

15.301/310, Managerial Psychology
Prof. Dan Ariely
Lecture 10: Group Decision-Making

Groups and group decision-making

Group decisions

-Where to eat, movies
-Electing president
Shows how bad it can be

Anyone from fraternity or sorority?
Anybody here have a family?
Make decisions as a family? Only parents?

In fact, Sometimes make decisions yourself, but for a group

Group decision making very important for 2 reasons:

- a. Spend lot of time in groups
- b. Often Take group into account, how decision affects other people

I often hear my wife's voice speaking to me, telling her opinion

Lets try group decision making exercise
Show short riddle, 30 sec to read, write own answer
Ready, set, go...
(slide)

Those who think the answer is above 100 come to this corner, below 100, other corner

Now explain, convince each other, if your answer changes, switch groups

If have answer for sure, Go to other group, try to convince each other, or sit down
I suggest you go to the other group

Observation: above 100 only men, but for 1

How much started with the right answer? 0
How many ended up with right answer? 2

How many changed mind? Few changed mind

This was my best hope to show you how effective group decision making can be.
Get together, talk, share info, learn.

Idea: show advantages of groups

Rest of class will be about pitfalls, why groups can be bad

Examples where groups bad in terms of outcome?

-Mob mentality, Listening to authority

From your own experience, groups making bad decisions?

-Coordinate time w/ group

Taxing

-people disagree

Not necessarily bad

-silence is agreement, but can create problem if not true

-people dominate discussion

Bad decision making - great movie at end of class

mob behavior

sports game - fire, cars turn over, poles bent

how do you think it happens? What happens? Why?

LA riots, what do you remember?

-carnage, fire

People break into stores, steal, fire, how start?

National guard can't contain

-break law, so many others, can't be caught. 30 people steal, 31 not going to catch

-everyone doing it, getting cool stuff, have good time

One way to think about it -I'm not for stealing, but in this condition

Or, people change their norms

Unique in mob behavior, riots - people feel they cannot be singled out

Just one of crowd

Consequence: people don't evaluate what they are doing, don't follow social norms of regular life - obey parents, don't steal, etc

Zimbardo proposed process (slide)

Not feel singled out

All of us together

Not think about selves, what do I stand for?

Consequence, people don't evaluate what they are doing

Obey norms of local group created

Football team wins over another

England, for example, people die over soccer

Change way they think once these conditions happen

Example of how social norms can be broken due to anonymity
Experiment, students in dark, start walking around. Told to not say anything about themselves (slide)

Once anonymous intro, no name, darkness
Talked about personally relevant stuff
After about 40 min, started to get interactive
90% indicated touched someone on purpose
20% said trying to keep people from touching them
50% hugged somebody else
80% said they were sexually aroused

Very different in real life. Stick 6 students in room, hour later 50% hugged?
Something about the anonymity allows people to behave apart from the norm.
Shows the power of anonymity

Girl studying in next room, subject asked to shock her if she is not studying well
Anonymous more likely to shock her

Not identified, you do all kinds of things not normally do

NY, very terrible case, girl raped, screamed, but nobody did anything because lots of people heard
"Someone must be doing something"

Another study
Students, some guards, some prisoners. For weekend.
What didn't expect was that guards started abusing the prisoners
Had to stop the experiment, couldn't last the whole weekend
Were told nothing of the sort. They took it upon themselves to do this.
Stockings on head, stand in line, strip searches, paper bag on head
Fellow students at Stanford

Remind you of anything recently in politics?

Take relatively well meaning kids, probably raised well, make some prisoners, some guards, start behaving very, very different

How likely if take people opposite side of war, not abuse if get chance?
Not far fetched, actually expected

Mob & deindividuation – conditions where group can create a bad outcome.
There is no leader, no sense of responsibility, social norm

Follow emerging norms
One person starts, other people follow
Can get worse and worse

Basically what happens is people don't want to be embarrassed.
Take silence, lack of action as indication that these people understand something, know something
Pluralistic ignorance I

While I might know something, if others behave differently, doubt my own motivations

Prof give incomprehensible lecture
Some students even nod favorably

Not only class material, but also more serious

Experiment: Smoke into room. More people present, longer to leave
Very hard to be the first one to leave
If alone, just leave. If many people there, say oh, nobody's leaving, and everyone is thinking that.

I did some work on political correctness
Can't conduct it at MIT, you guys not politically correct at all
At Princeton very successful

Harvard, interviewing for new faculty
Wanted more African American faculty
All tried to say this research and that, not talk about African American

-can you elaborate on how we not PC, Princeton are?

One example: PC game, line of people, FBI most wanted game. Have to communicate to another person which name is highlighted. The question is, Will they use race? Green sweatshirt standing by the car. People uncomfortable using race as a name to call people.

At MIT, people completely don't care about using race as indicator

U Virginia study
White, Black, wheelchair person to convince people of something stupid
Should do an exam on all the college material
Black, wheelchair much more convincing
Argument is we don't like to argue w/ people we are PC about

"if I say they are wrong, they will think I'm racist or something"
Video takes away this effect, no longer face to face

Idea is that people will do stuff if they think other people are doing the same thing.

Conformity

Norms for how well dressed
At MIT
Other places
Not deviate from those standards

If people free to do as please, they imitate one another.

Monty python: Life of Brian
Brian stands at a window, all people come to him as an apostle,
He says: Your all different!
They drone: "we're all different"

You don't have to follow me!
We don't have to follow you

Subtle conformity, mimicry

Sit across from you
If I rub my face, you more likely to rub you face

Want to increase liking, going to mimic
You rub face, subject more likely to rub face than shake foot,

Homework: Go home, do something, see if can get roommate to follow

Rational conformity
Maybe they know something
2 Fire exits
Fire starts
Run to exit
Somebody must know something, lets run after them
Nobody sees other exit sign, only others running

Slide, which line longer
Experiment, group of people
All but one working for him, told what to answer.
(wrong answer)
Question: Will the subject also give the wrong answer?
Picture of subject first time. Can't believe his eyes, how can that be?
75% of people conformed. This is about vision, something we no is good, no reason to doubt
Lots of people gave the wrong answer for conformity reasons

Bigger conformity to groups you want to be a part of, larger groups

Conformity: sometimes you do not know you are conforming

3 things to remember today

Prisoner experiment, Asch

75% of people gave wrong answ at least once
This is vision test
No reason to doubt eyesight
More conformity in larger groups, diff tasks, high desire to be part
Like fraternity, sorority

Conformity @workplace

Sometimes conformers not know conforming
Others, we know we are conforming

Suggests social info might change perception
Increase activity in visual cortex

Not necessarily know truth but not say to not embarrass self

Conform for different reasons

Workplace, people usually want opinion, but being the person saying no always is not a fun task

Faculty member, I have privilege of doing so often here

People annoyed

But very important

Conformity – one of the worst outcomes for groups.

Obedience

Very strong form of conformity

Was it WW2, Germans? Happen to anyone?

Experiment - Stanley Milgram

Video

Not sadistic, wanted to stop

Half got to end, subject stopped talking

Is incredible!

Nevertheless easy to get social norms created in the moment

Summary

Groups can be useful, more viewpoints etc

Can hinder what useful for

Authority or not

Asked explicitly or not

All dress same, obey rules

Compliance – no authority

Obedience – authority, asked explicitly

Mob behavior

Probable ignorance

Conformity

Obedience

One more plea for wednesday

Writing instructor here

You need help w/ writing, you should come

[Stanley Milgram film]