

Chapter 9

Group Processes

Influence in Social Groups



Chapter Outline and Learning Objectives

What Is a Group?

LO 9.1 Explain what groups are and why people join them.

Why Do People Join Groups?

The Composition and Functions of Groups

Individual Behavior in a Group Setting

LO 9.2 Describe how individuals perform differently when others are around.

Social Facilitation: When the Presence of Others Energizes Us

Social Loafing: When the Presence of Others Relaxes Us

Gender and Cultural Differences in Social Loafing: Who Slacks Off the Most?

Deindividuation: Getting Lost in the Crowd

Group Decisions: Are Two (or More) Heads Better Than One?

LO 9.3 Compare the decision-making outcomes of individuals versus groups, and explain the impact of leadership in group outcomes.

Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving

Group Polarization: Going to Extremes

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Conflict and Cooperation

LO 9.4 Summarize the factors that determine whether individual and group conflict will escalate or be resolved.

Social Dilemmas

Using Threats to Resolve Conflict

Negotiation and Bargaining

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Revel Interactive	Survey What Do You Think?	
	SURVEY	RESULTS
	Have you ever written or posted something anonymously online that you know you never would have had the nerve to say or do in person?	
	☐ Yes ☐ No	

As the evening of November 8 turned to the early morning of November 9, it became clear that the 2016 Election Day outcome very, very few had predicted was coming to fruition: Donald Trump would become the 45th president of the United States, defeating Hillary Clinton. Almost immediately, pundits and prognosticators began to generate potential explanations for the surprise result. Some pointed fingers at James Comey, the FBI Director who had announced the revival of an inquiry into Clinton's private e-mail server less than 2 weeks previously. Others suggested that perhaps some Trump voters had been unwilling to admit their support for the controversial candidate during pre-election polls, skewing reported results in an unrealistically pro-Clinton direction.

There were likely many reasons for Clinton's loss, including some that were outside her control: the Comey letter, reluctance to elect a female president, and even, potentially, Russian efforts to influence the election. There is little doubt, however, that Clinton and her seasoned team of campaign experts also blundered in some critical strategic decisions. Consider, for example, the following episode, which took place slightly more than a week before Election Day. Union organizers—a strong Clinton base of support—were growing concerned about an unexpectedly close race in Michigan. They decided to send more campaign volunteers to Detroit, hoping to bolster a state that the Democrats needed to win. Union leadership called top Clinton campaign aides to share their plan.

Turn those buses around! came the response from central command at Team Clinton in New York. There was no need, they asserted, to send resources to Michigan, a state that their statistical models projected as a 5-point win for their candidate (Dovere, 2016).

Similar stories were playing out in other supposed Democratic strongholds. Local campaign operatives in Wisconsin had to scramble to raise their own money for a get-out-the-vote effort after Clinton headquarters didn't earmark funds for the effort. (Stein, 2016). And while Clinton held a celebrity-filled rally in Philadelphia on election eve, some critics noted that her November travel schedule also included ultimately fruitless stops in Arizona and Utah, two traditionally "red states."

Had Hillary Clinton won Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, she would have been elected president. She ended up losing all three by a relatively paltry combined total of less than 70,000 votes. It appears to have been a catastrophic blunder for her team of advisors to assume that these states were safely in their column. Could a few more volunteers here, a few rallies there, and a different allocation of campaign dollars have been enough to change the outcome? Maybe. We will never know.

Social psychologists who study groups would pose a different, yet related set of questions: How could one of the most experienced, knowledgeable, and previously successful campaign teams ever assembled seemingly have gotten this wrong? Aren't groups of experts supposed to make better decisions than are individuals? Presidential campaigns have at their disposal a huge number of talented people, and it might seem that drawing on this combined expertise should inevitably lead to the best decisions. But groups don't always make good decisions. In this chapter, we will focus on

questions about the nature of groups and how they influence people's behavior, which are some of the oldest topics in social psychology (Forsyth & Burnette, 2010; Kerr & Tindale, 2004; Wittenbaum & Moreland, 2008; Yuki & Brewer, 2014).

What Is a Group?

LO 9.1 Explain what groups are and why people join them.

Group

Two or more people who interact and are interdependent in the sense that their needs and goals cause them to influence each other

Six students studying independently at tables in the library are not a group. But if they meet to study for their psychology final together, they are. A **group** consists of two or more people who interact and are interdependent in the sense that their needs and goals cause them to influence each other (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Lewin, 1948; J. C. Turner, 1982). However, groups are usually larger than two, with two people sometimes referred to as a dyad instead (Moreland, 2010). Like a president's advisers working together to reach a foreign policy decision or people who have gathered to blow off steam at a party, groups consist of people who have assembled for a common purpose.

Think for a moment of the number of groups to which you belong. Don't forget to include your family, campus groups (such as clubs or political organizations), community groups, sports teams, and more temporary groups (such as your classmates in a small seminar). All of these count as groups because you interact with the other members and you are interdependent: You influence them, and they influence you.

Why Do People Join Groups?

Joining forces with others allows us to accomplish objectives that would be more difficult to meet individually. Ever try to move to a new dorm room or apartment on your own? Much quicker and less painful if you can get others to help you. Forming relationships with other people also fulfills a number of basic human needs—so basic, in fact, that there may be an innate need to belong to groups. Some researchers argue that in our evolutionary past, there was a substantial survival advantage to establishing bonds with other people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; DeWall & Richman, 2011; Reitz, Motti-Stefanidi, & Asendorpf, 2016). People who bonded together were better able to hunt for and grow food, find mates, and care for children. Consequently, researchers argue, the need to belong has become entrenched in all societies. Consistent

with this view, people in all cultures are motivated to form relationships with other people, monitor their status in groups, and remain vigilant for any sign that they might be rejected (Blackhart et al., 2009; Gardner, Pickett, & Brewer, 2000; Kerr & Levine, 2008).

Not only do people have a strong need to belong to social groups, but they also have a need to feel distinctive from those who do *not* belong to the same groups. If you go to a large university, you might have a sense of belonging, but being a member of such a large collective is unlikely to make you feel distinctive from others. Groups that are relatively small can fulfill both functions by giving us a sense of belonging with our fellow group members and also making us feel special and distinctive. This helps explain why people are attracted to smaller groups within their college environments, whether fraternities and sororities, clubs and organizations, or dramatic or other performance ensembles (Brewer, 2007).



Groups have a number of benefits. They are an important part of our identity, helping us define who we are, and are a source of social norms, the explicit or implicit rules defining what is acceptable behavior. Groups also help us accomplish goals that we could not complete on our own.

Another important function of groups is that they help us define who we are. As we saw in Chapter 8, other people can be an important source of information, helping us resolve ambiguity about the nature of the social world (Darley, 2004). Groups provide a lens through which we can understand the world and our place in it (Baumeister, Ainsworth, & Vohs, 2016; Hogg, Hohman, & Rivera, 2008). So groups become an important part of our identity—witness the number of times people wear shirts emblazoned with the name of one of their groups (e.g., a sports team, a university or college, any campus organization). Groups also help establish social norms, the explicit or implicit rules defining what is acceptable behavior.

The Composition and Functions of Groups

The groups to which you belong probably vary in size from a few members to several dozen members. Most groups, however, have three to six members (Desportes & Lemaine, 1988; Levine & Moreland, 1998). If groups become too large, you cannot interact with all the members; for example, the college or university that you attend is not, on its own, a group because you are unlikely to meet and have interdependent goals with every other student. In the sections to follow, we will consider factors that influence how individuals behave within groups and how groups themselves function.

SOCIAL NORMS All societies have norms about which behaviors are acceptable, some of which all members are expected to obey (e.g., we should be quiet in libraries) and some of which vary from group to group (e.g., what is appropriate to wear to weddings and funerals). If you live in a dorm, you can probably think of social norms that govern behavior in your group, such as whether alcoholic beverages are consumed at parties there and how you are supposed to feel about rival dorms. It is unlikely that your singing group, drama ensemble, or other groups to which you belong share these same exact norms. The power of norms to shape behavior becomes clear when we violate them too often: We are shunned by other group members and, in extreme cases, pressured to leave the group (Jetten & Hornsey, 2014; Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001; Schachter, 1951).

SOCIAL ROLES Most groups have a number of well-defined **social roles**, which are shared expectations in a group about how particular people are supposed to behave (Ellemers & Jetten, 2013; Hare, 2003). Whereas norms specify how all group members should act, roles specify how people who occupy certain positions in the group should behave. In a business, a boss and an employee occupy different roles and are expected to act in different ways in that setting. Like social norms, roles can be very helpful because people know what to expect from each other. When members of a group follow a set of clearly defined roles, they tend to be satisfied and perform well (Barley & Bechky, 1994; Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001).

However, people can get so far into a role that their personal identities and personalities get lost. To test this idea, Philip Zimbardo and colleagues conducted a highly unusual (and controversial) study. They built a mock prison in the basement of the psychology department at Stanford University and paid students to play the role of guard or prisoner (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973; Zimbardo, 2007). Which role a participant played—guard or prisoner—was determined by the simple flip of a coin. Guards were outfitted with a uniform of khaki shirts and pants, a whistle, a police nightstick, and reflective sunglasses. Prisoners were given a loose-fitting smock with an identification number stamped on it, rubber sandals, a nylon stocking cap, and a chain attached to one ankle.

Social Roles

Shared expectations in a group about how particular people are supposed to behave

Zimbardo and his colleagues randomly assigned students to play the role of prisoner or guard in a mock prison. The students assumed these roles all too well.





One of the guards from Zimbardo's prison experiment at Stanford.

The researchers planned to observe the students for 2 weeks to see whether they began to act like real prison guards and prisoners. As it turned out, the students quickly assumed these roles—so much so that the researchers ended the experiment after only 6 days. Many of the guards became abusive, coming up with increasingly creative ways of verbally harassing and humiliating the prisoners. The prisoners became passive, helpless, and withdrawn. Some prisoners, in fact, became so anxious and depressed that they had to be released from the study early. Remember, everyone knew that they were in a psychology experiment and that the prison was only make-believe. But the roles of guard and prisoner were so compelling and powerful that this simple truth was often overlooked. People got so far into their roles that their personal identities and sense of decency somehow got lost. In fact, one major methodological criticism of Zimbardo's study—beyond the obvious

ethical questions regarding the treatment of research participants—is that the students quickly figured out what the study was about and role-played in the manner that they thought was expected of them (Banuazizi & Movahedi, 1975; Kulig, Pratt, & Cullen, 2017).

But what is clear is that it didn't take coercion, bribery, or weeks of training to prompt these "guards" and "prisoners" to slip easily into their roles and that, in particular, some of the student guards clearly and quickly took things much too far. Does this sound familiar? As mentioned in Chapter 8, in 2004 it came to light that American military guards had been abusing prisoners in Abu Ghraib, a prison in Iraq (Hersh, 2004). The American public was shocked by pictures of U.S. soldiers smiling as they stood in front of naked Iraqi prisoners, as if they were posing in front of local landmarks for the folks back home. Did a few bad apples happen to end up in the unit guarding the prisoners? Not according to Zimbardo (2007). "What's bad is the barrel," Zimbardo argued. "The barrel is the barrel I created by my prison—and we put good boys in, just as in this Iraqi prison. And the barrel corrupts. It's the barrel of the evil of prisons—with secrecy, with no accountability—which gives people permission to do things they ordinarily would not" (quoted in O'Brien, 2004).

This is not to say that the soldiers should be excused for their actions. The abuse came to light when 24-year-old Joe Darby, an army reservist at Abu Ghraib, reported what was happening. As in Zimbardo's study, not everyone was caught in the web of their social roles, unable to resist. But as much as we would like to think that we would be one of these heroes, the lesson from the Zimbardo prison study—and Milgram's

studies of obedience—is that many if not most of us would not fully resist the social influences in these powerful situations and would perhaps perform acts we thought we were incapable of.

GROUP COHESIVENESS Another important aspect of how a group functions is how cohesive it is. **Group cohesiveness** refers to the qualities of a group that bind members together and promote mutual liking (Dion, 2000; Holtz, 2004; Rosh, Offermann, & Van Diest, 2012). If a group has formed primarily for social reasons, such as a group of friends who go to the movies together on weekends, then the more cohesive the group is, the better. This is pretty obvious;

Group Cohesiveness

Qualities of a group that bind members together and promote liking between them

Watch ZIMBARDO'S PRISON STUDY



would you rather spend your free time with a bunch of people who don't care much for each other or a tight-knit and committed bunch? As you would expect, the more cohesive a group is, the more its members are likely to stay in the group, take part in group activities, and try to recruit new like-minded members (Levine & Moreland, 1998; Pickett, Silver, & Brewer, 2002; Spink et al., 2014).

If the function of the group is to work together and solve problems, however—as it is for a military unit or sales team at a company—then the story is not quite so simple. Doing well on a task causes a group to become more cohesive (Mullen & Cooper, 1994; Picazo et al., 2014), but is the reverse true? Does cohesiveness cause a group to perform well? It does if the task requires close cooperation between the group members, such as the case of a football team executing a difficult play or a military unit carrying out a complicated maneuver (Casey-Campbell & Martens, 2009; Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 1995). Sometimes, however, cohesiveness can get in the way of optimal performance if maintaining good relations among group members becomes more important than finding good solutions to a problem. Is it possible, for example, that the cohesiveness and sense of confidence shared by Hillary Clinton and her campaign advisers got in the way of clear thinking about how best to plot their electoral strategy? We will return to this question later in the chapter when we discuss group decision making.

GROUP DIVERSITY Related to cohesiveness is the matter of how diverse a group's composition is. More often than not, members of a group tend to be alike in age, sex, beliefs, and opinions (Apfelbaum, Phillips, & Richeson, 2014; Levine & Moreland, 1998). There are at least two reasons for the relative homogeneity of groups. First, many groups tend to attract people who are already similar before they join (Alter & Darley, 2009; Feld, 1982). As we'll see in Chapter 10, people are attracted to others who share their attitudes and thus are likely to recruit fellow group members who are similar to them. Second, groups tend to operate in ways that encourage similarity in the members, as discussed in Chapter 8.

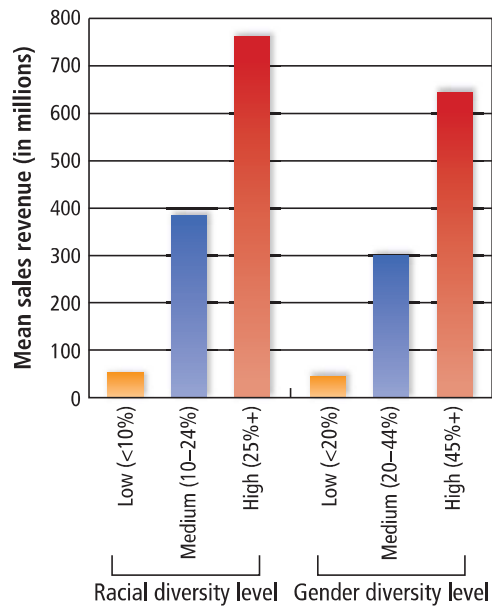
In short, people tend to gravitate toward groups with similar others, and such similarity predicts group cohesiveness. Consider a study conducted by McLeod, Lobel, and Cox (1996) in which college students were assigned to brainstorming groups ranging in size from three to five. Half of these groups were comprised entirely of White students. That is, these groups were not diverse at all with regard to race; they were racially homogeneous. The other half of the groups were racially diverse, including White students as well as Asian American, African American, or Latino students. All groups, regardless of their diversity, were assigned the same task: to spend 15 minutes brainstorming ideas for how best to attract more tourists to the United States. At the end of each session, participants were asked how much they liked the other members of their group. As you might predict based on the conclusion that homogeneous groups are often cohesive, members of all-White groups reported liking their fellow group members more than did members of diverse groups.

But remember that just because a group is cohesive does not mean it is performing at its optimal level. Indeed, when McLeod and colleagues (1996) analyzed the ideas each group developed for boosting tourism, they found that the diverse groups had come up with more feasible and effective possibilities. Participants may have enjoyed being in a group with similar others, but their performance was strongest when in a diverse group. These findings are consistent with more general conclusions that although diversity—of all types, not just related to race—can sometimes come at the expense of a group's cohesiveness and morale, a diversity of backgrounds or perspectives often predicts improved performance in terms of group creativity, information sharing, and flexible problem solving (Phillips et al., 2004; Savitsky et al., 2016; Sommers, 2006).

There is no simple answer to the question of how diversity affects groups (Apfelbaum et al., 2014; Mannix & Neale, 2005; van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, & Homan, 2013). For that matter, as we just alluded to, there are many ways to define a group's diversity—in

Figure 9.1 Racial and Gender Diversity and Business Performance

To examine the relationship between a business's performance and its racial and gender diversity, Herring (2009) conducted a correlational study of more than 1,000 U.S. workplaces and found a positive association between both types of diversity with (a) sales revenue and (b) number of customers. These results indicate a positive relationship between diversity and a business's bottom line. But as you know, because these data are only correlational, we cannot draw conclusions here regarding one variable causing another.



terms of race and other social demographics, sure, but also diversity in terms of experience, education, attitude, and other dimensions. Increasingly, though, a variety of organizations seem to be betting on the positive potential of diversity. There is a reason why institutions such as universities, the military, and *Fortune 500* companies currently spend effort and resources to achieve diversity in their ranks: They believe that it will lead to improved performance, whether in terms of the learning environment or the corporate bottom line (Herring, 2009; Page, 2008). Figure 9.1 suggests that—in correlational terms at least—they are often right. Similarly, in a recent experimental study using a stock market simulation, researchers found that traders

randomly assigned to an ethnically diverse marketplace made better, more accurate decisions about how to price stocks than did equally experienced traders assigned to a homogeneous market, supporting the conclusion that the friction caused by diversity can upend conformity and improve decision making (Levine et al., 2015).

#trending

Diversity Research and the Affirmative Action Controversy

With some regularity, the U.S. Supreme Court has heard cases involving the use of affirmative action in college admissions. Most recently, in 2016, the Court issued its ruling in *Fisher v. University of Texas*, in which a White student, Abigail Fisher, had argued that the university's policy of taking into consideration an applicant's race—as one among many demographic, academic, and extracurricular factors—was unconstitutional. The Court ruled in favor of the University of Texas's policy, and against Fisher, but by no means will this be the final word in the legal machinations surrounding affirmative action in college admissions.

There are, of course, many arguments that colleges and universities make in favor of factoring race and ethnicity into admissions decisions. The justifications offered for affirmative action typically include righting historical wrongs and overcoming current obstacles to equal access for all demographic groups. Opponents of affirmative action sometimes argue that such policies are unfair and that admissions should be based solely on “objective criteria” such as test scores and GPA. But at the heart of the affirmative action debate resides a critical, social psychological question: what are the effects of a diverse student body on social and academic outcomes?

In one investigation, Gaither and Sommers (2013) followed roommate pairs over the course of their first year of college. These roommates had been assigned at random by their university housing office, resulting in both same-race pairs and

interracial pairs. After one semester, White students who lived with an other-race roommate reported having a more diverse set of friends than did Whites who had a White roommate. In a follow-up study, Whites assigned to a non-White roommate were found to be less anxious and warmer during a laboratory conversation with a non-White stranger, suggesting that diverse living arrangements also affected students' more general social tendencies in new situations.

What about the effects of campus diversity on students of color? In another roommate study, Shook and Clay (2012) found that minority students randomly assigned to an interracial roommate pairing reported an increased sense of belonging on campus after one semester. And in terms of academic outcomes, minority students completed their first year with a higher GPA when they had been part of an interracial roommate pair, in large part because of the aforementioned increased sense of belonging at the university.

There is no question that affirmative action is a complex issue. And as you read previously in this chapter, the effects of a group's diversity on its performance are also complicated. Studies of college roommates have indicated, though, that there is some empirical evidence to support the claim of college and university admissions offices that the potential exists for a diverse student body to predict a variety of positive social and academic outcomes on campus.

Review Questions

1. Which of the following is *not* an example of a group?
 - a. Six students studying together for an exam
 - b. The 12-person cast of a musical theater production
 - c. A four-person work team collaborating on a project via Web conferencing
 - d. Seven commuters waiting together silently at a bus stop
2. One reason people join groups is to
 - a. avoid having to deal with normative social influence.
 - b. accomplish objectives that are more difficult or impossible to accomplish alone.
 - c. decrease their cohesiveness.
 - d. avoid well-defined social roles.
3. Group cohesiveness is particularly important for a group when
 - a. the group has formed for primarily social reasons.
 - b. the group's primary objective is problem solving.
 - c. the group is diverse in terms of gender but not when it is diverse in terms of race.
 - d. financial decision making is involved.
4. From an evolutionary perspective, groups
 - a. are more productive when they have two or three members as opposed to when they are larger.
 - b. help fulfill a basic human need to affiliate and belong with others.
 - c. often lead to immoral behavior, such as that observed among abusive prison guards.
 - d. are better able than individuals to avoid the influence of social norms.
5. With the redistricting of the school system, Coach Taylor's football team for the upcoming season is more diverse than usual, with kids from a wide range of backgrounds, including socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, family status, sexual orientation, and even football experience. Research suggests which of the following conclusions regarding a diverse group such as this?
 - a. His team will definitely win more games than will less diverse teams.
 - b. His team will likely experience deficits in performance, creativity, and problem solving when compared to less diverse teams.
 - c. His team is likely to experience threats to morale and group cohesion, but these challenges will probably lessen as the season goes on.
 - d. His team will avoid relying on clear social roles.

Individual Behavior in a Group Setting

LO 9.2 Describe how individuals perform differently when others are around.

Thus far, we have focused on why people join groups and how groups function. But another question we might ask is, what are the effects of being in a group on the performance of individual people? Do you act differently when others are around? When do we “choke” under the pressure of having people watching us? When does having other people around lead us to raise our game and perform better than usual? Simply being in the presence of other people can have a variety of interesting effects on our behavior. We will begin by looking at how a group affects your performance on something with which you are no doubt very familiar—taking a test in a class.

Social Facilitation: When the Presence of Others Energizes Us

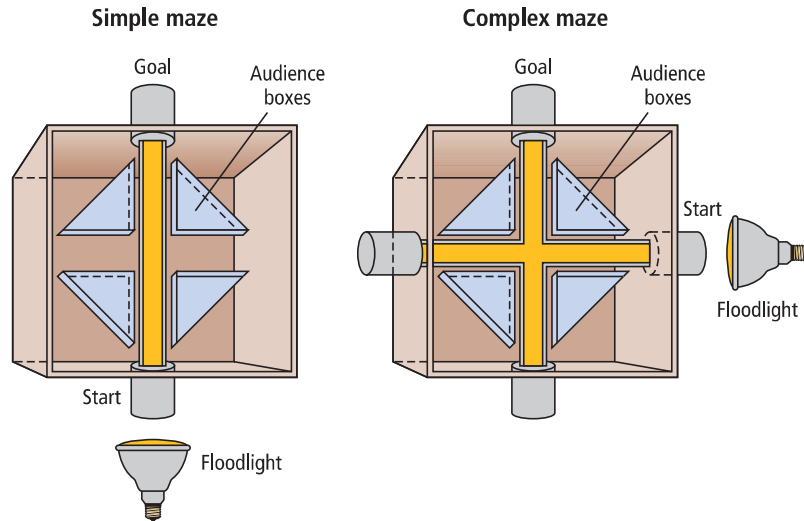
It is time for the final exam in your psychology class. You have spent hours studying the material, and you feel ready. When you arrive, you see that the exam is scheduled in a tiny room already packed with students. You squeeze into an empty desk, elbow to elbow with your classmates. The professor arrives and says that if any students are bothered by the close quarters, they can take the test by themselves in one of several smaller rooms down the hall. What should you do?

The question is whether being with others will affect your performance (Guerin, 1993; Monfardini et al., 2016; Zajonc, 1965). The presence of other people can mean one of two things: (a) performing a task with coworkers who are doing the same thing you are or (b) performing a task in front of an audience that is not doing anything but

Figure 9.2 Cockroaches and Social Facilitation

In the maze on the left, cockroaches had a simple task: to go from the starting point down the runway to the darkened box. They performed this feat faster when other roaches were watching than when they were alone. In the maze on the right, the cockroaches had a more difficult task. It took them longer to solve this maze when other roaches were watching than when they were alone.

(Based on data in Zajonc, Heingartner, & Herman, 1969)



observing you. Note that the question is a basic one about the effects of the mere presence of others, even if they are not part of a group that is interacting. Does the simple fact that other people are around you make a difference, even if you never speak or interact with them in any way?

To answer this question, we need to talk about insects—cockroaches, in fact. Believe it or not, a classic study using cockroaches as research subjects helps us answer the question of how you should opt to take your psychology test. Robert Zajonc and his colleagues (Zajonc, Heingartner, & Herman, 1969) built a contraption to see how a cockroach's behavior was influenced by the presence of its peers. The researchers placed a bright light (which cockroaches dislike) at the end of a runway and timed how long it took a roach to escape the light by running to the other end, where it could scurry into a darkened box (see the left side of Figure 9.2). The question was, did roaches perform this simple feat faster when they were by themselves or when they were in the presence of other cockroaches?

You might be wondering how the researchers managed to persuade other cockroaches to be spectators. They simply placed other roaches in clear plastic boxes next to the runway. These roaches were in the bleachers, so to speak, observing the solitary cockroach do its thing (see Figure 9.2). As predicted, the individual cockroaches performed the task faster when other roaches were there watching than when they were by themselves.

We would not give advice on how you should take your psychology test based only on one study of cockroaches. But the story does not end here. Dozens of studies have been done on the effects of the mere presence of others, involving human beings as well as other species, such as ants and birds (Demolliens et al., 2017; Krasheninnikova & Schneider, 2014; Sharma et al., 2010). The findings of these studies are consistent: As long as the task is a relatively simple, well-learned one—as escaping a light is for cockroaches—the mere presence of others improves performance.

Research on social facilitation finds that people do better on a well-learned task when in the presence of others than when they are alone. If students have studied hard and know the material well, they might be better off taking an exam in a room with lots of other people.



SIMPLE VERSUS DIFFICULT TASKS Before concluding that you should stay in the crowded classroom to take your exam, we need to consider a different set of findings. Remember that we said that the presence of others enhances performance on *simple, well-learned* tasks, like cockroaches escaping a light. What happens when we give people a more difficult task to do and place them in the presence of others? To find out, Zajonc and his colleagues (1969) included another condition in the cockroach experiment. This time, the cockroaches had to solve a maze that had several runways, only one of which led to the darkened box (see the right side of Figure 9.2). When working on this more difficult task, the opposite pattern of results occurred: The roaches took *longer* to solve it when other roaches were present than when they were alone. Many other studies have also found that people and animals do worse in the presence of others when the task is difficult (Aiello & Douthitt, 2001; Augustinova & Ferrand, 2012; Geen, 1989).

AROUSAL AND THE DOMINANT RESPONSE In an influential article, Zajonc (1965) offered an elegant theoretical explanation for why the presence of others facilitates a well-learned response but inhibits a less practiced or new response. He argued that the presence of others increases physiological arousal (i.e., our bodies become more energized). When such arousal exists, it is easier to perform a dominant response (e.g., something we're good at) but harder to do something complex or learn something new. Consider, for example, a behavior that is second nature to you, such as riding a bicycle or writing your name. Arousal caused by the presence of other people watching you should make it even easier to perform these well-learned tasks. But let's say you have to do something more complex, such as learning a new sport or working on a difficult math problem. Now arousal will lead you to feel flustered and do less well than if you were alone (Schmitt et al., 1986). This phenomenon became known as **social facilitation**, which is the tendency for people to do better on simple tasks and worse on complex tasks when they are in the presence of others and their individual performance can be evaluated.

WHY THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS CAUSES AROUSAL Why does the presence of others lead to arousal? Researchers have developed three theories to explain the role of arousal in social facilitation: Other people cause us to become particularly alert and vigilant, they make us apprehensive about how we're being evaluated, and they distract us from the task at hand.

The first explanation suggests that the presence of other people makes us more alert. When we are by ourselves reading a book, we don't have to pay attention to anything but the book; we don't have to worry that the lamp will ask us a question. When someone else is in the room, however, we have to be alert to the possibility that he or she will do something that requires us to respond. Because other people are less predictable than lamps, we are in a state of greater alertness in their presence. This alertness, or vigilance, causes mild arousal. The beauty of this explanation is that it explains both the animal and the human studies. A solitary cockroach need not worry about what the cockroach in the next room is doing; however, it needs to be alert when in the presence of another member of its species—and the same goes for human beings.

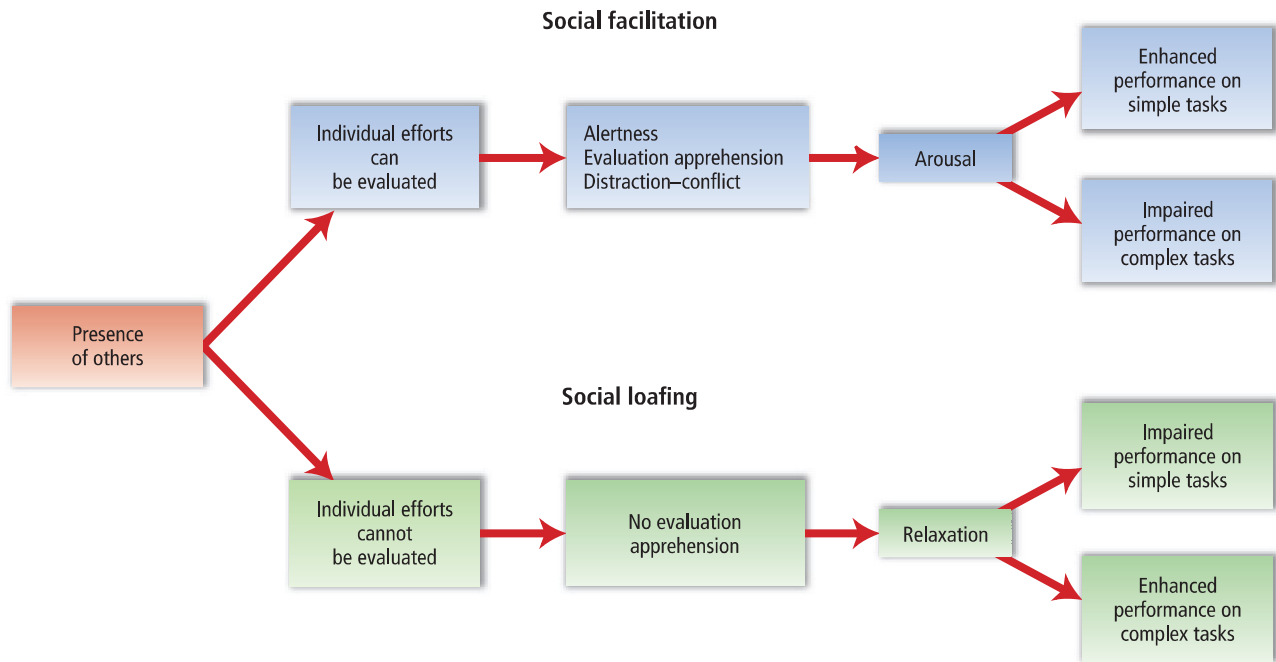
The second explanation focuses on the fact that unlike cockroaches, people are often concerned about how others are evaluating them. When other people can see how you are doing, the stakes are raised: You feel as if the other people are evaluating you; you will be embarrassed if you do poorly and pleased if you do well. This concern about being judged, called *evaluation apprehension*, can cause arousal. According to this view, then, it is not the mere presence of others but rather the presence of others who are evaluating us that causes arousal and subsequent social facilitation (Blascovich et al., 1999; Muller & Butera, 2007).

Social Facilitation

When people are in the presence of others and their individual performance can be evaluated, the tendency to perform better on simple tasks and worse on complex tasks

Figure 9.3 Social Facilitation and Social Loafing

The presence of others can lead to social facilitation or social loafing. The important variables that distinguish the two are evaluation, arousal, and the complexity of the tasks.



The third explanation centers on how distracting other people can be (Feinberg & Aiello, 2006; Muller, Atzeni, & Fabrizio, 2004). It is similar to Zajonc's (1980) notion that we need to be alert when in the presence of others, except that it focuses on the idea that any source of distraction—be it the presence of other people or noise from the party going on in the apartment upstairs—will put us in a state of conflict because it is difficult to pay attention to two things at the same time. This divided attention produces arousal, as any student knows who has ever tried to get work done in the presence of a roommate who is listening to loud music, talking on the phone, or otherwise making it hard to focus. Consistent with this interpretation, nonsocial sources of distraction, such as a flashing light, can cause the same kinds of social facilitation effects as the presence of other people (Baron, 1986).

We have summarized research on social facilitation in the top half of Figure 9.3 (we will discuss the bottom half in a moment). This figure illustrates that there is more than one reason why the presence of other people is arousing. The consequences of this arousal, however, are the same: When you are around other people, you do better on tasks that are simple and well learned, but you do worse on tasks that are complex and require you to learn something new. Where, then, should you take your psychology exam? We recommend that you stay in the regular classroom, assuming you know the material well, so that it is relatively simple for you to recall it. But when you study for an exam—that is, when you learn new material—you should do so by yourself, away from other people.

Social Loafing: When the Presence of Others Relaxes Us

When you take your psychology exam, your individual efforts will be evaluated (i.e., you will be graded on the test). This is typical of the research on social facilitation: People are working on something either alone or in the presence of others, and their individual efforts are easily evaluated. Often when you are in the presence

of others, however, your individual efforts cannot be distinguished from those of the people around you. Such is the case when you clap after a concert (no one can tell how loudly you as an individual are clapping) or when you play an instrument in a marching band (your instrument blends in with all the others).

These situations are the opposite of the social facilitation settings we have just considered. In social facilitation, the presence of others puts the spotlight on you, making you aroused. But if being with other people means we can merge into a group, becoming less noticeable than when we are alone, we should become relaxed. Because no one can tell how well we are doing, we should feel less evaluation apprehension. What happens then? Will this relaxation produced by becoming lost in the crowd lead to better or worse performance? Again, the answer depends on whether we are working on a simple, unimportant task or a complex task.

The question of how working with others would influence performance on a basic task was first studied in the 1880s by a French agricultural engineer, Max Ringelmann (1913). He found that when a group pulled on a rope, each individual exerted less effort than when doing so alone. In other words, eight individuals pulling on the rope did not exert eight times the force as one person pulling alone. A century later, social psychologists Bibb Latané, Kipling Williams, and Stephen Harkins (2006) called this **social loafing**, which is the tendency for people to relax when they are in the presence of others and their individual performance cannot be evaluated, such that they do worse on simple tasks that they don't care about but better on complex tasks that are important to them. Social loafing in groups has since been found on a variety of simple tasks, such as clapping your hands, cheering loudly, and thinking of as many uses for an object as you can (Karau & Williams, 2001; Lount & Wilk, 2014; Shepperd & Taylor, 1999).

What about complex tasks? Recall that when performance in a group cannot be identified, people become more relaxed. Recall also our earlier discussion of the effects of arousal on performance: Arousal enhances performance on simple tasks but impairs performance on complex tasks. By the same reasoning, becoming relaxed impairs performance on simple tasks—as we have just seen—but can improve performance on complex tasks (Jackson & Williams, 1985). This process is illustrated in the bottom part of Figure 9.3.

Gender and Cultural Differences in Social Loafing: Who Slacks Off the Most?

Kate and William are working with several classmates on a class project, and no one will be able to assess their individual contributions. Who is more likely to slack off and let the other do most of the work: Kate or William? If you said William, you are probably right. In a review of more than 150 studies of social loafing, the tendency to loaf was found



Sometimes being surrounded by others allows us to slack off (or “loaf”), demonstrating that there’s not a single, simple answer to the question of how the presence of other people affects individual performance.

Social Loafing

When people are in the presence of others and their individual performance cannot be evaluated, the tendency to perform worse on simple or unimportant tasks but better on complex or important tasks

Watch SOCIAL LOAFING



to be stronger in men than in women (Karau & Williams, 1993). Women tend to be higher than men in *relational interdependence*, which is the tendency to focus on and care about personal relationships with other individuals. Perhaps it is this focus that makes women less likely to engage in social loafing when in groups (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999).

Research has also found that the tendency to loaf is stronger in Western cultures than Asian cultures, which may be due to the different self-definitions prevalent in these cultures (Karau & Williams, 1993). Asians are more likely to have an *interdependent view of the self*, which is a way of defining oneself in terms of relationships to other people. This self-definition may reduce the tendency toward social loafing when in groups. We should not, however, exaggerate these gender and cultural differences. Women and members of Asian cultures do engage in social loafing when in groups; they are just less relatively likely to do so than men or members of Western cultures (Chang & Chen, 1995; Hong, Wyer, & Fong, 2008). Moreover, the composition of the entire group is an important consideration: Research indicates that people are more likely to loaf when they expect to work together with team members from a different culture (Meyer, Schermuly, & Kauffeld, 2016). This seems to occur because we more easily develop bonds and a sense of accountability to similar others, and also come to expect less cooperation from dissimilar others.

To summarize, you need to know two things to predict whether the presence of others will help or hinder your performance: whether your individual efforts can be evaluated and whether the task is simple or complex. If your performance can be evaluated, the presence of others will make you alert and aroused. This will lead to social facilitation effects, where people do better on simple tasks but worse on complex tasks (see the top of Figure 9.3). If your efforts cannot be evaluated (i.e., you are one cog in a machine), you are likely to become more relaxed. This leads to social loafing effects, where people do worse on simple tasks that they don't care about but better on complex ones (see the bottom of Figure 9.3).

These findings have numerous implications for the way in which groups should be organized. On the one hand, if you are a manager who wants your employees to work on a relatively simple problem, a little evaluation apprehension is not such a bad thing—it may very well improve performance. You shouldn't place your employees in groups where their individual performance cannot be observed because lowered performance on simple tasks is likely to result due to social loafing. On the other hand, if you want your employees to work on a difficult, complex task, then lowering their evaluation apprehension—by placing them in groups in which their individual performance cannot be observed—is likely to result in better performance.

Deindividuation

The loosening of normal constraints on behavior when people can't be identified (such as when they are in a crowd)

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Deindividuation: Getting Lost in the Crowd

The consequences of feeling anonymous can be much more serious than loafing on a group task, however. Being in a group can also cause **deindividuation**, which is the loosening of normal constraints on behavior when people can't be identified (Lea, Spears, & de Groot, 2001). In other words, getting lost in a crowd can lead to an unleashing of behaviors that we would never dream of exhibiting by ourselves. Throughout history, there have been many examples of groups of

people committing horrendous acts that few individuals would do on their own, such as military atrocities; acts of looting, arson, and violence; hysterical fans at rock concerts trampling each other to death; and other examples sometimes referred to more colloquially as resulting from a “mob mentality.”

One particularly troubling example in the United States is the shameful history of Whites—often cloaked in the anonymity of hooded robes—lynching African Americans. Brian Mullen (1986) content-analyzed newspaper accounts of 60 lynchings committed between 1899 and 1946 and discovered that the more people there were in the mob in question, the greater the savagery and viciousness with which they killed their victims. Similar results were observed by Robert Watson (1973), who studied 24 cultures and found that warriors who hid their identities before going into battle—for example, by using face and body paint—were significantly more likely to kill, torture, or mutilate captive prisoners than were warriors who did not hide their identities.

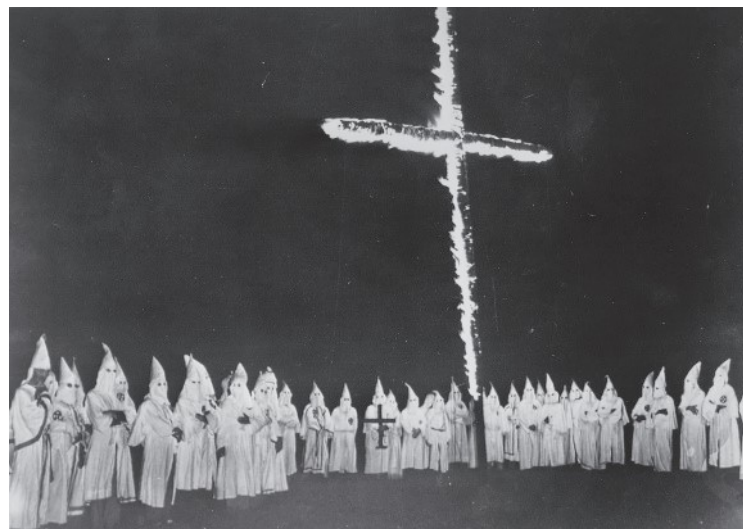
DEINDIVIDUATION MAKES PEOPLE FEEL LESS ACCOUNTABLE Why does deindividuation lead to and exacerbate impulsive (often violent) acts? One reason is that people feel less accountable for their actions when they recognize there is a reduced likelihood that they can be singled out and blamed for their behavior (Diener, 1980; Postmes & Spears, 1998; Zimbardo, 1970). In Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for example, a mob of White southerners assembled to lynch Tom Robinson, a Black man accused (falsely) of rape. Here is a classic case of deindividuation: It was night, the men were dressed alike, and it was difficult to tell one from another. But then Scout, the 8-year-old daughter of Robinson’s attorney, Atticus, recognized one of the farmers and greeted him by name. She unwittingly performed a brilliant social psychological intervention by making the mob feel more like individuals who were accountable for their actions. And, indeed, the mob disbanded and went home.

DEINDIVIDUATION INCREASES OBEDIENCE TO GROUP NORMS In a meta-analysis of more than 60 studies, researchers found that becoming deindividuated also increases the extent to which people obey the group’s norms (Postmes & Spears, 1998). Sometimes the norms of a specific group to which we belong conflict with the norms of other groups or of society at large. When these group members are together and deindividuated, they become more likely to act according to the group norms than societal norms. Thus, it is not just that deindividuation reduces the likelihood that one person will stand out and be blamed, but also that it increases adherence to the local group’s norms (Reicher et al., 2016).

Consequently, deindividuation does not always lead to aggressive or antisocial behavior; it depends on what the group’s norm is. Imagine that you are at a rowdy party at which everyone is dancing wildly to loud music. To the extent that you feel deindividuated—it is dark, and you are dressed similarly to other people—you are more likely to join the group and let loose on the dance floor, rather than if the room was bright and no one was dancing. Thus, it is the specific norm of the group that determines whether deindividuation will lead to positive or negative behaviors (Hirsh, Galinsky, & Zhong, 2011; Johnson & Downing, 1979). If the group is angry and the norm is to act violently, deindividuation will make people in the group act aggressively. If we are at a party and the norm is to eat a lot, being deindividuated will simply increase the likelihood that we eat the entire bowl of guacamole.

DEINDIVIDUATION ONLINE Deindividuation doesn’t require face-to-face contact. In fact, it thrives with less physical forms of interaction. Anyone who has ever read the comments

The robes and hoods of the Ku Klux Klan cloak its members in anonymity; their violent behavior is consistent with research on deindividuation.





Beginning in 2014, several women video game developers and journalists—including media critic Anita Sarkeesian, pictured above—were targeted by vicious online attacks and false accusations in what quickly became known as “Gamergate.” The sexist and often violent harassment was usually perpetrated by anonymous individuals, demonstrating once again that the phenomenon of the internet “troll” is a modern example of deindividuation.

section at the bottom of online article, blog, or YouTube clip has witnessed deindividuation at work, whereby people feel less inhibited about what they write because of their anonymity. In many respects, the internet is ideal terrain for the emergence of deindividuation (Coles & West, 2016; Lee, 2004). Given how quickly many online forums deteriorate into strings of insulting “trolling” or obscene comments, numerous sites have moved away from allowing anonymous participation, now requiring users to sign in with a social media account or other identifying information before they are allowed to post.

In the pre-internet era, angry readers and others seeking to stir up debate would have written letters to a newspaper editor or vented their feelings to coworkers at the watercooler. In both cases, their discourse would have likely been more civil, free of the profanities used in many online forums, in large part because people are not anonymous in such settings. Online anonymous communication does have certain advantages

in terms of free and open discussion of difficult topics. But there is also a cost, namely, an apparent reduction in common civility. And one of the chief culprits responsible is deindividuation.

The good news? Perhaps understanding deindividuation can also help combat online trolling and make the internet a more civilized—at least slightly—place. In a recent study, Kathleen Van Royen and her colleagues (2017) tried out a series of potential interventions with adolescents active on social media. Specifically, the participants in this study were presented with a scenario in which a hypothetical user had posted about another girl who had “stolen” her boyfriend. The researchers were particularly interested in those participants who reported that they would be likely, in such a scenario, to respond by calling the other girl offensive names like “slut” and “whore.”

One intervention message they tried with one group of youth who said they were likely to use this type of language was a reminder that such comments could be read by their parents. Another intervention told participants that many other people would disapprove of such comments. And yet another reminded participants that this sort of comment could be hurtful for the girl it targeted. Any of these three warning messages decreased a teenager’s reported likelihood of going through with the sexist post, but particularly effective was the reminder that one’s parents might read the offensive language. Why? Because it emphasized other influential norms, those related to family. And, presumably, because it also reminded participants of their own, unique personal identity.

Review Questions

1. The concept of *social facilitation* is so named because of the idea that when the presence of others is arousing,
 - a. this arousal facilitates better task performance.
 - b. this arousal facilitates a well-learned, dominant response.
 - c. hard tasks are facilitated, but easy tasks are impeded.
 - d. deindividuation is facilitated.
2. Which of the following is *not* an explanation for why the presence of other people can be arousing?
 - a. The presence of other people is distracting and causes conflict, as individuals have to decide what they should pay attention to.
 - b. When other people are around, an individual has to be on alert in anticipation of what might happen next.

- c. When other people are around, individuals become more concerned about how they are being evaluated.
 - d. Having other people around makes an individual feel less accountable for his or her own actions.
3. Your social psychology professor calls you up to the front of the classroom and asks you to answer a series of course-related questions out loud. Even though you feel the eyes of your classmates on you, you find the questions to be easy. According to the model of _____, you should perform _____ on these questions than you would have if you had been asked them in private, without an audience.
- a. social facilitation; worse
 - b. social facilitation; better
 - c. social loafing; worse
 - d. social loafing; better
4. Which of the following individuals would you expect to be most likely to engage in social loafing?
- a. Serena, an American woman
 - b. Li, a Chinese woman
 - c. Andy, a British man
 - d. Kei, a Japanese man
5. Individuals experiencing deindividuation
- a. feel increasingly accountable for their actions.
 - b. exhibit greater conformity to specific group norms.
 - c. are less likely to engage in destructive or immoral behavior.
 - d. are unlikely to experience this feeling online, as deindividuation is much less common in virtual environments.

Group Decisions: Are Two (or More) Heads Better Than One?

LO 9.3 Compare the decision-making outcomes of individuals versus groups, and explain the impact of leadership in group outcomes.

We have just seen that the presence of other people influences individual behavior in a number of interesting ways. We turn now to one of the major functions of groups: making decisions. Many important decisions are made by groups because it is assumed that groups are better decision makers than individuals. In the American judicial system, for example, most verdicts are determined by groups (juries), not individuals. The U.S. Supreme Court is made up of nine justices, not just one. Similarly, governmental and corporate decisions are often made by groups of people who meet to discuss the issues; U.S. presidents have a cabinet and the National Security Council to advise them.

Is it true that two (or more) heads are better than one? Most of us assume the answer is yes. A lone individual may be subject to all sorts of whims and biases, whereas several people together can exchange ideas, catch each other's errors, and reach better decisions. We have all taken part in group decisions in which we listened to someone else and thought to ourselves, "Hmm, that's a really good point; I never would have thought of that." In general, groups can perform better than individuals when group members freely contribute independent opinions from a variety of viewpoints, if people are motivated to search for the answer that is best for the entire group and not just for themselves, or when they rely on group members' unique areas of expertise (De Dreu, Nijstad, & van Knippenberg, 2008; Surowiecki, 2004). Sometimes, though, two or more heads are not better than one—or at least no better than two heads working alone (Kerr & Tindale, 2004). Several factors can cause groups to make worse decisions than individuals would.

Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving

One potential problem is that a group can perform well only if the most expert or talented members can convince the others that they are

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Process Loss

Any aspect of group interaction that inhibits good problem solving

right. This is not always easy, given that many of us bear a strong resemblance to mules when it comes to admitting we are wrong. You undoubtedly know what it's like to try to convince a group to follow your idea, be faced with opposition and disbelief, and then have to sit there and watch the group make the wrong decision. This is an example of **process loss**, which is any aspect of group interaction that inhibits good problem solving (Steiner, 1972; Tidikis & Ash, 2013). Process loss can occur for a number of reasons. Groups might not try hard enough to find out who the most competent members are and instead rely on someone who really doesn't know what he or she is talking about. Perhaps the most competent members find it difficult to disagree with everyone else in the group. Other causes of process loss involve communication problems, such as failure to listen or one person being allowed to dominate the discussion while others tune out (Sorkin, Hays, & West, 2001; Watson et al., 1998).

FAILURE TO SHARE UNIQUE INFORMATION Suppose you are meeting with three other people to decide whether to support a particular candidate for Student Senate president. You all know some of the same things about the candidate (you have "shared" information), such as the fact that she was president of her sophomore class and is an economics major. But each of you also has information that only you know (i.e., "unique" information). Maybe you are the only one who knows that she was punished for underage drinking in her first-year dorm, whereas one of the other group members is the only one who knows that she volunteers every week at a local homeless shelter. Obviously, the four of you will make the best decision if you share with each other everything you know about the candidate.

But there is a funny thing about groups: They tend to focus on the information they already collectively share, talking less about facts known to only some members of the group (McLeod, 2013; Toma & Butera, 2009; Lu, Yuan, & McLeod, 2012). One study, for example, used a situation similar to the one we have just described, in which students decided who among several candidates was most qualified to be student body president (Stasser & Titus, 1985). In the shared information condition, groups of four participants were given the same packet of information to read, all of which indicated that Candidate A was the best choice for office. Not surprisingly, when the groups met to discuss the candidates, almost all of the members chose Candidate A. In the unique information condition, each participant in the group received a different packet of information. All participants learned that Candidate A had the same four negative qualities, but each learned that Candidate A also had two unique positive qualities—that is, positive qualities that were different from those listed in other participants' packets. Thus, if the four participants shared with each other the information in their packets, they would learn that Candidate A had a total of eight positive qualities and four negative qualities. Instead, most of the groups in the unique information condition never realized that Candidate A had more good than bad qualities because they focused on the information they already shared collectively rather than on the information they did not. As a result, few of these groups chose Candidate A.

Subsequent research has focused on ways to get groups to focus more on unique information (Scholten et al., 2007; Toma & Butera, 2015). Unique information is more likely to be brought up later in the discussion, suggesting that group discussions should last long enough to get beyond what everyone already knows (Fraudin, 2004; Larson et al., 1998). It also helps to tell group members not to share what their initial preferences are at the outset of the discussion; if they do, they will focus less on unique, unshared information (Mojzisch & Schulz-Hardt, 2010). Another approach is to assign different group members to specific areas of expertise so that they know that they alone are responsible for certain types of information (Stasser, Vaughn, & Stewart, 2000; Stewart & Stasser, 1995).

This last lesson has been learned by many couples, who know to rely on each other's memories for different kinds of information. One party might be responsible for

remembering the times of social engagements, whereas the other might be responsible for remembering when to pay the bills. When the combined memory of a group is more efficient than the memory of its individual members, we call it **transactive memory** (Peltokorpi, 2008; Rajaram & Pereira-Pasarin, 2010; Wegner, 1995). By learning to specialize their memories and knowing what their partner is responsible for, couples often do quite well in remembering important information. The same can be true of groups if they develop a system whereby different people are responsible for remembering different parts of a task (Ellis, Porter, & Wolverson, 2008; Lewis et al., 2007; Mell, van Knippenberg, & van Ginkel, 2014). In sum, the tendency for groups to fail to consider important unique information can be overcome if people learn who is responsible for what kinds of information and take the time to discuss these unshared data (Stasser, 2000).

GROUPTHINK: MANY HEADS, ONE MIND Earlier we mentioned that group cohesiveness can get in the way of clear thinking and good decision making. Using real-world events, Irving Janis (1972, 1982) developed an influential theory of group decision making that he called **groupthink**, a kind of thinking in which maintaining group cohesiveness and solidarity is more important than considering the facts in a realistic manner. According to Janis's theory, groupthink is most likely to occur when certain preconditions are met, such as when the group is highly cohesive, isolated from contrary opinions, and ruled by a directive leader.

Many a presidential decision gone awry has been chalked up to groupthink. Janis (1982) himself famously cited as an example the ill-fated decision of President John F. Kennedy and his advisers to try to overthrow Cuban leader Fidel Castro via the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. Some have suggested that President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was an example of groupthink. More recently, as discussed in the opening of this chapter, one might argue that the surprise failure of Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign also exhibited telltale signs of groupthink, as she and her team of advisers seemed to assume from the start that they had the election in the bag, sometimes turning away voices (and data) that went against that narrative.

None of these decisions can be reduced to just one explanation. But they all seem to meet many of the circumstances likely to elicit groupthink: tight-knit, homogeneous groups following the lead of a confident individual who made clear what he or she thought was the best course of action. Consider, for example, this assessment from Bush's former press secretary, Scott McClellan, who wrote that once the president made his view known, "it was rarely questioned" because "that is what Bush expected and made known to his top advisers" (McClellan, 2008, p. 128). The antecedents, or preconditions, of groupthink can be found on the left of Figure 9.4. Originally, it was believed that all of these preconditions had to be met for groupthink to occur; today, however, researchers propose that groupthink can occur even when only a few are present (Baron, 2005; Henningsen et al., 2006; Mok & Morris, 2010).

When preconditions of groupthink are met, several symptoms appear (see center box of Figure 9.4). The group begins to feel that it is invulnerable and can do no wrong. People exercise self-censorship, failing to voice contrary views because they are afraid of dampening the group's morale or because they fear being criticized by others. If anyone does voice a contrary viewpoint, the rest of the group is quick to criticize, pressuring the

Transactive Memory

The combined memory of a group that is more efficient than the memory of the individual members

Groupthink

A kind of decision process in which maintaining group cohesiveness and solidarity is more important than considering the facts in a realistic manner

Henry Martin/The New Yorker
Collection/The Cartoon Bank

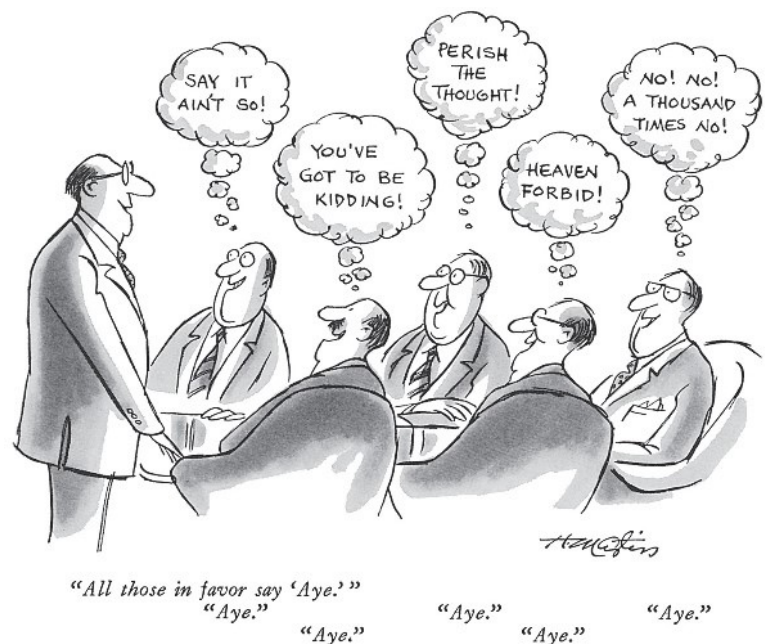
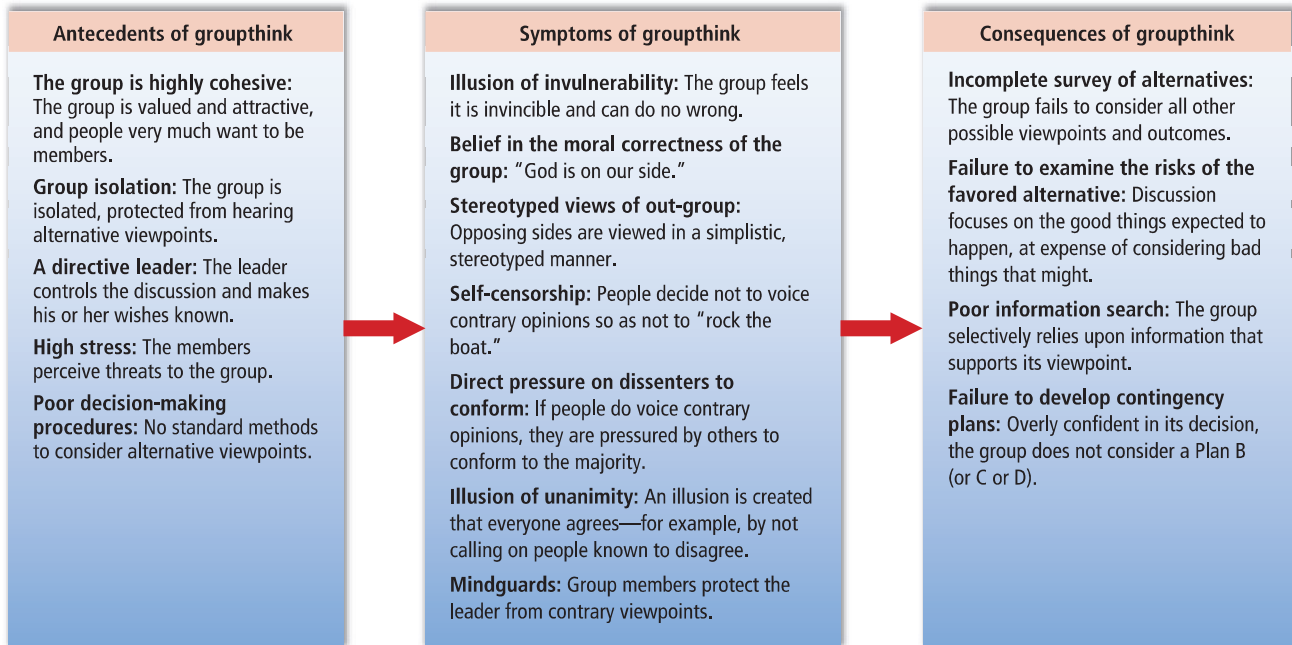


Figure 9.4 Groupthink: Antecedents, Symptoms, and Consequences

Under some conditions, maintaining group cohesiveness and solidarity becomes more important to a group than considering the facts in a realistic manner (see “Antecedents”). When this happens, certain symptoms of groupthink occur, such as the illusion of invulnerability (see “Symptoms”). These symptoms lead to defective decision making.

(Based on data in Janis & Mann, 1977)



person to conform to the majority view. This kind of behavior creates an illusion of unanimity where it looks as if everyone agrees, even if, under the surface, they privately do not.

The perilous state of groupthink leads to an inferior decision-making process (Packer, 2009; Tetlock et al., 1992; Turner et al., 2006). As seen on the right of Figure 9.4, the group does not consider the full range of alternatives, develop contingency plans, or adequately consider the risks of its preferred choice. Can you think of other real-life examples—presidential or more personal—of decisions that may have been plagued by groupthink?

Research has demonstrated that groups and their leaders can take several steps to make groupthink less likely (McCauley, 1989; Pratkanis & Turner, 2013; Zimbardo & Andersen, 1993):

- **Remain impartial.** A leader should not take a directive role but should remain impartial.
- **Seek outside opinions.** The group should invite outside opinions from people who are not members and who are thus less concerned with maintaining group cohesiveness.
- **Create subgroups.** A leader can divide the group into subgroups that first meet separately and then meet together to discuss their different recommendations.
- **Seek anonymous opinions.** A group might also take a secret ballot or ask members to write down their opinions anonymously; doing so ensures that people give their true opinions, uncensored by a fear of recrimination from the group.



The concept of groupthink has become widely known in the general culture, and writers and pundits alike have blamed it for many bad decisions. A *New York Times* article, for example, claimed that experts on the Federal Reserve Board should have predicted the mortgage-based financial crisis of 2007 but didn't because they exhibited symptoms of groupthink (Shiller, 2008).

Group Polarization: Going to Extremes

Okay, so groups sometimes make poor decisions. Surely, though, groups will usually make less risky decisions than a lone individual will. One individual might be willing to go all in on a risky proposition, but if others help make the decision, they will interject reason and moderation. Or will they? In examining the question of whether groups or individuals make riskier decisions, many initial studies found, surprisingly, that groups make riskier decisions than individuals do.

For example, in one study, people were asked to consider the following scenario: A low-ranked participant in a national chess tournament, playing an early match against a highly favored opponent, has the choice of whether to attempt a risky maneuver that might lead to quick victory if it is successful but almost certain defeat if it fails. When deciding alone, people said that the chess player should make the risky gambit only if there were at least a 30% chance of success. But after discussing the problem in a group, people said that the chess player should go for it even if there were only a 10% chance of success (Wallach, Kogan, & Bem, 1962). Findings such as these became known as the *risky shift*. But further research made clear that such shifts are not the full story. It turns out that groups tend to make decisions that are more extreme in the same direction as the initial predispositions of their members. So if the individual members of a group are already leaning toward a risky decision, group discussion will usually exaggerate that risky tendency. But when people are initially inclined to be conservative, groups tend to make even more conservative decisions than individuals do.

Consider this problem: Soo-Min, a young woman with two children, has a secure but low-paying job and no savings. Someone gives her a tip about a stock that will triple in value if the company's new product is successful but will plummet if the new product fails. Should Soo-Min sell her life insurance policy and invest in the company? Most people recommend a safe course of action here: Soo-Min should buy the stock only if the new product is very certain to succeed. When they talk it over in a group, they become even more conservative, deciding that the new product would have to have a nearly 100% chance of success before they would recommend that Soo-Min buy the stock. This tendency for groups to make decisions that are more extreme than the initial inclination of its members—toward greater risk if people's initial tendency is to be risky and toward greater caution if people's initial tendency is to be cautious—is known as **group polarization** (Brown, 1965; Keating, van Boven, & Judd, 2016; Palmer & Loveland, 2008).

Group polarization occurs for two main reasons. According to the *persuasive arguments* interpretation, all individuals bring to the group a set of arguments supporting their initial recommendation. One aspect of being in a group is that you might be exposed to persuasive arguments you hadn't thought of before. For example, in considering Soo-Min's investment strategy, one member of the group might stress that cashing in the life insurance policy is an unfair risk to Soo-Min's children should she die prematurely. Another group member might not have considered this possibility; thus, he or she becomes more conservative as well. A series of studies supports this interpretation of group polarization, whereby each member presents arguments that other members have not considered (Burnstein & Vinokur, 1977; El-Shinnawy & Vinze, 1998).

According to the *social comparison* interpretation, when people discuss an issue in a group, they first check out how everyone else feels. What does the group value: being risky or being cautious? In an effort to fit in and be liked, many people then take a position

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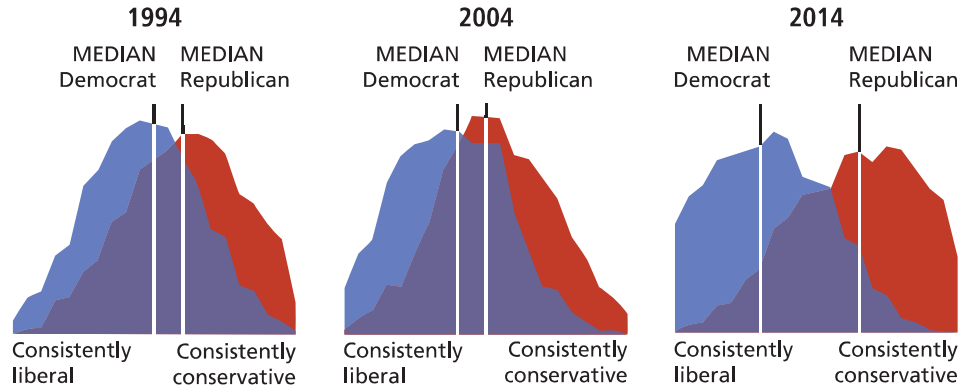


Group Polarization

The tendency for groups to make decisions that are more extreme than the initial inclinations of their members

Figure 9.5 Increasing Partisanship in America

Joining a group is likely to lead an individual's attitudes to become more extreme through group polarization. Though this process isn't inevitable, it appears we are becoming more politically polarized as a country. One contributing factor could be social media. Social media feeds tend to vary widely based on a user's stated preferences. Someone who has clicked "like" on the *New York Times*, NPR, and Planned Parenthood is likely to be exposed to a much more progressive/liberal feed of posts than someone who has "liked" Fox News, Ann Coulter, and the NRA. As such, these two individuals, who had very different attitudes to begin with, are likely to find themselves even further apart ideologically through processes of polarization, as demonstrated below by the change over two decades in how people rate their own political values on a 10-item scale.



(Adapted from Pew, 2014)

that is similar to everyone else's but even just a little bit more extreme. In this way, individuals support the group's values and also present themselves in a positive light—as "good" group members. For example, consider the alcohol-related attitudes of new college students. Those who arrive on campus positively inclined toward drinking may soon find themselves surrounded by similar others, their own attitudes shifting even further in a positive direction in order to fit in. Those wary of alcohol may also seek out and find like-minded friends, growing even more wary of drinking as the group's values become clear.

Both the persuasive arguments and the social comparison interpretations of group polarization have received research support (Boos et al., 2013; Brauer, Judd, & Gilner, 1995), though notably, individuals tend to underestimate just how polarizing being in a group can be (Keating et al., 2016). That is, we as individuals are often unaware of the polarizing effects that group membership has on our own attitudes, perceiving instead that our beliefs have remained unbiased and stable over time. For example, Figure 9.5 depicts the political polarization that has taken place in the U.S. over the past two decades.

Leadership in Groups

Another critical issue related to group decision making is the role of a leader. The question of what makes a great leader has intrigued psychologists, historians, and political scientists for some time (Fiedler, 1967; Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2013; Lord et al., 2017). One of the best-known answers to this question is the **great person theory**, which maintains that certain key personality traits make a person a good leader, regardless of the nature of the situation the leader faces.

If the great person theory is true, we ought to be able to isolate the key aspects of personality that make someone an effective leader. Is it a combination of intelligence, charisma, and courage? Is it better to be introverted or extroverted? Should we add a dollop of ruthlessness to the mix as well, as Niccolò Machiavelli suggested in 1513 in his famous treatise on leadership, *The Prince*? Or do highly moral people make the best leaders?

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONALITY People of all different personality types can become successful leaders. Compared to nonleaders, for example, leaders tend to be only slightly more intelligent, extraverted, charismatic, open to new experiences, confident,

Great Person Theory

The idea that certain key personality traits make a person a good leader, regardless of the situation

and assertive (Ames & Flynn, 2007; Judge et al., 2002; Van Vugt, 2006). Surprisingly few personality characteristics correlate strongly with leadership effectiveness, and the relationships that have been found tend to be modest (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; von Wittich & Antonakis, 2011). For example, Dean Simonton (1987, 2001) gathered information about 100 personal attributes of all U.S. presidents, such as their family backgrounds, educational experiences, occupations, and personalities. Tall presidents, those from small families, and those who had published books before taking office were most likely to become effective leaders, as rated by historians. The other 97 characteristics, including personality traits, were not related to leadership effectiveness at all.

LEADERSHIP STYLES Although great leaders may not have specific kinds of personalities, they do appear to adopt specific kinds of leadership styles. **Transactional leaders** set clear, short-term goals and reward people who meet them. **Transformational leaders**, on the other hand, inspire followers to focus on common, long-term goals (Bass, 1998; Haslam et al., 2013). So although transactional leaders do a good job of making things run smoothly, it is transformational leaders who think outside the box and inspire their followers to exert themselves to meet big-picture goals.

Interestingly, these leadership styles are not closely linked with personality traits; it is not as if people are “born to be” one type of leader or the other (Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004; Nielsen & Cleal, 2011). Further, these styles are not mutually exclusive; in fact, the most effective leader is one who adopts both styles (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). If no one was minding the day-to-day operation of an organization or people were not being rewarded for meeting short-term objectives, the organization would suffer. At the same time, it is important to have a charismatic leader who inspires people to think about long-term objectives.

THE RIGHT PERSON IN THE RIGHT SITUATION As you know by now, one of the most important tenets of social psychology is that, to understand behavior, it is not enough to consider personality alone—we must take the situation into account as well. For example, a business leader can be highly successful in some situations but not in others. Consider the late Steve Jobs, who, at age 21, founded Apple Computer with Stephen Wozniak. Jobs was anything but a traditional suit-and-tie corporate leader; he turned to computers only after experimenting with LSD, traveling to India, and living on a communal fruit farm. In the days when there were no personal computers, Jobs’s offbeat style was well suited to starting a new industry. Indeed, within 5 years, he had become the leader of a billion-dollar company.

But Jobs’s unorthodox style was ill suited to managing a large corporation in a competitive market. Apple’s earnings began to suffer, and in 1985 Jobs was forced out. Undeterred, Jobs cofounded Pixar in 1986, the first major company to make computer-generated animation, and then sold it to the Disney Company in 2006 for \$7.4 billion. And in the 1990s, Apple faced some of the same technological challenges it had at its inception, needing to revamp the operating system for its Macintosh computers and regain market share. Whom did Apple hire to lead this new challenge? Jobs, of course, whose ability to think creatively and inspire his workforce to take risks made him the right person to lead these companies in times when a new direction was called for.

A comprehensive theory of leadership thus needs to focus on the characteristics of the leader, the followers, and the situation. The best-known theory of this type is the **contingency theory of leadership**, which argues that leadership effectiveness depends both on how task oriented or relationship oriented the leader is and on the amount of control and influence the leader has over the group (Fiedler, 1967; Yukl,

Transactional Leaders

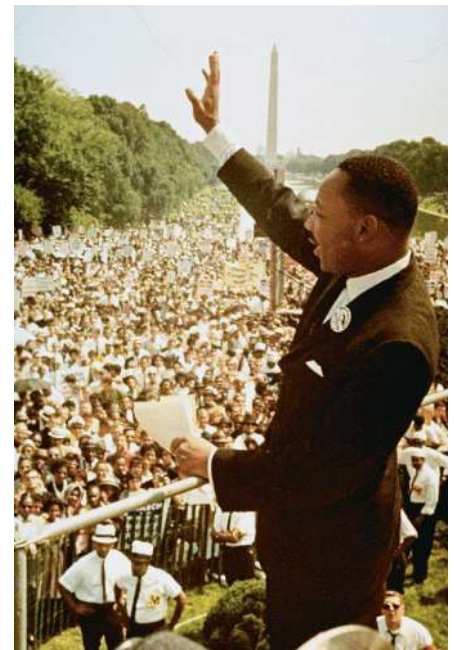
Leaders who set clear, short-term goals and reward people who meet them

Transformational Leaders

Leaders who inspire followers to focus on common, long-term goals

Contingency Theory of Leadership

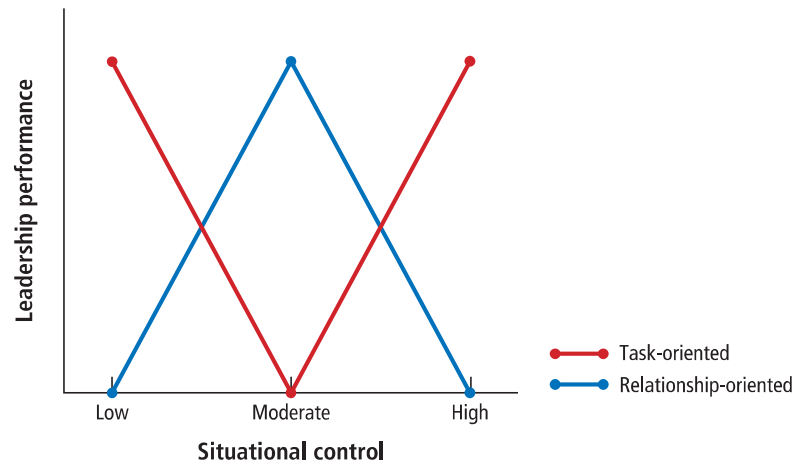
The idea that the effectiveness of a leader depends both on how task- or relationship-oriented the leader is and on the amount of control the leader has over the group



What determines whether someone, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., is a great leader? Is it a certain constellation of personality traits, or is it necessary to have the right person in the right situation at the right time?

Figure 9.6 Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership

According to Fiedler, task-oriented leaders perform best when situational control is high or low, whereas relationship-oriented leaders perform best when situational control is moderate.



Task-Oriented Leaders

Leaders who are concerned more with getting the job done than with workers' feelings and relationships

Relationship-Oriented Leaders

Leaders who are concerned more with workers' feelings and relationships

2011). There are basically two kinds of leaders, the theory argues: **task-oriented leaders**, who are concerned more with getting the job done than with workers' feelings and relationships, and **relationship-oriented leaders**, who are concerned more with workers' feelings and relationships.

Task-oriented leaders do well in *high-control work situations*, when the leader's position in the company is clearly perceived as powerful and the work needing to be done by the group is structured and well defined (e.g., a corporate manager with control over each worker's performance review and merit raise). They also do well in *low-control work situations*, when the leader is not perceived as powerful and the work needing to be done is not clearly defined (e.g., the supervisor of a newly formed group of volunteers). What about relationship-oriented leaders? They are most effective in *moderate-control work situations*. Under these conditions, the wheels are turning fairly smoothly, but important work still needs to be done; the leader who can promote strong relations between individual employees will be the most successful (see Figure 9.6). The contingency theory of leadership has been supported in studies of numerous types of leaders, including business managers, college administrators, and military commanders (Ayman, 2002; Chemers, 2000; Lord et al., 2017).

GENDER AND LEADERSHIP The U.S. workforce today is approximately half female. But are women as likely as men to become leaders in business, politics, and other organizations? Not yet, but this is changing. The barriers between women and high-level advancement are breaking down, with one vivid example being Hillary Clinton's historic run in 2016. Still, there is work to be done. In 2016, only 21 of the chief executive officers of *Fortune 500* companies were women, and the boards



If women seeking leadership roles conform to society's expectations about how they ought to behave, by being warm and communal, they are often perceived as having low leadership potential. If they become leaders and act in ways that leaders are expected to act—namely, in agentic, forceful ways—they are often perceived negatively.

of directors of U.S. companies included only 15% women (Catalyst, 2017). Things are not much different elsewhere. That 15% figure is actually among the highest in the world; among the few countries with higher rates include Norway (47%), Sweden (34%), France (34%), and Australia (23%). Taiwan (5%), South Korea (4%), and Japan (4%) came in at the low end of this survey. One reason why it is difficult for women to achieve leadership positions is that many people believe that good leaders have *agentic* traits (e.g., assertive, controlling, dominant, independent), which are traditionally associated with men. In contrast, women are stereotypically expected to be more

communal (e.g., concerned with the welfare of others, warm, helpful, affectionate). Thus, if women behave in the way they are “supposed” to behave, they are often viewed as having less leadership potential. But if women succeed in attaining a leadership position and act in ways that leaders are expected to act—namely, in agentic, forceful fashion—they are criticized for not “acting like a woman should” (Brescoll, Dawson, & Uhlmann, 2010; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig et al., 2011).

Here’s another danger that women leaders face: Because they are perceived as being more communal, they are often thought to be better at managing crises, particularly ones involving interpersonal conflicts. That might seem like a good thing—trusting women leaders to solve problems—but it has a downside in which women are more likely to be put in precarious, high-risk positions where it is difficult to succeed. Michelle Ryan and her colleagues have called this a “glass cliff” (Ryan et al., 2008, 2011). Even when women have broken through the “glass ceiling” into top leadership positions, they are more likely than men to be put in charge of units that are in crisis and in which the risk of failure is high. Ryan and her colleagues found this to be true in studies of hiring in real-world companies as well as in controlled laboratory studies in which people read descriptions of companies and recommended people for leadership positions. Participants were more likely to recommend a woman when an organizational unit was in crisis and a man when the unit was running smoothly—tendencies that make it more likely that women will fail in their leadership positions.

The better news is that prejudice against women leaders appears to be lessening over time. In a Gallup poll conducted in 1953, 66% of people said that they preferred a man as a boss, and only 5% preferred a woman (25% had no preference). In a similar poll conducted in 2011, 32% preferred a man as a boss, 22% preferred a woman, and 46% had no preference. Further, there is some evidence that people are becoming more accepting of women who act in stereotypically “male” ways (Twenge, 1997) and that there is a growing recognition that effective leaders must be able to act in communal as well as agentic ways (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig et al., 2011).



In 2012, Yahoo hired Marissa Mayer (*left*) as its new CEO, hoping she could turn around its sagging fortunes as an internet portal that was quickly being left behind in an era of social media, mobile apps, and, of course, Google. Two years later, in 2014, Mary Barra (*right*) became the first female CEO of a major global automaker, in this case General Motors. Within months, she had to announce a recall of more than 11 million cars due to defective design components that the company had known about for a decade. Both Meyer and Barra seemed prime candidates to be women who broke through a “glass ceiling” only to find themselves on a “glass cliff.” Meyer recently stepped down, with Yahoo still struggling, though its stock value soared during her time with the company. Barra, however, continues to enjoy what has been, by most metrics, a highly successful tenure at the helm of GM.

CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP Most research on leadership has been conducted in Western countries; thus, the question arises as to how much the results apply to leadership in other cultures. For this reason, researchers have recently turned their attention to the kinds of traits people value in leaders and actual leadership styles in different cultures (Aktas, Gelfand, & Hanges, 2016; Aycan et al., 2013; Eagly & Chin, 2010). One ambitious study examined leadership practices and attitudes toward leaders in 62 different countries. The researchers gave questionnaires to 17,000 managers in 951 organizations in those countries, conducted extensive interviews, convened group discussions, and analyzed media content in each country. Not surprisingly, different cultures valued different traits in leaders. For example, autonomous leadership, defined as being independent of one's superiors and spending a lot of time working alone, was valued more in Europe than in Latin America. But there was universal agreement about the value of two leadership qualities: charisma and being team oriented (House et al., 2004). Questions about cultural differences in leadership are receiving increasing attention because in a global economy, work groups are becoming more diverse and managers from different cultures have increasingly frequent contact.

Review Questions

1. Which of the following is *not* an example of process loss?
 - a. Transactive memory
 - b. Group polarization
 - c. Failure to share uniquely held information
 - d. Groupthink
2. One step that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of groupthink is
 - a. putting in place a strong, directive group leader.
 - b. taking group votes aloud rather than relying on secret ballot or other anonymous methods.
 - c. creating subgroups that meet on their own first before reconvening and sharing the content of their discussions with the group at large.
 - d. emphasizing the importance of being unanimous.
3. Walt, Jesse, Mike, and Gus are business partners trying to decide whether they should invest in a risky new direction for their company. Jesse gets the feeling that his partners are leaning toward the risky option. To convince his partners that he is a valued member of the company and a "good" group member, Jesse speaks up in strong, public terms in favor of the risky decision, and he leaves the meeting even more convinced than he was before that they should take the risk. Jesse's personal shift in the risky direction illustrates the _____ explanation for group polarization.
 - a. social comparison
 - b. counterattitudinal
 - c. persuasive arguments
 - d. social facilitation
4. Research on personality type and leadership indicates that
 - a. the great person theory is the best explanation for leadership success.
 - b. people of all different personality types can become successful leaders.
 - c. the most successful U.S. presidents (as rated by historians) tended to share major personality traits, such as extraversion, openness to new experience, and empathy.
 - d. most successful leaders embrace agentic traits but avoid communal traits.
5. A _____ leader is one who sets clear, short-term goals and rewards people for meeting them.
 - a. contingent
 - b. transformational
 - c. communal
 - d. transactional

Conflict and Cooperation

LO 9.4 Summarize the factors that determine whether individual and group conflict will escalate or be resolved.

We have already examined how people work together to make decisions; in these situations, group members have a common goal. Often, however, people have incompatible goals, placing them in conflict with each other. This can be true of two individuals, such as domestic partners who disagree about who should clean the kitchen, or two groups, such as a labor union and company management who

disagree over wages and working conditions. It can also be true of nations. Indeed, the opportunity for interpersonal conflict exists whenever two or more people interact. Sigmund Freud (1930) went so far as to argue that conflict is an inevitable by-product of civilization because the goals and needs of individuals often clash with the goals and needs of their fellow human beings. The nature of conflict and how it can be resolved has been the topic of a great deal of social psychological research (Cohen & Insko, 2008; De Dreu, 2014; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Many conflicts are resolved peacefully, with little rancor. Couples often find a way to resolve their differences in a mutually acceptable manner, and labor disputes are sometimes settled with a handshake. All too often, however, conflict erupts into open hostilities. The divorce rate in the United States remains high. People sometimes resort to violence to resolve their differences. Warfare between nations remains an all-too-common solution to international disputes. Obviously, it is of great importance to find ways of resolving conflicts peacefully.



Sometimes people are able to resolve conflicts peacefully, such as a couple that works out its differences or even has an amicable divorce. At other times conflicts escalate into rancor and violence. Social psychologists have performed experiments to test ways in which conflict resolution is most likely to occur.

Social Dilemmas

One of the reasons why we have conflicts in the first place is because very often, what is best for an individual is not always best for the group as a whole. Consider a recent venture from the Panera restaurant chain. A few years ago, they began opening Panera Cares restaurants, which look and operate like other Paneras except for one thing: People aren't required to pay anything. There are suggested prices for all menu items, but customers are allowed to pay whatever they want. The chief executive officer and founder of the restaurant chain, Ronald Shaich, had a vision in which people in need could come get a good meal and pay what they could afford; the costs would be offset, he anticipated, by customers who could afford to pay more than the suggested prices.

Panera has devised a classic **social dilemma**, a conflict in which the most beneficial action for an individual will, if chosen by most people, be harmful to everyone (Van Lange et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017; Weber, Kopelman, & Messick, 2004). It is to any individual's financial advantage to eat at Panera Cares free of charge and let other people worry about paying. However, if too many people take this approach, everyone will lose because the restaurant will not remain solvent and will eventually have to close.

In the first years of the Panera Cares experiment, about three in five people paid the suggested prices, one in five paid less, and one in five paid more. Some customers did take advantage of the system, such as three college students who paid \$3 for a \$40 meal simply because they felt like it. Of course, Panera's hope was that enough people would pay more than the suggested price to offset those who pay less. The verdict on Panera Cares has been a mixed one: three of the first five stores closed their doors, with those in Boston and St. Louis continuing to operate. What is it that determines whether people respond selfishly or selflessly in social dilemmas such as this one? Social psychologists have attempted to find out by studying such conflicts experimentally, testing both their causes and resolutions in the laboratory.

One of the most common ways of studying social dilemmas uses of a set-up referred to as the "prisoner's dilemma." This curious name derives from a scenario in which two (literal) partners in crime have been captured by police and are being held separately. Both criminals—let's call them Piper and Alex—are offered the

Social Dilemma

A conflict in which the most beneficial action for an individual will, if chosen by most people, have harmful effects on everyone

same deal: betray your partner and confess to the crime, and you'll receive a lighter sentence. The dilemma is that the precise sentence that both criminals receive depends on what their partner chooses to do. If they both decide to keep quiet, remaining loyal to each other, the police only have enough evidence to send them to prison for a short time. If they both betray each other, their sentence will be a bit longer. Easy choice, right? It seems like they should both keep quiet. But not so fast ... if Piper keeps quiet but Alex confesses? Alex goes free while Piper serves the maximum sentence. And if Piper confesses but Alex keeps quiet? Then Piper goes free and Alex serves a long prison stint.

Luckily for research participants, psychologists have figured out laboratory variations on the prisoner's dilemma that do not involve the risk of jail time. In these studies, two players have to choose one of two options without knowing what the other player will choose. The number of points they win depends on the options chosen by both people. Suppose that you were playing the game with a friend. As shown in the following Try It! exercise, you have to choose Option X or Option Y. Just like it was for Piper and Alex, your payoff—in this case, the amount of money you win or lose—also depends on the choices made by your friend. For example, if both of you choose Option X, you both win \$3. If, however, you choose Option Y and your friend chooses Option X, you win \$6 and your friend loses \$6. Which option would you choose, knowing that you won't find out what your partner chooses until afterward?

Option Y frequently seems like the safest choice in scenarios such as this one (Rapoport & Chammah, 1965). The dilemma is that both players may come to think this way, ensuring that both sides lose out on a potential payday. People's actions in these games seem to mirror many conflicts in everyday life. To find a solution desirable to both parties, people must trust each other. Often they do not, and this lack of trust leads to an escalating series of competitive moves so that in the end no one wins (Insko & Schopler, 1998; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Lount et al., 2008). Two countries locked in a weapons race, for example, may feel that they cannot afford to disarm out of fear that the other side will take advantage of their weakened position. The result is that both sides add furiously to their stockpile of weapons, neither gaining superiority and both spending money they could use to solve domestic problems instead

Try It!

The Prisoner's Dilemma

Your Friend's Options	Your Options	
	Option X	Option Y
Option X	You win \$3 Your friend wins \$3	You win \$6 Your friend loses \$6
	You lose \$6 Your friend wins \$6	You lose \$1 Your friend loses \$1

Play this version of the prisoner's dilemma game with a friend. First, show the table to the friend and explain how the game works: On each trial, you and your friend can choose Option X or Option Y, without knowing what the other will choose. You should each write your choice on folded pieces of paper that are opened at the same time. The numbers in the table represent imaginary money that you and your friend win or lose on each trial. For example, if you choose Option X on the first

trial and your friend chooses Option Y, you lose an imaginary \$6 and your friend wins an imaginary \$6. If both of you choose Option Y, you both lose an imaginary \$1. Play the game for 10 trials and keep track of how much each of you wins or loses. Did you and your friend choose the cooperative option (Option X) or the competitive option (Option Y) more often? Why? Did a pattern of trust or mistrust develop over the course of the game?

(Deutsch, 1973). Such an escalation of conflict is also seen all too often among couples who are divorcing. Sometimes the goal seems more to hurt the other person than to further one's own needs (or the children's). In the end, everyone suffers because, metaphorically speaking, both sides choose Option Y too often.

INCREASING COOPERATION IN THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA Such escalating conflict, though common, is not inevitable. Many studies have found that when people play the prisoner's dilemma game, they will, under certain conditions, adopt the more cooperative response (Option X), ensuring that both sides end up with a positive outcome. Not surprisingly, if people are playing the game with a friend or a partner with whom they expect to interact in the future, they are more likely to adopt a cooperative strategy that maximizes everyone's profits (Cohen & Insko, 2008; Grueneisen & Tomasello, 2017).

Subtly changing the norms about what kind of behavior is expected can also have large effects on how cooperative people are. One study found that simply changing the name of a game from the "Wall Street Game" to the "Community Game" increased the percentage of people who played cooperatively from 33% to 71% (Lieberman et al., 2004). Another study, conducted with Chinese college students in Hong Kong, found that showing people symbols of Chinese culture before the game (e.g., a Chinese dragon) made people more cooperative, whereas showing people symbols of American culture (e.g., an American flag) made them more competitive (Wong & Hong, 2005).

Another option is the **tit-for-tat strategy**, a way of encouraging cooperation by at first acting cooperatively but then always responding the way your opponent did (cooperatively or competitively) in the previous trial. This strategy communicates a willingness to cooperate and an unwillingness to sit back and be exploited if the partner is selfish. The tit-for-tat strategy is often successful in getting the other person to respond with a trusting response (Klapwijk & Van Lange, 2009; Leite, 2011; Wubben, De Cremer, & van Dijk, 2009). Using this tactic in the arms race would mean matching not only any military buildup made by an unfriendly nation but also any conciliatory gestures, such as a ban on nuclear testing.

And one more proven strategy is to allow individuals rather than opposing groups to resolve a conflict. Two individuals who play the prisoner's dilemma are more likely to cooperate with each other than two groups who play the same game (Schopler & Insko, 1999). As discussed in Chapter 8, being in a group can be deindividuating; you also know now that groups produce more extreme and polarized attitudes. As a result of these phenomena, when two rival groups distrust each other, sometimes single representatives from each side are better able to bridge that gap and foster communication and negotiation. In short, social dilemmas have been the subject of a great deal of psychological research, though it is worth noting that not all of it has focused on the prisoner's dilemma. See the photo gallery on the next page for examples of social dilemmas based on management of shared resources.

Tit-for-Tat Strategy

A means of encouraging cooperation by at first acting cooperatively but then always responding the way your opponent did (cooperatively or competitively) on the previous trial

Using Threats to Resolve Conflict

When involved in a conflict, many of us are tempted to use threats to get the other party to cave to our wishes, believing that we should, in the words of Teddy Roosevelt, "speak softly and carry a big stick." Parents commonly use threats to get their children to behave, and teachers often threaten their students with detention or a visit to the principal. Threats are commonly used on an international scale as well to further the interests of one nation over another (Turner & Horvitz, 2001).

A classic series of studies by Morton Deutsch and Robert Krauss (1960, 1962) indicates that threats are not an effective means of reducing conflict. These researchers developed a game in which two participants imagined that they were in charge of trucking companies named Acme and Bolt. The goal of each company was to transport merchandise as quickly as possible to a destination. The participants were paid 60 cents for each "trip" but had 1 cent subtracted for every second it took them. The most direct route for each company was over a one-lane road that only one truck could travel

RESOURCE DILEMMAS



The prisoner's dilemma is not the only type of challenging social dilemma. Resource dilemmas involve shared use of a limited, finite resource. As with the prisoner's dilemma, an individual who opts for the selfish course of action stands to benefit, but if too few people cooperate, everyone will suffer the consequences.



Consider, for example, the tale of the tragedy of the commons, in which villagers sharing a common piece of grassy land are each allowed to place a certain number of cattle to graze there. Of course, by sneaking an extra animal or two onto the commons to eat, a villager could receive personal benefit—more (and fatter) cows! But if everyone does this, the grass will be gone and there won't be enough food for any cows (or, eventually, for the villagers).



One form of resource dilemma is when individuals use too much of a resource too quickly. Yet another is when not enough people contribute to a replenishable resource. If not enough individuals donate blood, there will not be enough supply when an emergency hits; if not enough individuals contribute taxes, infrastructure crumbles and people everywhere will suffer.

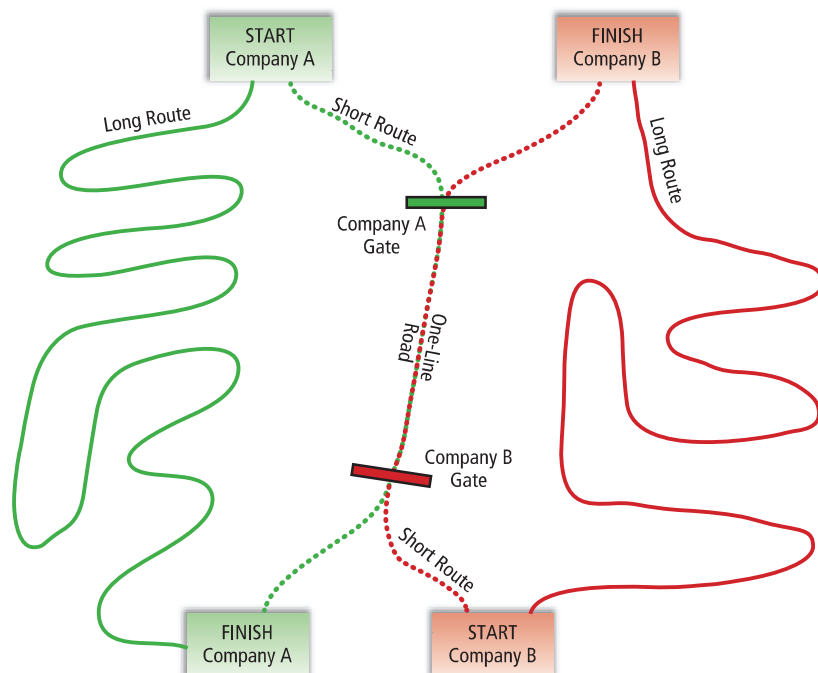


Many of the strategies reviewed in this chapter can help promote cooperation in resource dilemmas. Yet another possibility is to create a regulatory entity with the authority to sanction those who run afoul of pro-social, cooperative behavior. For example, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can levy large fines against corporations that violate national environmental standards.

at a time, which placed the two companies in direct conflict, as seen in Figure 9.7. If Acme and Bolt both tried to take the one-lane road, neither truck could pass, and both would lose money. Each company could take an alternate route, but this was much longer, guaranteeing that they would lose at least 10 cents per trial. After a while, most

Figure 9.7 The Deutsch and Krauss Trucking Game

Deutsch and Krauss (1962) studied cooperation (and the lack thereof) by asking participants to play a trucking game. In the game, players earned money by driving from one point to another as quickly as possible. As in the image below, the shortest route required crossing a one-lane road, but both companies could not use this road at the same time. When players were given gates they could use to restrict the other player's use of the one-lane road, both companies made even less money.



participants worked out a solution that allowed both trucks to make a modest amount of money, taking turns waiting for the other party to cross the one-lane road.

In another variation, the researchers gave Acme a gate that could be lowered over the one-lane road, thereby blocking Bolt from using that route. You might think that using force—the gate—would increase Acme’s profits because all Acme had to do was to threaten Bolt to “stay off the one-lane road or else.” In fact, the opposite happened. When one side had a gate, both participants lost more money than when neither side had a gate. Bolt did not like being threatened and often retaliated by parking its truck on the one-lane road, blocking the Acme truck’s progress. Meanwhile, seconds ticked away, and both sides lost money. What happened when the situation was more equitable, with both sides having gates? Surely they would learn to cooperate then, recognizing the stalemate that would ensue if both of them used their gates—right? To the contrary, both sides lost even *more* money in the bilateral threat condition. Here, the owners of both trucking companies threatened to use their gates and did so with great frequency.

EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATION There is an important way, however, in which the trucking game does not approximate real life: The two sides were not allowed to communicate with each other. Would the adversaries have worked out their differences if they could have talked them over? To find out, Deutsch and Krauss ran a version of their study in which the participants were required to communicate through an intercom on every trial. Alas, requiring people to communicate did not raise profits dramatically. Why not?

The problem with the communication in the trucking studies is that it did not foster trust. In fact, people used the opportunity to threaten each other. Krauss and Deutsch examined this tendency in yet another version of their study in which they specifically instructed people on how to communicate, telling them to work out a solution that was fair to both parties (i.e., one that they would be willing to accept if they were in the other person’s shoes). Under these conditions, verbal communication did increase the amount of money both sides won because it fostered trust instead of adding fuel to the competitive fires (Deutsch, 1973; Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2011; Krauss & Deutsch, 1966).

Negotiation and Bargaining

In the laboratory games we have discussed so far, people’s options are limited. They have to choose Option X or Y in the prisoner’s dilemma, and they have only a couple of ways of getting their truck to its destination. In everyday life, we often have a wide array of options. Consider two people haggling over the price of a car. Both the buyer and the seller can give in to all of the other’s demands, to some of them, or to none of them. Either party can walk away from the deal at any time. Given that there is considerable latitude in how people can resolve the conflict, communication between the parties becomes all the more important. By talking, bargaining, and negotiating, people can arrive at a satisfactory settlement. **Negotiation** is a form of communication between opposing sides in a conflict in which offers and counteroffers are made and a solution occurs only when both parties agree (Menon, Sheldon, & Galinsky, 2014; Thompson, Wang, & Gunia, 2010). How successful are people at negotiating mutually beneficial solutions?

One limit to successful negotiation is that people often assume that they are locked in a conflict in which only one party can come out ahead. They don’t realize that a solution favorable to both parties is available. A couple getting a divorce, for example, might find it impossible to reach a financial settlement until they realize that they have different priorities. Perhaps it is most important to one person to keep the furniture and the baseball season tickets, whereas the other wants the fancy china and the vintage collection of vinyl records. This type of compromise, called an **integrative solution**, is an outcome to a conflict whereby the parties make trade-offs on issues according to their different interests; each side concedes the most on issues that are unimportant to it but are important to the other side.

It might seem that such integrative solutions would be easy to achieve. After all, the two parties simply have to sit down and figure out which issues are the most important to

Negotiation

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Integrative Solution

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Neutral mediators often help solve labor disputes, legal battles, and divorce proceedings. Mediators can be in a better position to recognize that there are mutually agreeable solutions to a conflict.

many advantages, of course, but one disadvantage is that it is harder to get to know people and learn to trust them. A meta-analysis of several studies found that negotiations conducted over electronic media were more hostile and resulted in lower profits than face-to-face negotiations (Stuhlmacher & Citera, 2005).

The bottom line? When you are negotiating with someone, it is important to keep in mind that integrative solutions are often available. Try to gain the other side's trust, communicate your own interests in an open manner and try taking the other person's perspective (Trötschel et al., 2011). Remember that the way you construe the situation is not necessarily the same as the way the other party construes it. You may well discover that the other side communicates its interests more freely as a result, increasing the likelihood that you will find a solution beneficial to both parties.

each. However, people often find it difficult to identify integrative solutions (Moran & Ritov, 2007; Thompson, 1997). For example, the more people have at stake in a negotiation, the more biased their perceptions of their opponent. They will tend to distrust proposals made by the other side and to overlook interests they have in common (Kong, Dirks, & Ferrin, 2014; O'Connor & Carnevale, 1997). This is one reason why people often use neutral mediators to solve labor disputes, legal battles, and divorce proceedings: Mediators are often in a better position to recognize that there are mutually agreeable solutions to a conflict (Kressel & Pruitt, 1989; Ross & LaCroix, 1996; Wall & Dunne, 2012).

The *style* of communication is also critical to developing trust during negotiation (Rosette et al., 2012). It appears that trust is more easily established in old-fashioned face-to-face negotiations than in electronic communications such as e-mail, texting, and videoconferencing. The modern techniques have

Review Questions

- When it comes to social dilemmas,
 - an individual who adopts a cooperative strategy will always be more profitable than one who is selfish.
 - the most beneficial course of action for an individual will, if chosen by most people, be harmful to all in the long run.
 - one always has to win, and one side always has to lose.
 - laboratory studies cannot be useful in understanding the escalation and persistence of group conflicts.
- Consider the prisoner's dilemma. You will receive the worst possible outcome for yourself as an individual if
 - you are cooperative and so is your partner.
 - you are cooperative but your partner is selfish.
 - you are selfish and so is your partner.
 - you are selfish but your partner is cooperative.
- Two fishing companies, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw, use the same body of water to catch fish. Both companies are considering building dams that would allow them to cut off the water supply and prevent the other company from fishing. Research on the power of threats indicates that if
 - both companies build a dam and gain the ability to prevent the other from fishing,
 - conflict will decrease because each side has equal threat capacity.
 - conflict will increase because each side has equal threat capacity.
 - conflict will increase slightly, but not as much as it would if only one side built a dam and had threat capacity.
 - conflict will increase, but only if communication between the two companies is prevented.
- A(n) _____ solution is an outcome to a negotiation in which each side concedes on issues that are unimportant to it but are important to the other side.
 - tit-for-tat
 - transactive
 - integrative
 - communal
- According to Sigmund Freud, _____ is an inevitable by-product of civilization.
 - negotiation
 - cooperation
 - conflict
 - psychology

Summary

LO 9.1 Explain what groups are and why people join them.

- **What Is a Group?** A *group* consists of two or more (usually more) people who interact with each other and are interdependent.
- **Why Do People Join Groups?** The *need to belong* to groups may be innate. Groups also allow us to accomplish difficult objectives, serve as a source of information about the social world, and are an important part of our social identities. People are sensitive to rejection from groups and do what they can to avoid it. Groups also make people feel distinctive from members of other groups.
- **The Composition and Functions of Groups** Groups tend to consist of homogeneous members, in part because groups have *social norms* that people are expected to obey. Groups also have well-defined social roles, shared expectations about how people are supposed to behave. People can get so far into a social role that their personal identities and personalities get lost. Group cohesiveness, qualities of a group that bind members together and promote liking between members, is another important property of groups that influences the group's performance. So does a group's composition, with diversity sometimes negatively associated with group morale but positively associated with a range of performance outcomes.

LO 9.2 Describe how individuals perform differently when others are around.

- **Individual Behavior in a Group Setting** Research has compared the performance of people who are by themselves versus in groups.
- **Social Facilitation: When the Presence of Others Energizes Us** When people's individual efforts on a task can be evaluated, the mere presence of others leads to social facilitation: Their performance is enhanced on simple tasks but impaired on complex tasks.
- **Social Loafing: When the Presence of Others Relaxes Us** When people's individual efforts *cannot* be evaluated, the mere presence of others leads to relaxation and social loafing: Performance is impaired on simple or unimportant tasks but enhanced on complex tasks.
- **Gender and Cultural Differences in Social Loafing: Who Slacks Off the Most?** Social loafing is more prevalent among men than women and more prevalent in Western than Asian cultures.

- **Deindividuation: Getting Lost in the Crowd** The mere presence of others can also lead to more serious consequences such as deindividuation, the loosening of normal constraints on behavior when people are in crowds.

LO 9.3 Compare the decision-making outcomes of individuals versus groups, and explain the impact of leadership in group outcomes.

- **Group Decisions: Are Two (or More) Heads Better Than One?** Research has compared how people make decisions when they are by themselves versus in groups.
- **Process Loss: When Group Interactions Inhibit Good Problem Solving** Groups make better decisions than individuals if they are good at pooling independent ideas and listening to the expert members of the group. Often, however, process loss occurs, which is any aspect of group interaction that inhibits good decision making. For example, groups often focus on the information they have in common and fail to share unique information. Tightly knit, cohesive groups are also prone to groupthink, which occurs when maintaining group cohesiveness and solidarity becomes more important than considering the facts in a realistic manner.
- **Group Polarization: Going to Extremes** Group polarization causes individuals to become more extreme in their attitudes than they were before group discussions; in this manner, group decisions can be more risky or more cautious than individual decisions, depending on which direction the individual members were initially leaning.
- **Leadership in Groups** There is little support for the great person theory, which argues that good leadership is a matter of having the right personality traits. Leaders adopt specific kinds of leadership styles, such as transactional or transformational. Leadership effectiveness is a function of both the kind of person a leader is and the nature of the work situation. Although strides have been made, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions. Women who become leaders often face a "glass cliff" whereby they are put in charge of work units that are in crisis and in which the risk of failure is high. Further, there is a double bind for women leaders: If they conform to societal expectations about how they ought to behave, by being warm and communal, they are often perceived as having low leadership potential. If they succeed in

attaining a leadership position and act in ways that leaders are expected to act—namely, in agentic, forceful ways—they are often perceived negatively for not “acting like a woman should.”

LO 9.4 Summarize the factors that determine whether individual and group conflict will escalate or be resolved.

- **Conflict and Cooperation** Research has examined how people resolve conflicts when they have incompatible goals.
- **Social Dilemmas** These occur when the most beneficial action for an individual will, if chosen by most people, have harmful effects for everyone. A commonly studied social dilemma is the

prisoner’s dilemma, in which two people must decide whether to look out for only their own interests or for their partner’s interests as well. Creating trust is crucial in solving this kind of conflict, and a variety of situational factors can render individual cooperation more likely.

- **Using Threats to Resolve Conflict** Research has found that using threats tends to escalate rather than resolve conflicts, even more so when both sides have equal threat capacity.
- **Negotiation and Bargaining** When two sides are negotiating and bargaining, it is important to look for an integrative solution whereby each side concedes the most on issues that are unimportant to it but are important to its adversary.

Revel Interactive	Shared Writing What Do You Think?
	Why might deindividuation be particularly likely to occur in an online situation? How can websites prevent it from occurring?

Test Yourself

- Why are groups often homogeneous (comprised of members who are alike in age, sex, beliefs, and opinions)?
 - People who are already similar to each tend to be drawn to joining the same groups.
 - Evolutionary pressures caused people with similar genes to join groups and people with dissimilar genes to avoid each other.
 - Groups are more productive when they are homogeneous.
 - Social loafing prevents us from seeking out new people and experiences.
- Group cohesiveness is best defined as
 - shared expectations in a group about how people are supposed to behave.
 - qualities that bind members together and promote liking between members.
 - expectations about the roles and behaviors of men and women.
 - the tendency for people to do better on simple tasks and worse on complex tasks in the presence of others.
- You are trying to decide whether to take a test in a lecture hall where you will be surrounded by lots of other people or in a room by yourself. Assuming that you have studied well for the test and find the material to be easy, you will perform best on the test in the _____ because it will result in _____.
 - room by yourself; social loafing
 - room by yourself; social facilitation
 - lecture hall; social loafing
 - lecture hall; social facilitation
- The tendency to engage in social loafing is stronger in _____; it is also stronger in _____.
 - men than women; Asian cultures than Western cultures
 - women than men; Asian cultures than Western cultures
 - men than women; Western cultures than Asian cultures
 - women than men; Western cultures than Asian cultures