Social influence in groups

Recap
- Group performance
  - Pros and cons of using groups for different tasks
- Stage models, cyclical models of group development

Goals
- Social influence
- Power
Social influence

- Majority influence – conformity, consensus formation
- Minority influence

Conformity

- Solomon Asch (1952)

Factors affecting conformity rates
- Presence of at least one dissenter
- Size of group
- Number of independent groups
Factors affecting conformity rates

- Presence of at least one dissenter
- Size of group
- Number of independent groups
- Public or private behaviors
- Cultural background
  - Individualistic vs. collectivistic

Task difficulty and need for accuracy
Conformity

- Individual differences
- Gender\gender roles
- Authoritarianism
- Reactance
- Self-esteem
- Self-monitoring

Minority influence

- Moscovici – influence of single dissenting minority in groups
- Minorities increased influence when
  - Consistent (e.g., didn’t waver in arguments)
  - Perceived as competent (e.g., possibly correct)
  - Majority felt uncertainty in own position
  - Willing to grant minor concessions (e.g., give a little to get a little)
  - Not considered ‘outsiders’ (e.g., actually considered to be part of the group)

Minority influence

- Hollander’s ‘idiosyncrasy credits’
  - People build up credits by going along with group at first
  - More credits result in more leeway to deviate from norms, greater influence
Minority influence

- Moscovici or Hollander’s approach?
  - Both methods (consistent arguments vs. initial ‘going along’) worked

- Majority vs. minority influence
  - Public conformity vs. private acceptance (again!)
  - Immediate vs. indirect influence
  - Narrowing of range of opinions (consensus formation) vs. innovation

Power

- Obedience to authority (today)
- Sources of power (next week)

- Getting people to do something they wouldn’t otherwise do
- Capacity for influence
Obedience to authority

- Milgram studies
  - Famous “shock” experiments
  - Experimenter ordered subjects to administer increasingly painful, sever electric shocks to others

Factors affecting obedience
- Perceived legitimacy of authority figure
- Proximity of target (the “learner”)
- Proximity of authority figure
- Behavioral requirements (pass on orders vs. actually shocking people)

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