

Chapter 11 Summary

- Anthropologists confirm that people tend to form groups in all known human societies. By joining a group, we attain a status, a relative social, formal, or informal position, or rank within the group. As soon as we obtain a status, we begin to perform our social roles, the sets of behaviors individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform. Each group has a set of norms, or rules within a group indicating how its members should or should not behave. Most of us identify our own in-groups, that is, groups to which we belong, and out-groups, that is, groups to which we do not belong. There are groups to which we may not belong but with which we identify ourselves: reference groups. Anthropologists suggest that territorial behavior is natural for both individuals and social groups. Groups that are inclusive will tend to tolerate “trespassers,” whereas exclusive groups will be particularly territorial.
- Studies show significant consistency in the rules of address across different cultures. Despite many similarities across countries, there are various social, religious, and cultural factors that regulate our specific contacts.
- Conformity is a form of social influence in which individuals change their attitudes and/or behavior to adhere to existing group or broader group or social norms. Conformity is a universal phenomenon, which has some variations across cultures. There is a positive correlation between individualism and economic wealth. In addition, in countries low on individualism, conformity is popular, and autonomy is rated as less important. In countries with high individualism, variety is valued. In particular, studies conducted in many Asian countries indicate that people of these cultures engage in conforming behavior to a greater degree than do people in the United States. Conformity is high in agricultural societies and low in hunting and gathering societies. It is typically lower in upper–middle-class groups and higher in lower socioeconomic groups. It is also higher in stratified societies.
- Obedience is a form of conformity when a person simply follows orders. People tend to obey other people who have power. Despite variations, it is more likely that in countries with high power distance, rates of obedience will be higher

than in countries with low power distance.

- Groupthink is the tendency of members of groups to adhere to the shared views so strongly that they ignore information inconsistent with those views. There is evidence suggesting that groupthink is common in every culture. Group polarization is the tendency for group members to shift, as a result of group discussion, toward more extreme positions than those they initially held. In the case of group polarization, group cohesiveness may not be as important for the group members. In some cases, the risky shift phenomenon occurs, which means that group decisions are often riskier than individual views held by the members before discussion or decision making. If a culture values risky behavior in its individuals, the risky shift is likely to occur.
- Social loafing is the tendency of group members to exert less effort on a task than they would if working alone or when the size of the group is expanding. In many cultures in which social loafing does not occur, the existing collectivist norms stimulate interpersonal interdependence. In competitive reward structure, a person gains when other members lose. In a cooperative reward structure, people’s rewards are positively linked. In an individualistic reward structure, the outcomes of individuals are independent of each other.
- Leadership is the process through which some individuals (leaders) influence other group members toward attainment of specific group goals. Goal-oriented leaders organize their activities around the group’s prime goals. The group-oriented leader is concerned first with in-group relationships. The self-oriented leaders’ concerns have to do with their own power. Traditionally, there are three major leadership styles recognized. In the authoritarian leadership style, the leader makes important decisions. In the democratic style, the leader makes decisions after consulting with the group members. The third is called *laissez-faire*, and in this style, the leader does not try to exercise control over the group, but gives the group members general instructions and advice. The usefulness of these styles is based on particular situational or cultural conditions.

Key Terms

Cohesiveness All forces acting on group members to cause them to remain part of a group, including mutual attraction, interdependence, and shared goals.

Competition A form of social interaction in which individuals or groups attempt to maximize their own outcomes, often at the expense of others.

Compliance Doing or saying what others say or do.

Conformity A form of social influence in which individuals change their attitudes or/and behavior to adhere to existing social norms.

Cooperation A form of social interaction in which individuals or groups coordinate their behavior to reach a shared goal.

Group Two or more individuals forming a complete unit in a composition.

Group Polarization The tendency of group members to shift, as a result of group discussion, toward more extreme positions than those they initially held.

Groupthink The tendency of members of groups to adhere to the shared views so strongly that they ignore information inconsistent with those views.

Identification The process wherein the individual so strongly feels that he is a member of a group that he adopts its opinions, attitudes, and values.

Leadership The process through which some individuals (leaders) influence other group members toward the attainment of a specific group goal or activity.

Norms Rules within a group indicating how its members should (or should not) behave.

Obedience A form of social influence in which one person simply orders one or more people to perform some action(s).

Power The capacity or ability of an individual to exercise control and/or authority.

Roles The sets of behaviors that individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform.

Sanctions Actions that reward those who follow the norms (positive sanctions) and reprove those who are deviant (negative sanctions).

Social Facilitation Effects on performance resulting from the presence of others.

Social Influence Efforts on the part of one person to alter the behavior or attitudes of one or more people.

Social Loafing The tendency of some group members to exert less effort on a task than they would if working alone.

Social Power The ability or capacity to exercise control, authority.

Status Relative social (formal or informal) position or rank within a group.