lind, & Wilke, 2006). In a large study of people who had been laid off from their jobs, those who felt the procedures used to decide who would be let go were unfair expressed greater hostility and intentions to retaliate against organizational authorities (Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005).

We also judge fairness in terms of the way information about outcomes and procedures is given to us. This is known as transactional justice, and two factors seem to play a key role in our judgments about it: the extent to which we are given clear and rational reasons for why rewards were divided as they were (Bies, Shapiro, & Cummings, 1988), and the courtesy or respect with which we are informed about these divisions (Greenberg, 1993; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997). In sum, we judge fairness in several different ways—in terms of the rewards we have received (distributive justice), the procedures used to reach these divisions (procedural justice), and the style in which we are informed about these divisions (transactional justice). All three forms of justice can have strong effects on our behavior. In many situations in which we ask the question “Am I being treated fairly?” we do not have sufficient information about the outcomes or procedures used to clearly apply rules of distributive and procedural justice.

We don't know exactly what rewards others have received (e.g., their salaries), and we may not know all the procedures or whether they were consistently followed when distributing rewards to group members. What do we do in such situations? Meta-analyses (Barsky & Kaplan, 2007) have revealed that we treat our feelings as a source of information and base our judgments on them, reasoning "If I feel good, this must be fair" or "If I feel bad, this must be unfair."

Decision Making by Groups: How It Occurs and the Pitfalls It Faces

One of the most important activities that groups perform is decision making—deciding on one out of several possible courses of action. Governments, corporations, and many other organizations entrust key decisions to groups. Why? As we noted in our opening about the financial and oil spill crises, people often believe that groups reach better decisions than individuals. After all, they can pool the expertise of their members and avoid the biases and extreme decisions that might be made by individuals acting alone. But are such beliefs about group decision making accurate? Do groups really make better decisions than individuals? In their efforts to address this issue, social psychologists have focused on three major questions: (1) How do groups *actually* make their decisions and reach a consensus? (2) Do decisions reached by groups differ from those made by individuals? (3) What accounts for the fact that groups sometimes make disastrous decisions?

The Decision-Making Process: How Groups Attain Consensus

When groups first begin to discuss any issue, their members rarely start out in complete agreement. Rather, they come to the decision-making task with a range of views (Brodbeck, Kerschreiter, Mojzisch, Frey, & Schulz-Hardt, 2002; Larson, Foster-Fishman, & Franz, 1998). After some period of discussion, however, groups usually do reach a decision. How is this accomplished, and can the final outcome be predicted from the views initially held by the members of the group?

THE DECISION QUALITY OF GROUPS: LESS OR MORE EXTREME?

Many suppose that groups are far less likely than individuals to make extreme decisions. Is that view correct? A large body of evidence indicates that groups are actually *more* likely to adopt extreme positions than if its members made those same decisions alone. Across many different kinds of decisions and many different contexts, groups show a pronounced tendency to shift toward views that are more extreme than the ones with which they initially began (Burnstein, 1983; Rodrigo & Ato, 2002). This is known as group polarization, and its major effects can be summarized as follows: whatever the initial leaning or preference of a group prior to its discussions, this preference is strengthened during the group's deliberations. As a result, groups make more extreme decisions than individuals. Initial research on this topic (Kogan & Wallach, 1964) suggested that groups move toward riskier alternatives as they discuss important issues—a change described as the *risky shift*. But additional research showed that the shift was not always toward risk—the shift toward risk *only* happened in situations where the initial preference of the group leaned in that direction. The shift could be in the opposite direction—toward increased caution—if caution was the group's initial preference. Why do groups tend to move, as shown in Figure 11.20, over the course of their discussions, toward increasingly

extreme views and decisions? Two major factors are involved. First, *social comparison* plays a role. If we all want to be “above average” where opinions are concerned, this implies holding views that are “better” than other group members. Being “better” would mean holding views that are more prototypical of the group’s overall preference, but even more so (Turner, 1991). So, for example, in a group of liberals, “better” would mean “more liberal.” Among a group of conservatives, better would mean “more conservative.”

A second factor involves the fact that during group discussion, most arguments favor the group’s initial preference. As a result of hearing such arguments, members shift, increasingly, toward the majority’s view. Consequently, the proportion of discussion favoring the group’s initial preference increases so that ultimately, members convince themselves that this must be the “right” view (Vinokur & Burnstein, 1974). In support of this idea, recent research has revealed that if other group members’ opinions are not known before discussion, group decisions improve because more diverse arguments are considered (Mojzisch & Schulz-Hardt, 2010).

The Downside of Group Decision Making

The drift of many decision-making groups toward polarization is a serious problem—one that can interfere with their ability to make sound decisions, but this is not the only process that can exert such negative effects (Hinsz, 1995). Among the most important of these other processes are (1) groupthink and (2) groups’ seeming inability to share and use information held by only some of their members.

GROUPTHINK: WHEN COHESIVENESS IS DANGEROUS

Earlier we described how high levels of cohesiveness in groups has benefits: it can increase members’ commitment to the group and make those groups more satisfying. But, like anything else, there can be too much of a good thing. When cohesiveness reaches very high levels, groupthink may develop. This is a strong tendency for decision-making groups to “close ranks” around a decision, to assume that the group *can’t* be wrong, with pressure for all members to support the decision strongly, and to reject any information contrary to the decision. Research indicates that once groupthink develops, groups become unwilling to change their decisions, even when initial outcomes suggest that those decisions were very poor ones (Haslam et al., 2006). Consider the decisions of three United States Presidents (Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon) to escalate the war in Vietnam. Each escalation brought increased American casualties and no progress toward the goal of ensuring the survival of South Vietnam as an independent country. Likewise, President George W. Bush and his cabinet chose to invade Iraq, without critically considering the assumption that is now known to be incorrect—that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. According to Janis (1982), the social psychologist who originated the concept of groupthink, this process—and the fact that it encourages an unwillingness among members of cohesive groups to consider alternative courses of action—may well have contributed to these events. Why does groupthink occur? Research findings (Kameda & Sugimori, 1993; Tetlock, Peterson, McGuire, Change, & Feld, 1992) suggest that two factors are crucial. One of these is a very high level of *cohesiveness* among group members and the fact that supportive group members in the leader’s “inner circle” exert a disproportional impact

on the ultimate decision making (Burris, Rodgers, Mannix, Hendron, & Oldroyd, 2009). The second is *emergent group norms*—norms suggesting that the group is infallible, morally superior, and because of these factors, there should be no further discussion of the issues at hand; the decision has been made, and the only valid response is to support it as strongly as possible. Closely related to these effects is a tendency to reject any criticism by outside sources. Criticism from outsiders is viewed with suspicion and attributed negative motives.

THE FAILURE TO SHARE INFORMATION UNIQUE TO EACH MEMBER

A second potential source of bias in decision-making groups involves the fact that such groups do not always pool their resources—share information and ideas unique to each member. In fact, research (Gigone & Hastie, 1997; Stasser, 1992) indicates such pooling of resources or information may be the exception rather than the rule. The result: The decisions made by groups tend to reflect the shared information. This is not a problem if such information points to the best decision. But consider what happens when information pointing to the best decision is *not* shared by most members. In such cases, the tendency of group members to discuss mainly the information they all already possess may prevent them from reaching the best decision. Consequently, the presence of dissent in groups can be critical; it can lead members to consider nonshared information and this improves decision quality (Schulz-Hardt, Brodbeck, Mojzisch, Kerschreiter, & Frey, 2006).

BRAINSTORMING: IDEA GENERATION IN GROUPS

When groups work on creative tasks together they tend to produce different kinds of solutions than when working alone (Adarves-Yorno, Postmes, & Haslam, 2007). But are they better solutions? In brainstorming—a process whereby people meet as a group to generate new ideas—it has generally been assumed that more creative output will emerge than when the same people work as individuals (Stroebe, Diehl, & Abakoumkin, 1992). But in contrast to this expectation, brainstorming does not on the whole result in more creative ideas being generated than if the same people worked alone. So why doesn't such a great idea in theory work in practice? Dugosh and Paulus (2005) investigated both cognitive and social aspects of brainstorming, particularly the effects of idea exposure. This is especially important because the benefits of brainstorming were assumed to result from group members' exposure to others' creativity. These researchers considered whether exposure to common or unique ideas by other group members would result in similar quality ideas being generated by the other participants, as well as whether people engage in social comparison during brainstorming. Some research has suggested that "performance matching" could lead to lowered motivations for idea output (i.e., everyone sort of "dumbing down" to conform to a low-output norm). Munkes and Diehl (2003) have suggested, however, that such social comparison ought to result in *competition* and raise the quality of the ideas generated.