How Does Group Membership Affect People

People are motivated to affiliate with others and form groups. Evolutionary psychologists make the argument that groups facilitated survival. It was critical to identify who was a member of your group (the ingroup) who would help you, and members of other groups (the outgroup) who may be a competitor for resources (food, water, mates, etc.).

For members, of our own group, we are more likely to favor them (the ingroup bias) and invoke the reciprocity norm. It takes very little to establish ingroup and outgroups. Even a random flip of coin (this coin flip was even shown to participants) were enough to create an ingroup bias (see Tajfel and Turner’s minimal group paradigm). Once groups are formed, we tend to see members of our group as diverse and members of other groups as homogeneous (the outgroup homogeneity effect).
In-group Bias

In-group bias: The tendency to make favorable, positive attributions to members of the “in-group” and unfavorable, negative attributions to members of “out-groups”. You give the benefit of the doubt to members of your own "in-group" and not the benefit of doubt to members of the "out-group".

Putting people into an outgroup as “enemies” can make it less likely you will treat them with respect and fairly and more likely that you will incur harm on them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ingroup</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outgroup</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• When we attack, it is because we were provoked.</td>
<td>• When you attack, it is because you are aggressive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We are successful because of hard work.</td>
<td>• They are successful because they are lucky. (and previous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When we save money, we are being thrifty.</td>
<td>• When they do it, it is being stingy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is the tendency to give the benefit of the doubt to white applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements for a loan,</td>
<td>• while rejecting black applicants (and thus not providing an opportunity for them, or forcing them to borrow money by other means at a higher interest rate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When “our president” is the president during an economic downturn, we say it is it partly due to circumstances he inherited.</td>
<td>• When “your president” is president during an economic downturn, it is due to incompetence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When “our president” is president during unprecedented economic growth, it is due to his leadership. (also see self-serving bias)</td>
<td>• When the economy grows under “your president”, it is due to his circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When we support “terrorists” such as</td>
<td>• When they support “terrorists” it is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the Northern Alliance, it is because we have no other choice.  
• When “we” provide information, it is the truth and for educational purposes.  
• We are taking a break.  
• We disagree with the president on principle  
• Our “pork barrel spending” stimulates the economy.  
• We are an community interest group  
• Our militants are extremists or fanatics.  
• I know what he means  
• Our team won because we are very skilled.  
• The KKK is not a terrorist organization.  
• When Jerry Falwell says that Mohammed is a terrorist, we say…  

because they are evil.  
• When “they” provide information, it is propaganda and spin.  
• They are lazy.  
• They disagree with the president as partisan  
• Their “pork barrel spending” are unfair subsidies.  
• You are a special interest group.  
• Their militants are terrorists.  
• She is vague  
• Our team lost because we were tired.* (not ingroup bias but…)  

• Al-Qaida is a terrorist organization.  
• When a Muslim cleric says Jesus or the U.S. is a terrorist…
• When we “torture” it is for a good reason
• When the Federation attacks the Klingons, it is because the Federation was provoked (situational).
• When we go to war, it is in the defense of our way of life.

• When they “torture” it is because they are evil.
• When Klingons attack the Federation, it is because Klingons are aggressive (dispositional).
• When they go to war, it is because they are war mongers
The biggest problem with the denizens of bullshit mountain is they act like their shit don’t stink. If they have success, they built it. If they failed, the government ruined it for them. If they get a break, they deserved it. If you get a break, it’s a handout and an entitlement. It’s a baffling, willfully blind cognitive dissonance...
- Jon Stewart
Outgroup homogeneity Effect

Out-group homogeneity effect: By clustering people into categories, these categories tend to make those within to “outgroup” seem more similar and uniform than they really are while exaggerating differences within the in-group.

- Women are all the same (implied is that men are quite different from one another)
- All New Yorkers are the same. Oregonians are different.
- People from Eugene are quite diverse. All those from Springfield are all the same.
- All those Democrats/Republicans are the same.
- All those Middle Eastern people are terrorists.
- The American population is quite diverse, however, those Europeans, Iraqis, etc. are all alike (you know “those kind of people”).
- All those artist, accountants, blondes, etc are all alike
Dividing lines exaggerate differences

Boundaries can create the perception of differences when they don’t exist. Boundaries, divisions and categories can exaggerate differences between groups that are quite similar. Different categories accentuate and focuses our attention on differences. With this example it is easy to see how context and a dividing line affect perception. In the real world, it is difficult to see this effect, especially when we can’t see the two groups with the boundary removed.
In addition, for some people, seeing the alternative is uncomfortable because it threatens their world view and sense of self. This can be especially true if you have a very homogeneous experience not filled with different perspectives.
Social Facilitation

The idea that the presence of others generally enhances performance (page 499).

[Diagram showing the relationship between presence of others, arousal, enhancement of dominant response, and performance level and arousal.]

*Psychological Science, 4/e Figure 12.17 © 2013 W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.*
Social Facilitation

Social facilitation: The idea that the presence of others generally enhances performance.
Social Facilitation and Arousal Theories

Arousal theories are based on the observation that people find both very high levels of arousal and very low levels of arousal quite unpleasant.

- When arousal is too low, we become motivated to increase arousal by seeking stimulating experiences.
- When arousal is too high, we become motivated to reduce arousal by seeking a less stimulating environment.

People are motivated to maintain an optimal level of arousal—one which is neither too high nor too low.
Social Facilitation and Arousal Theories

Arousal and Task Complexity
For easy tasks that are more automatic and well practiced, arousal and stress enhances performance, while for difficult tasks that require conscious effort, arousal and stress impair performance.
Social Facilitation and Arousal Theories

What are the implications of social facilitation and arousal theories?

In February 2009, this man, was able to be “graceful under pressure”.

Due to his experience, he was able to handle a stressful situation, calmly and in control. The stress (arousal) did not hamper his performance in what he had to do that day. He was able to land his US Airways airplane on the Hudson River with both engines out.
Arousal Theory, Social Perception and the Workplace

I was at Burger King the other day around noon. The person taking lunch orders appeared to be very "stressed out", made several mistakes and was having a hard time dealing with the mistakes. I’m glad I managed to get my order in so I don’t have to wait in line like all those other people. She said, "I normally do not take the orders, but work in the back." I quickly thought to myself, “What incompetent person—she’s messing everything up. It’s a good thing I am not that incompetent. Even if I make mistakes, it is because someone isn’t doing their job”.

- Where is the example of arousal theory?
- What are the implications for training regarding arousal theory?
**Deindividuation**

The reduction of self-awareness and inhibitions that can occur when a person is part of a group whose members feel anonymous. The feeling of anonymity can arise from being masked, dim lighting or large groups (this is not the definition in your book).

What behaviors does this help explain:
- Hooded Klu Klux Klan members
- Parties at night
- Large groups
- Masquerade parties
- Riots
What are the negative effects of deindividuation?

What are the positive effects of deindividuation?

How do you reduce effects due to deindividuation (for the negative effects)?
Deindividuation and Suicide Baiting

When conditions are likely to increase individuals' anonymity, suicide baiting tends to increase.

Percentage of times that suicide baiting occurred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crowd size</th>
<th>Time of day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;300</td>
<td>&lt;6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;300</td>
<td>&gt;6 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Psychology, 2/e  Figure 14.5
© 2011 W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
Deindividuation and Warfare

Warriors in tribes that deindividuate themselves before battle by wearing war paint and war masks tend to engage in more brutal warfare practices (page 551).
Groups: Groupthink

Among peer groups and informal settings in which social harmony is important, the costs of an incorrect decision aren’t as disastrous as those made by government and large corporations (page 556).

Irving Janis examined decisions made by government officials that led to bad decisions such as the following:

- The Bay of Pigs Invasion of Cuba to overthrow the Castro regime.
- The Johnson Administration to escalate the war in Vietnam.
- The conclusion by the U.S. naval high command to prevent the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.
- The launching of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986.

Janis says that groupthink occurred in these decisions.

Groupthink is a kind of faulty thinking on the part of highly cohesive groups in which the critical scrutiny that should be devoted to the issues at hand is subverted by social pressures to reach consensus.
Symptoms and Sources of Groupthink

Group decisions that experience groupthink tend to engage in shallow examination of information (such as relying on stereotypes, “common knowledge”, or superficial characteristics of an argument), a narrow consideration of alternatives, a sense of invulnerability and moral superiority (page 556).
Groups that engage in groupthink tend to have a strong leader, ignores alternative points of view, and discourages dissenting ideas. Good group decision-making involves the opposite processes.
Reducing Groupthink

To minimize the tendency for subordinates to self-censor themselves in group discussions, it is important for the leader or decision-maker to state their preference after everyone else has spoken. If the leader gives their preference first, it may prevent a healthy discussion of alternatives and opinions.

Have the membership of the group change so that there will be different opinions and points of view.

Appoint one person to become the “devil’s advocate”. Their job is to point out all the weaknesses of the group’s proposed course of action.

All of these are important to reduce bad decision making in groups. These take time. It is psychologically uncomfortable. If your goal is good policy, then it is worth it.
Group Polarization

Group polarization is the tendency for group decisions to be more extreme than those made by individuals. Whatever the individuals are leaning on a topic, group discussion tends to make them lean further in that direction.

Image source: Psychology, Gray
Explaining Group Polarization

- The “persuasive argument” account
  - Groups, rather than individually expose themselves to more arguments for their course of action than against. This strengthens and emboldens our positions.

- The social comparison interpretation
  - In order to determine if our beliefs are “correct” we measure or compare ourselves to the social environment. In addition, we tend to believe we are “better than average” or “more correct” than others, which brings the polarization.

With the internet, we tend to selectively expose ourselves to information that is consistent with our prior beliefs. We seek information consistent with our beliefs (the confirmation bias), and can lead us to become more extreme in our views. We tend not to expose ourselves to information inconsistent with our beliefs.
Social Loafing

The tendency for people to work less hard in a group than when working alone (page 502). Warning: this could be counter intuitive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>you work less hard in a group</th>
<th>than by yourself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pull of 100 lbs.</td>
<td>Pull of 110 lbs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social loafing tends to occur when your behavior is not monitored and your efforts cannot be directly accounted for.