

PSYCHOLOGY 305 / 305G  
Social Psychology



Groups

Lecturer: James Neill

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Overview of Lecture

- What is a group?
- Effects of the group on individuals
- Group decision making
- Intergroup conflict
- Co-operation between groups

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Questions

- Is the behaviour of the group different to the behaviour of individuals?
- Do groups make better decisions than individuals?
- Why do groups conflict?  
e.g., Is it because of scarce resources?

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## What is a Group?

“two or more people who share a common definition and evaluation of themselves and behave in accordance with such a definition”  
(Vaughan & Hogg, 2002, p. 200)

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## What is a Group?

a collection of people who interact with one another, accept rights and obligations as members and who share a common identity.

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## What is a Group?

Criteria for a group include:

- formal social structure
- face-to-face interaction
- 2 or more persons
- common fate
- common goals
- interdependence
- self-definition as group members
- recognition by others

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# Effects of groups on individuals

- Social Facilitation
- Social Loafing

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## Social Facilitation

- Presence of others facilitates dominant response
- Drive theory (Zajonc, 1965) - physical presence of others leads to arousal, motivates performance of dominant response
- Presence of others facilitates performance on skilled tasks, impairs performance on unskilled tasks

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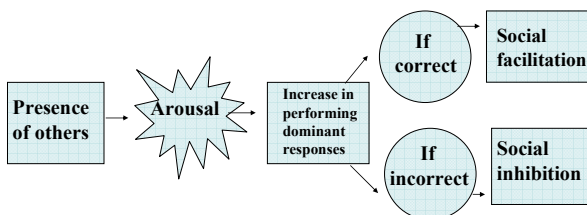
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## Zajonc's Drive Theory of Social Facilitation



*Note: The presence of others automatically produces arousal, which drives dominant responses. Performance is improved by a 'correct' dominant response, but is impaired by an 'incorrect' dominant response.*

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## Evaluation Apprehension Model (Cottrell, 1972)

- Apprehension about evaluation
  - > arousal
  - > increased drive & social facilitation
- e.g., Schmitt & colleagues (1986)

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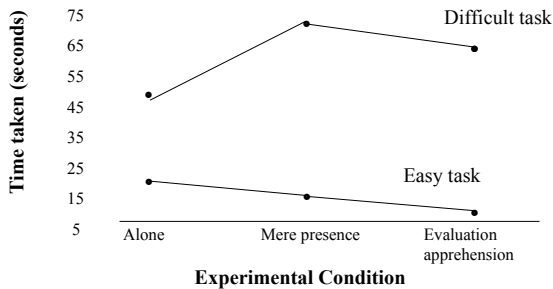
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Time taken for an easy and a difficult typing task as a function of social presence



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## Distraction-conflict theory (Baron, 1986; Sanders, 1983)

- Conflict occurs when person simultaneously pays attention to task & others
- Conflict -> arousal -> increased drive & social facilitation
- e.g., Sanders, Baron & Moore (1978)

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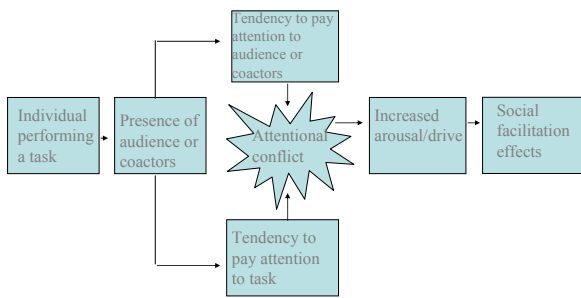
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## Distraction: Conflict Theory of Social Facilitation



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## Social Loafing

A reduction in individual effort when working on a collective task compared to working alone

- Coordination loss - losses of productivity due to problems of coordinating individual members
- Motivation loss - losses due to decreases in individual members' motivation

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## Social Loafing

- e.g., Ringlemann (1913) - less effort per person exerted when rope pulling in a group vs. alone.
- e.g., Latane, Williams & Harkins (1979) - performance decreased as group size increased.

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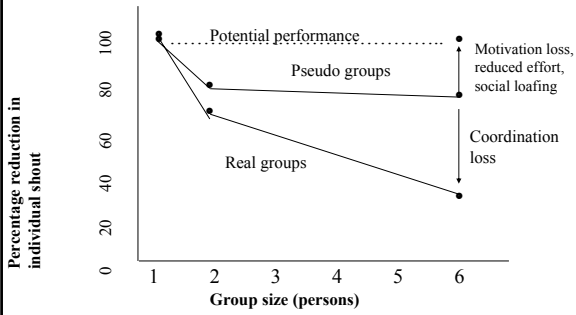
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## Reduction in volume of individual shout in 2-person & 6-person real & pseudo-groups



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## Why Does Social Loafing Occur?

- Output equity
- Evaluation apprehension
- Matching to standard

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## Social Impact Theory (Latane, 1981)

Diffusion of individual responsibility as group size increases.

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## Collective Effort Model (CEM) (Karau & Williams, 1993)

- links between individual's efforts & their outcomes weaker when working with others in a group

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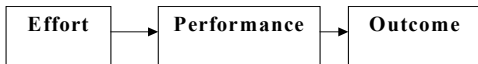
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## Collective Effort Model (CEM)

Individuals Working Alone



Individuals Working with Others in Groups



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## Collective Effort Model (CEM)

- According to CEM, individuals work hard on a task when:
  1. Believe working hard will lead to a better performance
  2. Believe better performance will be recognised & rewarded
  3. Rewards are ones they value & desire

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## Factors to Reduce Social Loafing

- increase identifiability
- increase value of task
- make contributions unique
- increase group cohesiveness
- increase identification with the group (e.g., Holt, 1987)

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## Group Decision-Making

- Brainstorming
- Group polarisation

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## Brainstorming

- Generation of ideas in a group to enhance group creativity
- Does brainstorming -> greater creativity?
- Nominal groups outperform 'real' interactive groups.

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## Brainstorming

### Why?

- evaluation apprehension
- social loafing
- production matching
- production blocking

### Remedies

- electronic brainstorming
- heterogenous groups

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## Group Polarisation

- 'Risky Shift' (Stoner, 1961) - tendency for group discussion to lead to more risky decisions
- *Group Polarisation* - tendency of group members to shift towards more extreme positions as a result of group discussion

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## Persuasive Arguments Theory

- During discussion, people are exposed to novel arguments that support initial position
- Become more convinced of initial position
- BUT - group polarisation is found in studies involving perceptual judgements

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## Social Comparison/Value Theory

- Competition between group members to represent some underlying valued position
- Social comparison - strive to represent most valued (extreme) position
- BUT - group polarisation occurs for 'non-value' judgements

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## Self-Categorization Theory

- Prototype - position that defines what group has in common compared to outgroups
- Ingroup members conform to prototype or ingroup norm
- This tends to be polarised in intergroup contexts

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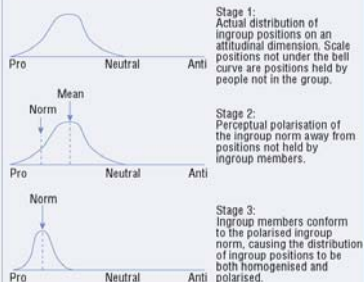
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FIGURE 9.8 ► **GROUP POLARISATION AS SELF-CATEGORISATION INDUCED CONFORMITY TO A POLARISED GROUP**



**Note:** Group polarisation can occur because people categorise themselves in terms of, and conform to, an ingroup defined by a norm that is polarised away from positions not held by ingroup members.

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## Inter-Group Conflict

- Sherif's summer camp studies (Sherif, 1956)
- Studies had 4 phases:
  1. Boys arrive at camp, formed friendships
  2. Split into 2 groups that cut across friendship lines, groups isolated

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## Inter-Group Conflict

3. 2 groups brought together to engage in intergroup competition
4. Introduced superordinate goals -> decreased intergroup conflict.

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## Important points re: the studies

- Some ethnocentrism present before competition
- Boys did not have authoritarian personalities
- Ingroups formed even though friends were outgroup members
- Mere contact was insufficient to improve intergroup relations

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## Realistic Conflict Theory

- Mutually exclusive goals produce intergroup conflict & ethnocentrism
- Shared goals requiring intergroup interdependence for achievement reduce conflict, promote cooperation
- Conflict will not occur when there is no personal gain for individuals in groups

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## Social Identity Theory

- Is competition between groups necessary (& sufficient) for intergroup conflict?
- What are the minimal conditions for intergroup conflict?
- Tajfel, Billig, Flament & Bundy (1971) - minimal group experiments
- most popular strategy was to favour the ingroup as much as possible

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## Social Identity Theory

- ingroup bias occurred in absence of personal gain & intergroup competition
- mere categorisation into groups sufficient to produce intergroup conflict

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## Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986)

Social identity theory categorisation,  
identification & comparison

- motivated to maximise positive distinctiveness
- motivated to minimise negative distinctiveness
- interdependence & conflict of interest not necessary for bias against outgroups

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## Strategies to Achieve a Positive Social Identity

- Both individual & collective strategies available - depends on belief structure
- Belong to low status groups - leave group (disidentification)
- Reflects *social mobility* belief structure
- Requires permeable group boundaries

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## Strategies to Achieve a Positive Social Identity

- if group boundaries are impermeable -> *social change* belief structure
- strategy depends on *cognitive alternatives* - beliefs about stability & legitimacy of status differentials between groups
- stable & legitimate -> strategy of *social creativity*
- unstable & illegitimate -> strategy of *social competition*

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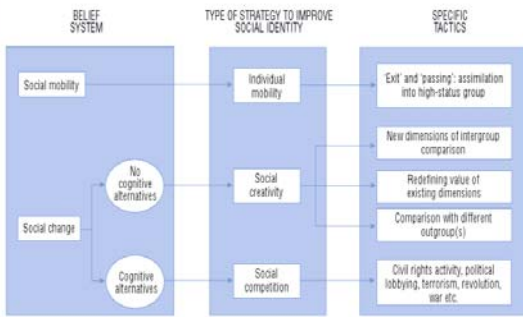
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FIGURE 11.6 ► SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY: BELIEF STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING SOCIAL IDENTITY



Note: Beliefs about the nature of intergroup relations influence the general strategies and specific tactics group members can adopt to try to maintain or achieve positive social identity.

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## Inter-Group Cooperation

- **Social Dilemmas** - situation in which most rewarding short-term choice for individual causes negative consequences for group as a whole
- **Commons Dilemma** - if all cooperate, all gain; if all compete, all lose
- **Public Goods Dilemma** - individual must contribute to provision of freely available resource

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## The prisoner's dilemma

		Prisoner A	
		Confesses	Does not confess
Prisoner B	Confesses	5 years / 5 years	10 years / 0 years
	Does not confess	0 years / 10 years	1 year / 1 year

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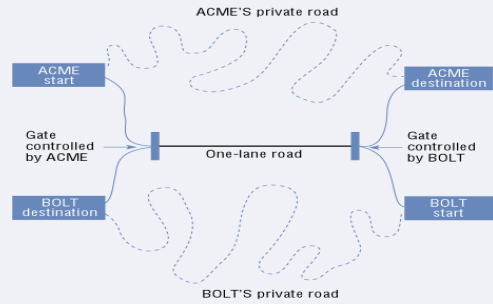
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FIGURE 11.5 ► THE TRUCKING GAME



**Note:** Two participants play a game where they work for separate trucking companies that transport goods from one place to another. They can use their own private roads, but there is also a much shorter shared route which has the drawback of having a one-lane section.

**Source:** Deutsch & Krauss (1960).

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## Social Dilemmas - Cooperation

Factors influencing cooperation in these games

1. cooperation increases as conflict between own & others' interests decreases
2. coop increases as rewards for coop increase
3. communication increases cooperation

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## Social Dilemmas - Cooperation

4. coop increases when players know each other
5. more likely to coop with ingroup members
6. increased no. of participants leads to increased conflict
7. initial social value orientation - competitive vs. cooperative

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## Criticisms of Dilemma Games

- assumes individuals are rational, motivated to maximise self-interest
- lack ecological/external validity
- are they about intergroup cooperation?

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## Intergroup Contact & Superordinate Goals

- May reduce conflict & increase cooperation
- Sherif's studies - needed *superordinate goals* in addition to contact to produce cooperation
- Superordinate goals only work if goal is achieved
- Failure may worsen intergroup relations - attributed to outgroup
- Recategorisation (Common Ingroup Identity Model)

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## Conclusions

- Groups influence the behaviour of individuals.
- Group decisions tend to be different to individual decisions (but not necessarily worse)
- Conflict between groups - realistic conflict theory vs. social identity theory.

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