



## Lecture 10: Group Dynamics

# Learning Objectives

1. Show how role requirements change in different situations.
2. Demonstrate how norms, status, and size exert influence on an individual's behavior.
3. Explain how issues of cohesiveness and size affect group performance.
4. Contrast the strengths and weaknesses of group decision-making.

# Groups Defined

- A **group** is defined as two or more people who are connected by social ties.
  - Characterized by interaction, purpose, interdependence, structure, and cohesiveness

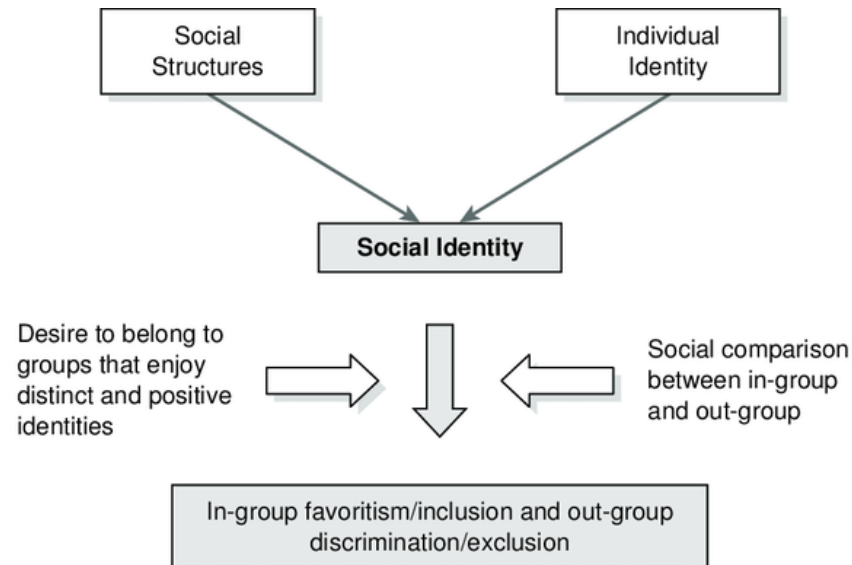


# Groups Defined

- **Formal groups:** Those defined by the organization's structure with clearly defined tasks and roles
  - Members' behaviors are stipulated by and directed toward organizational goals
- **Informal groups:** Alliances that form naturally in the work environment in a response to social needs
  - Neither formally structured nor organizationally determined

# Group Formation

- **Social identity** includes the “we” component of the self.
  - Shared characteristics, groups, roles, and relationships
  - Help us understand who we are and where we fit in



# Group Formation

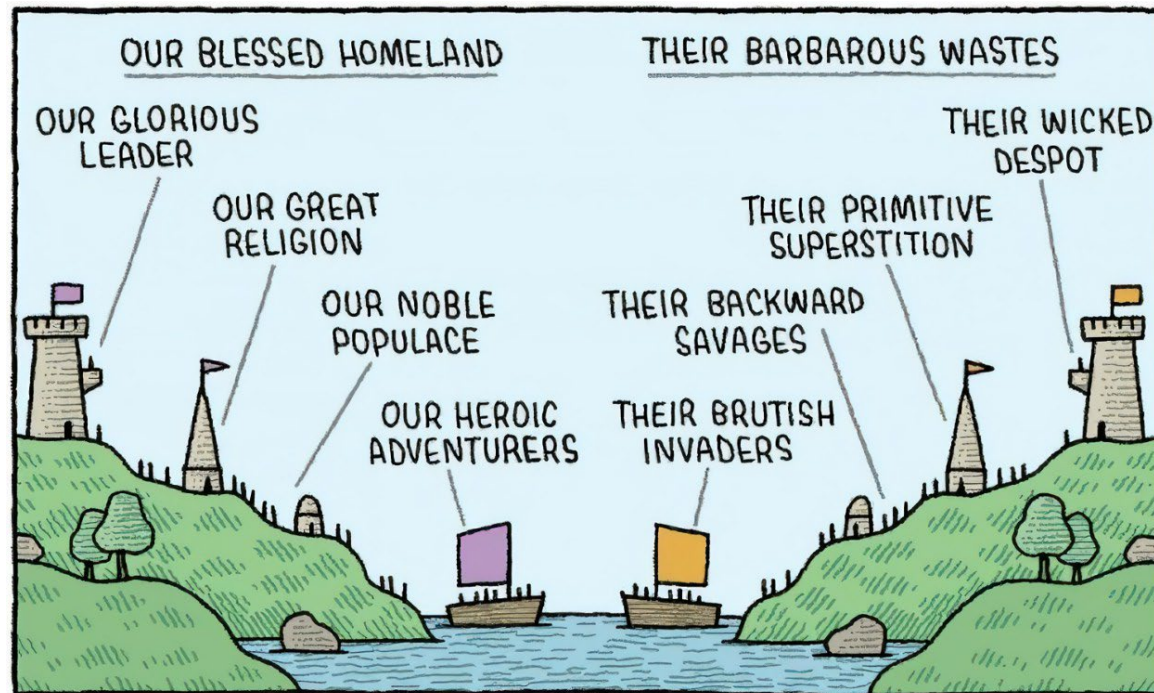
- **Social identity theory** (Tajfel, 1979) suggests group membership becomes part of the self-concept through social categorization, identification.
- It also suggests that people's self-esteem is tied to the performance of their groups.
  - When their group succeeds, they “bask in the reflected glory”.
  - When their group fails, they “cut off reflected failure”.

# Group Formation

- Our social identities lead us to form categories of people.
  - **Ingroup:** The people who appear to be fellow members of your group
  - **Outgroup:** The people who do not appear to be members of your group

# Group Formation

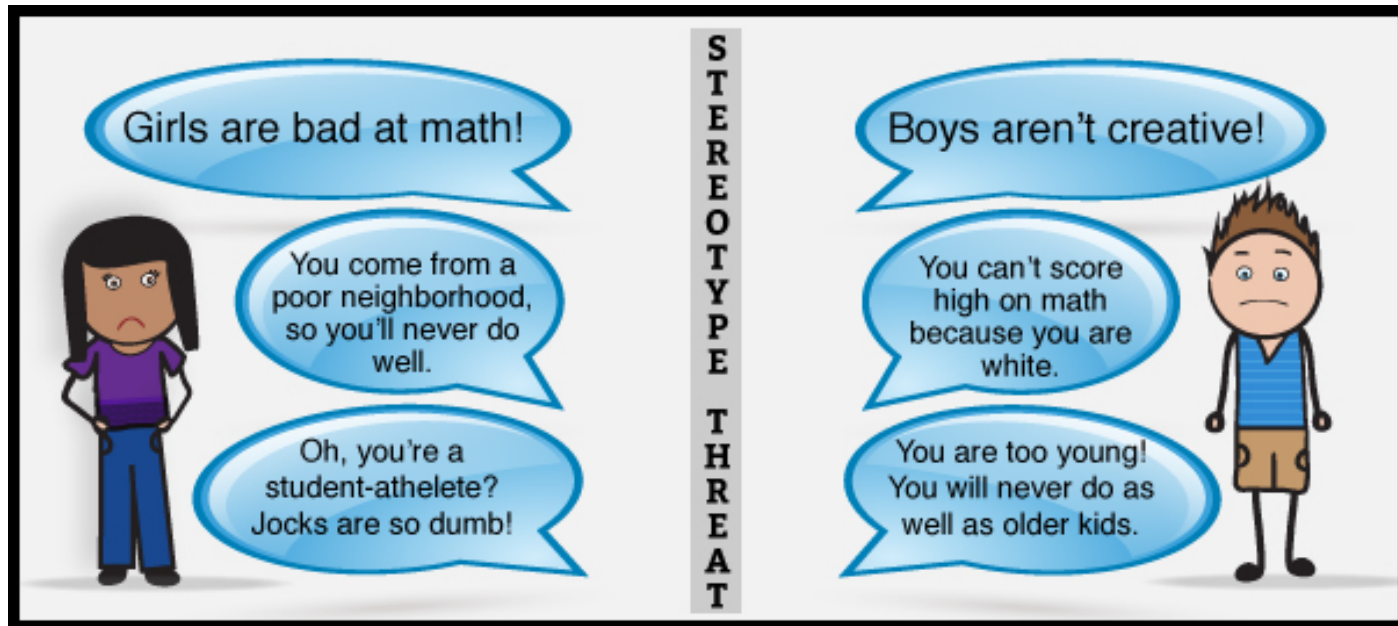
- **Ingroup favoritism:** Occurs when the ingroup is seen as better than the outgroup



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# Group Formation

- **Social identity threat:** The belief that others may negatively evaluate you due to your association with a devalued group



# Roles and Performance

- We have a variety of diverse roles each with its own expectations.
  - **Role:** A set of expected behavior patterns attributed to someone occupying a given position in a social unit

# Roles and Performance

- Some roles are compatible; some roles are incompatible.
  - **Role conflict:** The tension that occurs when we face divergent role expectations
  - **Interrole conflict:** The tension that occurs when our various roles have incompatible expectations

# Roles and Performance

- Members' perceptions and expectations can also impact group performance.
  - **Role expectations:** How others believe one should act
    - **Psychological contract:** An unwritten agreement of behavioral expectations that exists between employees and their employer
  - **Role perception:** One's perception of how to act
    - Susceptible to error and bias
    - Influenced by social environment

# Norms and Performance

- The presence of others can create pressures to conform.
  - **Norms:** Acceptable standards of behavior within a group that are shared by the group's members
  - **Conform:** The adjustment of attitudes and behaviors to align with the norms of the group

# Norms and Performance

- Positive group norms can lead to positive outcomes only when other factors are present.
- Negative group norms can encourage additional norm violations that threaten the well-being of the organization and its members (**deviant workplace behaviors**).

# Cohesiveness and Performance

- **Group cohesiveness:** The degree to which members are attracted to each other and are committed to the group
  - A highly cohesive group is productive when performance norms are high (not when they are low).

		Cohesiveness	
		High	Low
Performance Norms	High	High productivity	Moderate productivity
	Low	Low productivity	Moderate to low productivity

# Cohesiveness and Performance

- Encourage group cohesiveness by:
  - Physically isolating the group
  - Making the group smaller
  - Encouraging agreement with group goals
  - Increasing the time members spend together

# Cohesiveness and Performance

- Encourage group cohesiveness by (continued):
  - Increasing the status of the group and the perceived difficulty of attaining membership in the group
  - Stimulating competition with other groups
  - Giving rewards to the group rather than to individual members

# Status and Performance

- **Status:** A socially defined position or rank given to groups or group members by others
- **Status characteristics theory** proposes that social status is derived from one of three sources:
  - The power a person wields over others.
  - A person's ability to contribute to a group's goals.
  - An individual's personal characteristics.

# Status and Performance

- **Norms** – High-status people have more freedom to deviate from norms and are better able to resist pressures to conform.
- **Group Interaction** – High-status people are often more assertive; low-status people participate less.
- **Inequity** – Perceived inequity can lead to tension, which can lead to resentment and corrective behavior.
- **Stigmatization** – Non-stigmatized people can be stigmatized by association.

# Size and Performance

- Smaller groups (7 or fewer members) are faster and better for action-taking tasks.
- Large groups (more than 12 members) are good for fact-finding tasks, gaining diverse input, and problem solving but prone to:
  - **Social loafing:** Occurs when members give less effort when working with a group than when working alone
  - **Free riding:** Occurs when members give less effort because they think others will pick up their slack

# Group Decision-Making

- Compared to decisions made by individuals, decisions made by groups tend to:
  - Generate more complete information
  - Be more accurate than the average member but less accurate than the most accurate member
  - Offer greater diversity of views and creativity
  - Be more accepted by others

# Group Decision-Making

- Compared to decisions made by individuals, decisions made by groups tend to be:
  - More time consuming
  - More susceptible to conformity pressures
    - **Groupthink:** Situations in which group pressures for conformity deter the group from critically appraising unusual, minority, or unpopular views
  - Dominated by a few members
  - Ambiguous in terms of responsibility

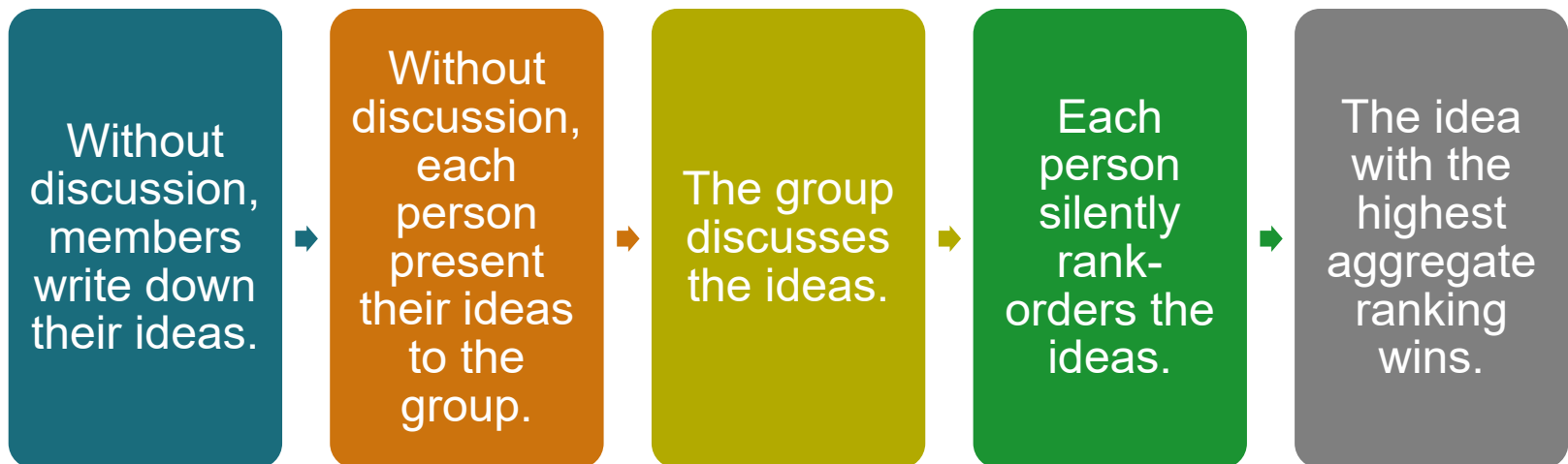
# Types of Decision-Making Groups

- **Brainstorming groups** tend to involve less pressure to conform and develop high levels of cohesion.
  - Members share aloud as many ideas as possible.
  - No criticism allowed!.
- BUT research consistently shows that individuals working alone generate more ideas than a brainstorming group!



# Types of Decision-Making Groups

- **Nominal groups** are task-focused and tend to outperform brainstorming groups.
- Steps of the **nominal group technique**:



# Types of Decision-Making Groups

**Exhibit 9-5** Evaluating Group Effectiveness

Type of Group			
Effectiveness Criteria	Interacting	Brainstorming	Nominal
Number and quality of ideas	Low	Moderate	High
Social pressure	High	Low	Moderate
Money costs	Low	Low	Low
Speed	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Task orientation	Low	High	High
Potential for interpersonal conflict	High	Low	Moderate
Commitment to solution	High	Not applicable	Moderate
Development of cohesiveness	High	High	Moderate

# Implications for Managers

- Understand how roles, norms, status, size, cohesion, and diversity operate within a group.
- Ensure members perceive their jobs accurately.
- Ensure group norms encourage desirable behavior and discourage CWBs.

# Implications for Managers

- Pay attention to the status aspect of groups and encourage participation from low status members.
- Build accountability by setting group goals, increasing intergroup competition, using peer evaluation, and distributing group rewards based on individual effort.