



Corso di
***Dinamiche dei Gruppi Virtuali e dei Social
Networks***
a.a. 2018-2019

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Topic 000

Psychological Groups: a brief introduction

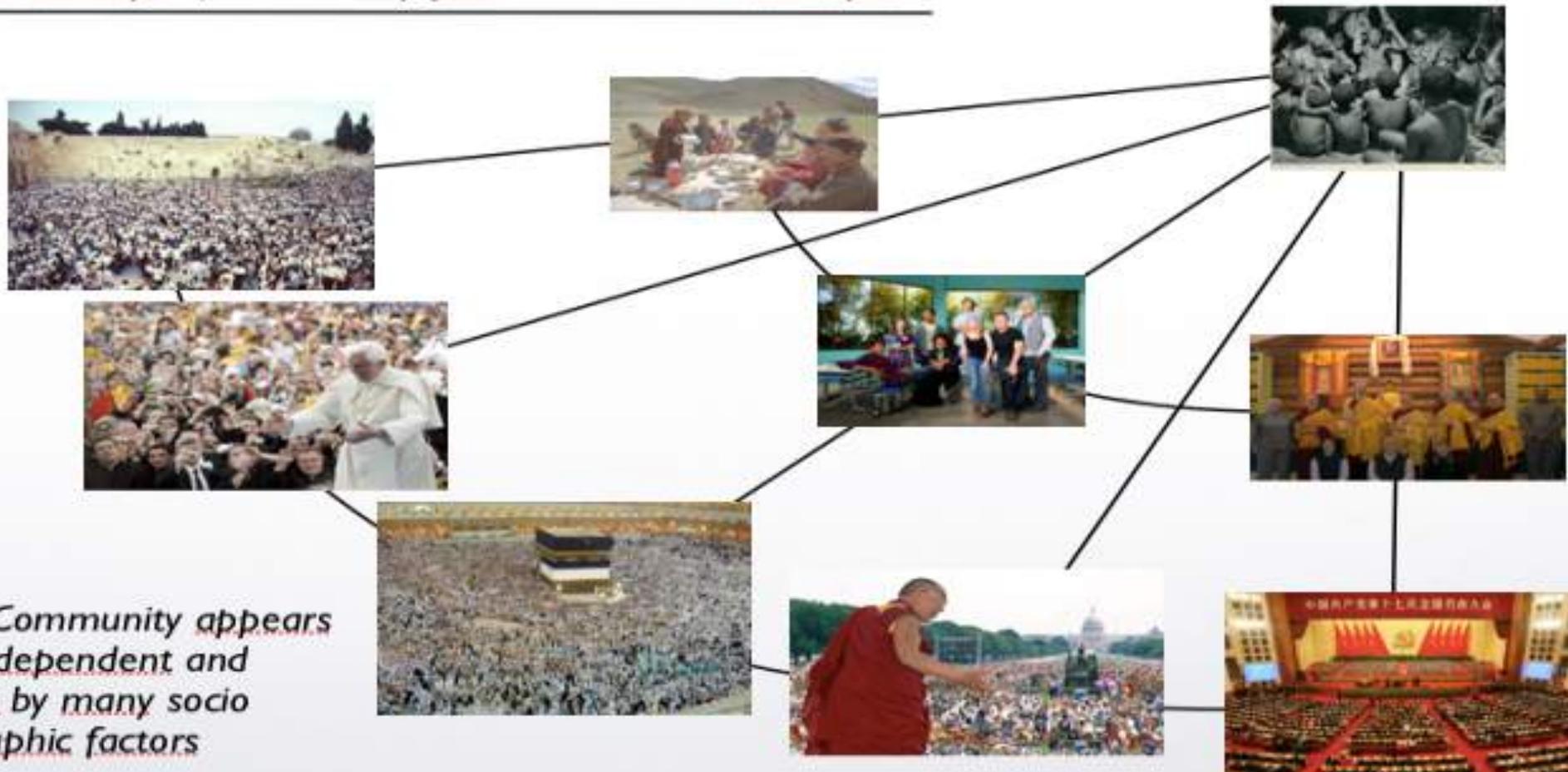
Module 1

Definition and Description of Psychological Groups

Topic 000 – Psychological Groups: a brief introduction

Module 1 - Definition and Description of Psychological Groups

The “ambiguous” concept of Community: just some Human example



The concept of Community appears as Culture dependent and determined by many socio demographic factors

Theoretical Key Concept

Group Dynamics

Group dynamics are the influential actions, processes, and changes that occur within and between groups. Groups come in all shapes and sizes and their functions are many and varied, but their influence is universal. the tendency to join with others in groups is perhaps the single most important characteristic of humans, and the processes that unfold within these groups leave an indelible imprint on their members and on society. To understand people, one must understand groups and their dynamics (Forsyth, 2004).



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Module 1 - Definition and Description of Psychological Groups

Defining Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

A broad definition of Psychological Groups

- *A group faces with communication or mutual dependance.*
- *Groups share purposes and goals, and only such a things turn a mere aggregate of individuals into a “group”.*
- *Groups share norms, roles and status (Social structure).*
- *Groups come into existence when people became linked togheter by some type of relationship*



Defining Groups

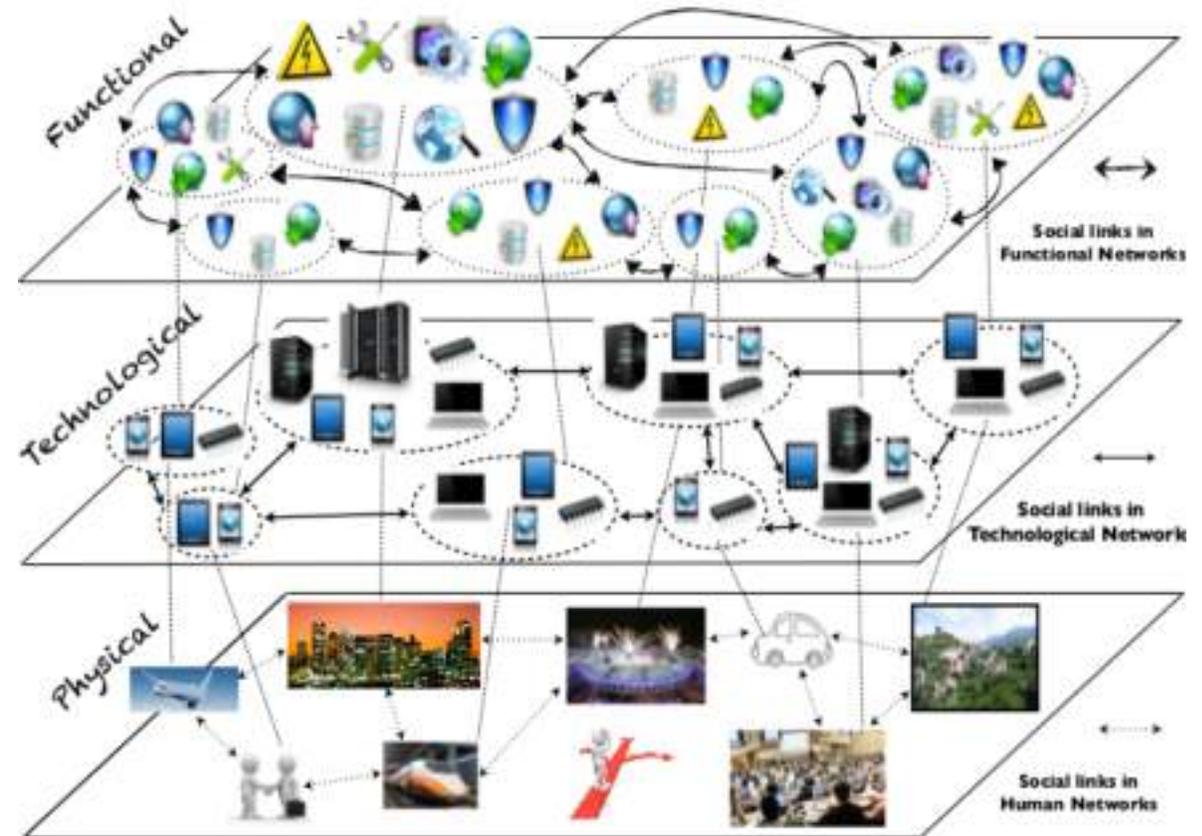
In general among the others we can find very special groups, such as families, where members are connected by more than 1 similarity:

- a- Genetic similarities
- b- Legal rights
- c- Sharing of environments
- d- Communicative connection
- e-

Theoretical Key Concept

Multiplex Network

Such a feature suggests how reality is more complex than any toy-model. When nodes can be connected by more than one possible link, and/or when nodes can be connected on more than one possible space, science uses to represent such a systema the concept of Multiplex or Coupled Networks



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Categorization	Two or more individuals [who] perceive themselves to be members of the same social category (Turner, 1982)
Communication	Three or more people who (a) think of themselves as a group, (b) are interdependent, and (c) communicate with one another (Frey et al. 2010)
Face-To-Face	Any number of persons engaged in interaction with one another in a single face-to-face meeting or series of such meetings (Bales, 1950)
Influence	Two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person (Shaw, 1981)
Interaction	Two or more interdependent individuals who influence one another through social interaction (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2007)
Interdependence	A dynamics whole based on interdependence rather than similarity (Lewin, 1948)
Interrelations	An aggregation of two or more people who are to some degree in dynamic interrelation with one another (McGrath, 1984)
Need satisfaction	A collection of organisms in which the existence of all (in their given relationships) is necessary to the satisfaction of certain individual needs in each (Cattell, 1951)

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Psychological Significance	A psychological group is any number of people who interact with each other, are psychologically aware of each other, and perceive themselves to be in a group (Pennington, 2002)
Relations	Individuals who stand in certain relations to each other, for example, as sharing a common purpose or having a common intentionality, or acting together, or at least having a common interest (Gould, 2004)
Shared Identity	Two or more people possessing a common social identification and whose existence as a group is recognized by a third party (r. Brown, 2000)
Shared tasks and goals	Three or more people who work together interdependently on an agreed-upon activity or goal (Keyton, 2002)
Size	Two or more people (Williams, 2010)
Structure	A social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in definite status and role relationships to one another and which possesses a set of values, norms of its own regulating the behavior of individual members, at least in matters of consequences of the group (Sherif, 1956)
Systems	An intact social system, complete with boundaries, interdependence for some shared purpose, and differentiated member roles (Hackman, 2010)

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Theoretical Key Concept

Group Size

A group can range in size from two members to many thousands. Very small collectives, such as dyads (two members) and triads (three members) are groups, but so are large mobs, crowds, and congregations (Simmel, 1902). Most groups, however, tend to be small, including two to seven members (James, 1951)



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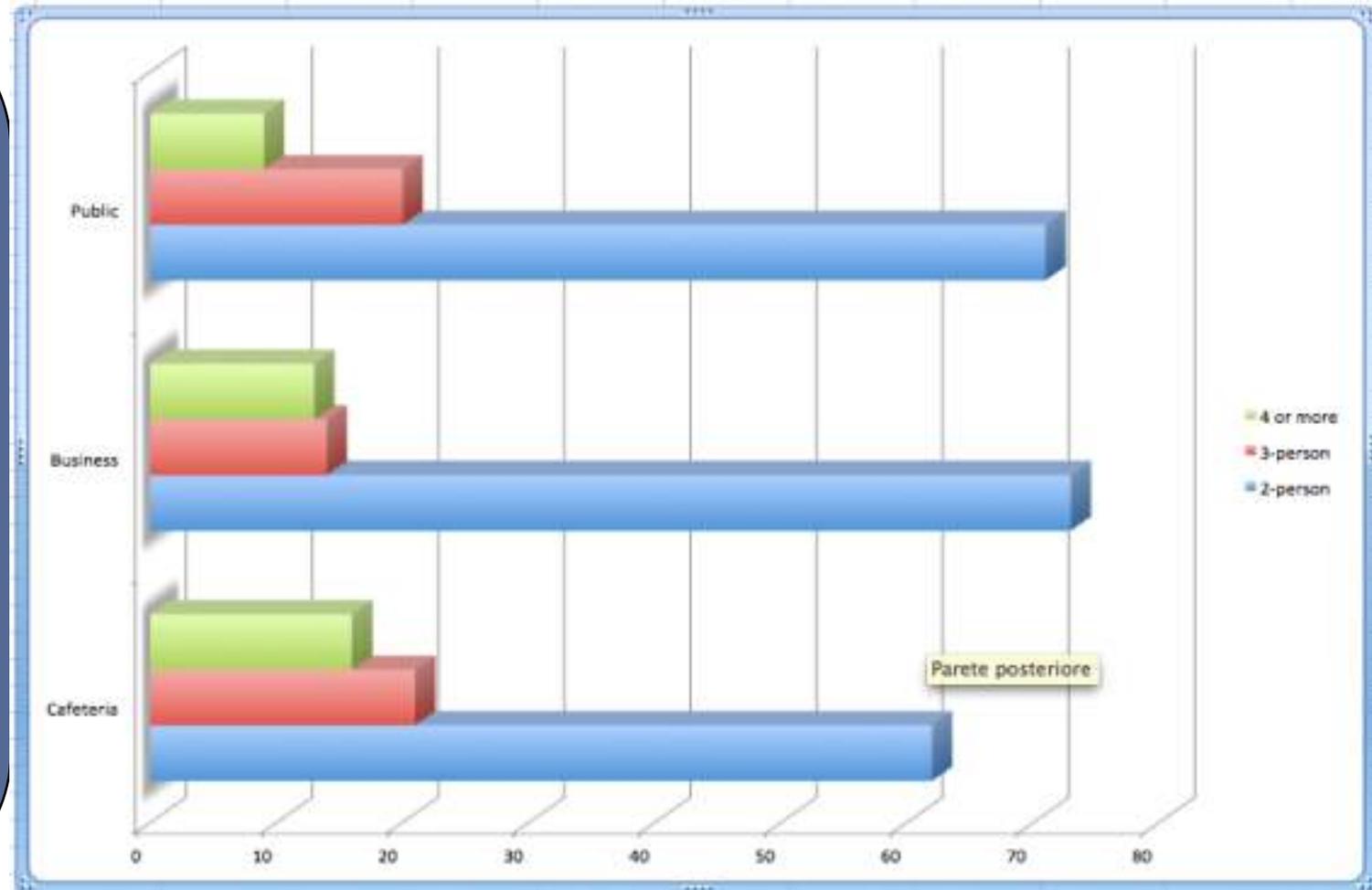
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Defining Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Typical Size of Psychological Groups

Classical researches have been confirmed by recent literature for what concern the fact that: “human groups gravitates to the smallest size, two”
(Hare, 1976; Ruef, 2003)



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Module 1 - Definition and Description of Psychological Groups

Describing Groups

Each one of the billions of groups that exist at this moment is a unique configuration of individuals, processes, and relationships.

Theoretical Key Concept

Psychological Groups Characterization

But all groups, despite their distinctive characteristics, possess common properties and dynamics. When researchers study a group, they must go beyond its unique qualities to consider characteristics that appear with consistency in most groups.

Some of these qualities, such as what the group members are doing and the tasks they are attempting, are relatively obvious ones. Other qualities, such as the degree of interdependence among members or the group's overall unity, are harder to discern.



VS



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Describing Groups

Robert F. Bales (1950, 1999) spent his career searching for an answer to the question, “What do people do when they are in groups?” Bales eventually concluded that the countless interactions he had witnessed were of two basic types.

Theoretical Key Concept

Interaction

- ***Relationship interaction*** (or *socioemotional interaction*) - Actions performed by group members that relate to or influence the emotional and interpersonal bonds within the group, including both positive actions (social support, consideration) and negative actions (criticism, conflict).
- ***Task interaction*** - Actions performed by group members that pertain to the group’s projects, tasks, and goals.



VS



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Describing Groups

Groups usually exist for a reason. A team strives to outperform other teams in competitions. A study group wants to help members get better grades. A jury makes a decision about guilt or innocence.

Theoretical Key Concept

Goals

In each case, the members of the group are united in their pursuit of common goals. In groups, people solve problems, create products, develop standards, communicate knowledge, have fun, perform arts, create institutions, and even ensure their safety from attacks by other groups. Put simply, groups make it easier to attain our goals. For this reason, much of the world's work is done by groups rather than by individuals.



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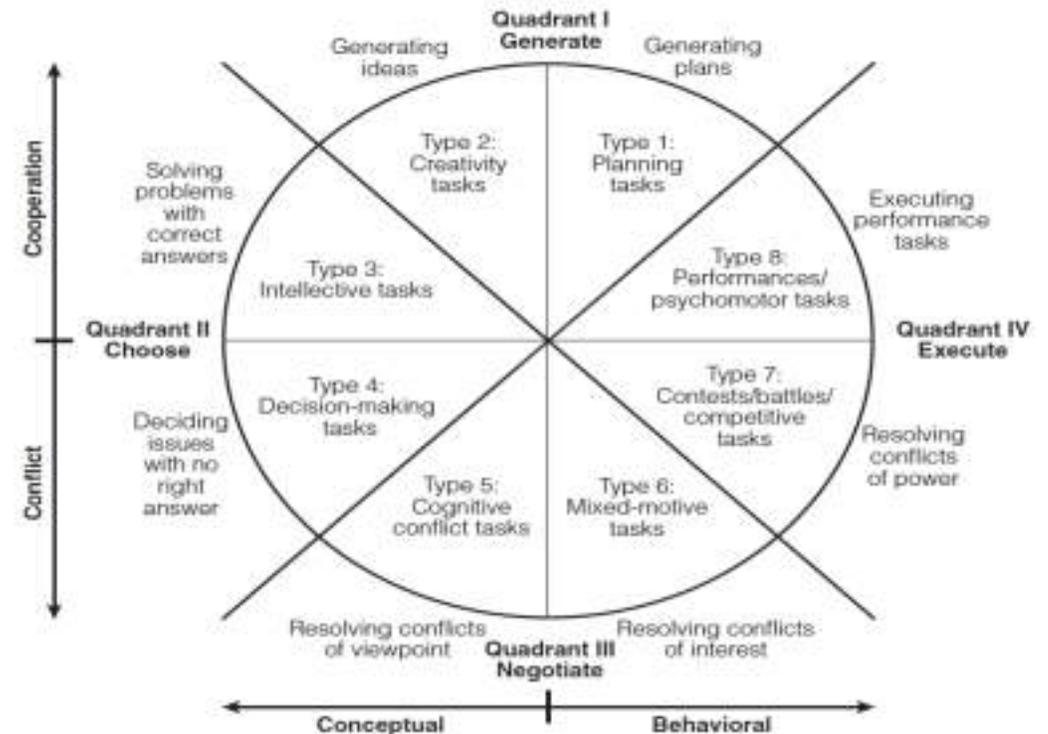
Describing Groups

Just as Bales identified the basic types of interactions that occur within groups, so Joseph E. McGrath's (1984) with the circumplex model of group tasks brings order to the many goal-related activities that groups undertake. McGrath's model distinguishes among four basic group goals: generating ideas or plans, choosing a solution, negotiating a solution to a conflict, or executing (performing) a task.

Theoretical Key Concept

Circumplex model of group tasks

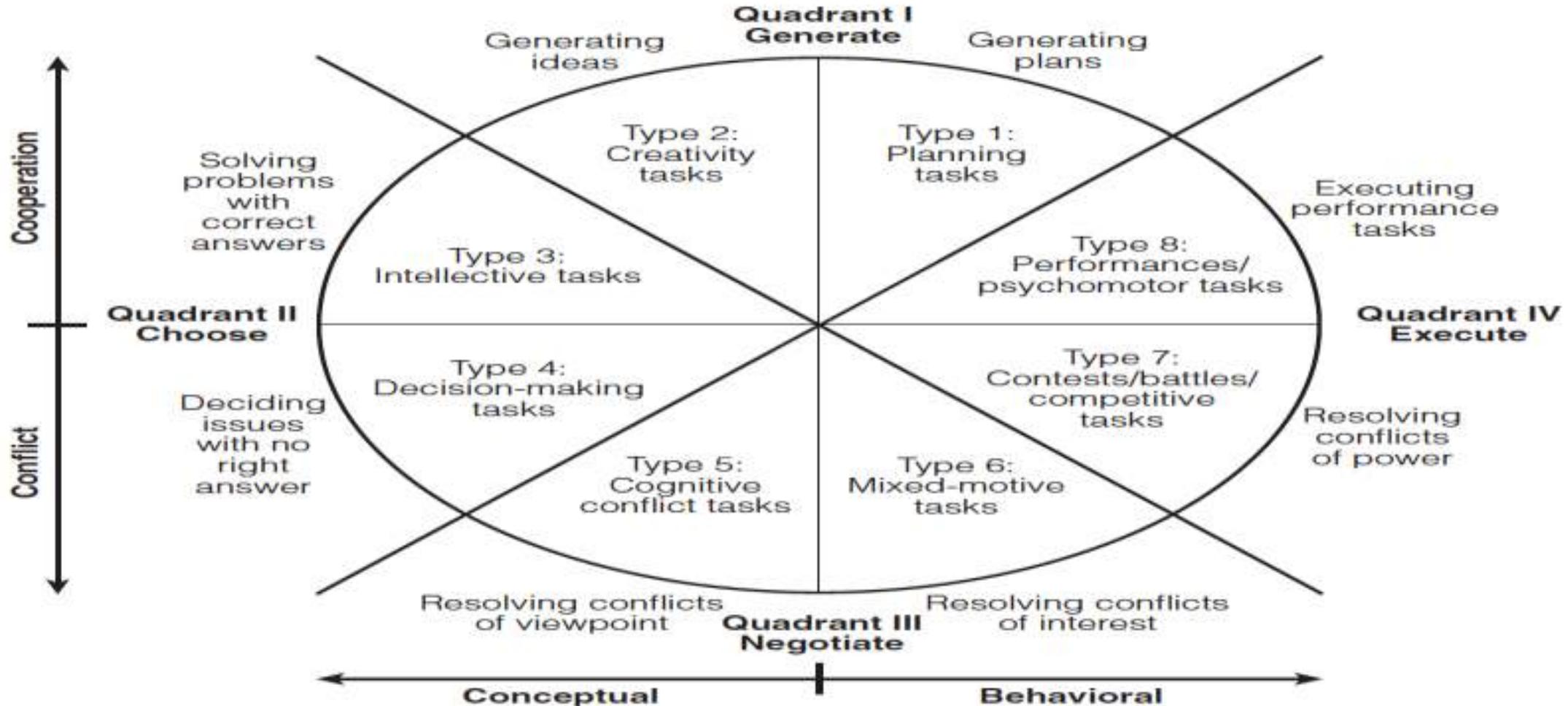
A conceptual taxonomy developed by Joseph McGrath that orders group tasks in a circular pattern based on two continua: cooperative-competitive and conceptual-behavioral. Each of these basic categories can be further subdivided, yielding a total of eight basic goal-related activities.



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Describing Groups – The Circumplex Model by McGrath



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Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

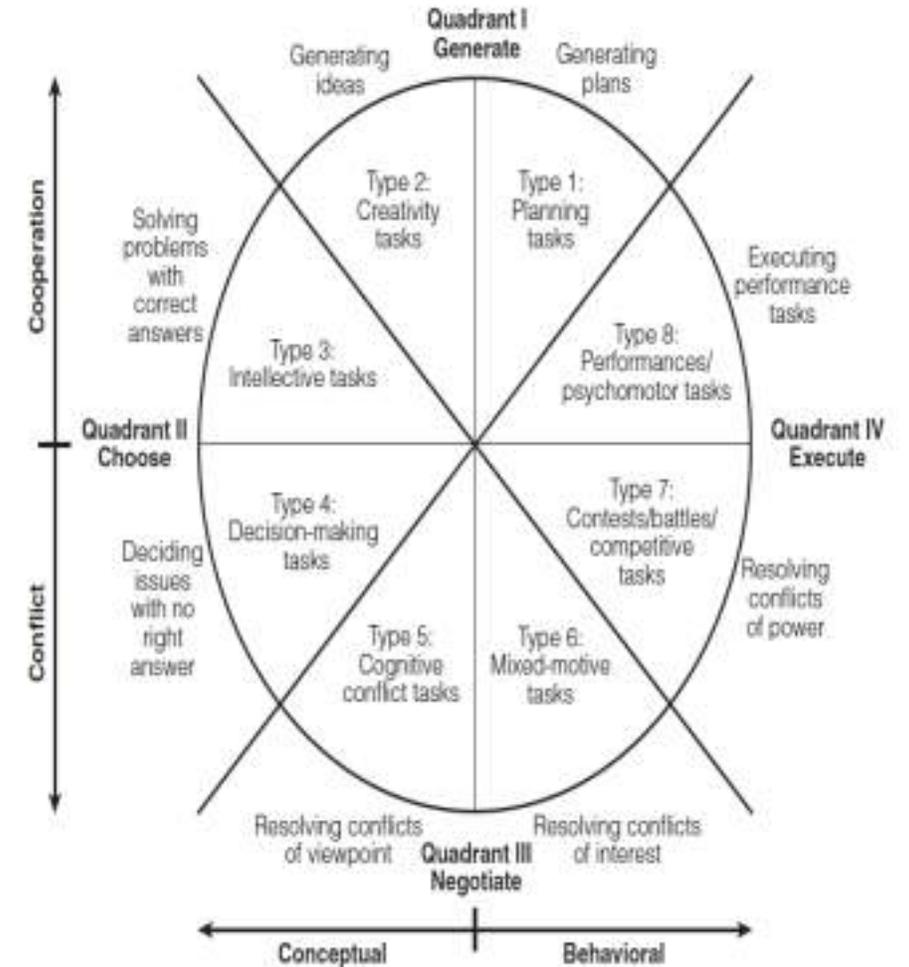
Quadrant and Sectors Description

Generating: Groups that concoct the strategies they will use to accomplish their goals (Type 1: planning tasks) or to create altogether new ideas and approaches to their problems (Type 2: creativity tasks).

Choosing: Groups that make decisions about issues that have correct solutions (Type 3: intellective tasks) or questions that can be answered in many ways (Type 4: decisionmaking tasks).

Negotiating: Groups that must resolve differences of opinion among members regarding their goals or decisions (Type 5: cognitive conflict tasks) or resolve competitive disputes among members (Type 6: mixed-motive tasks).

Executing: Groups that do things, including taking part in competitions (Type 7: contests/battles/competitive tasks) or working together to create some product or carry out collective actions (Type 8: Performances tasks).



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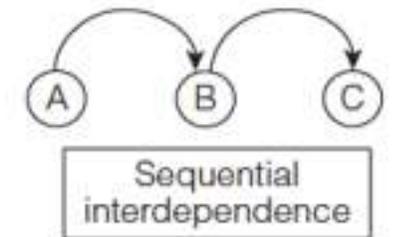
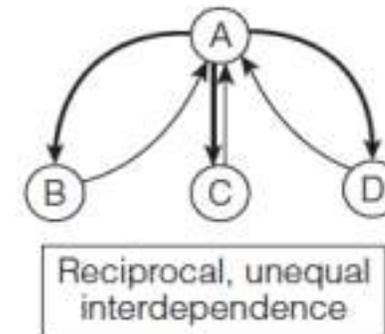
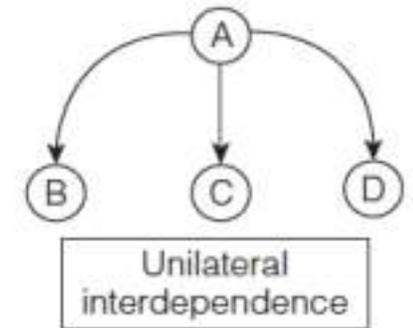
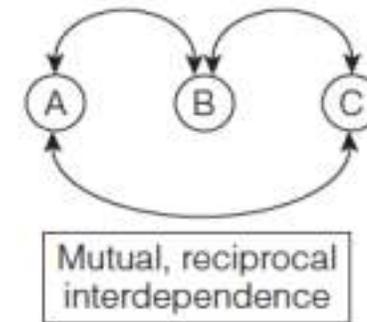
When people join groups they soon discover that they are no longer masters of their own fate. She can fulfill her personal tasks skillfully, but if her staff fails, then she fails as well. In such situations, members are obligated or responsible to other group members, for they provide each other with support and assistance. This interdependence means that members depend on one another; their outcomes, actions, thoughts, feelings, and experiences are determined in part by others in the group.

Theoretical Key Concept

Interdependence

Some groups create only the potential for interdependence among members. The outcomes of people standing in a queue at the checkout counter in a store, audience members in a darkened theater, or the congregation of a large mega-church are hardly intertwined at all.

Other groups, such as gangs, families, sports teams, and military squads, create far higher levels of interdependency since members reliably and substantially influence one another's outcomes over a long period of time and in a variety of situations. In such groups the influence of one member on another also tends to be mutual; member A can influence B, but B can also influence A in return. In other groups, in contrast, influence is more unequal and more one-directional



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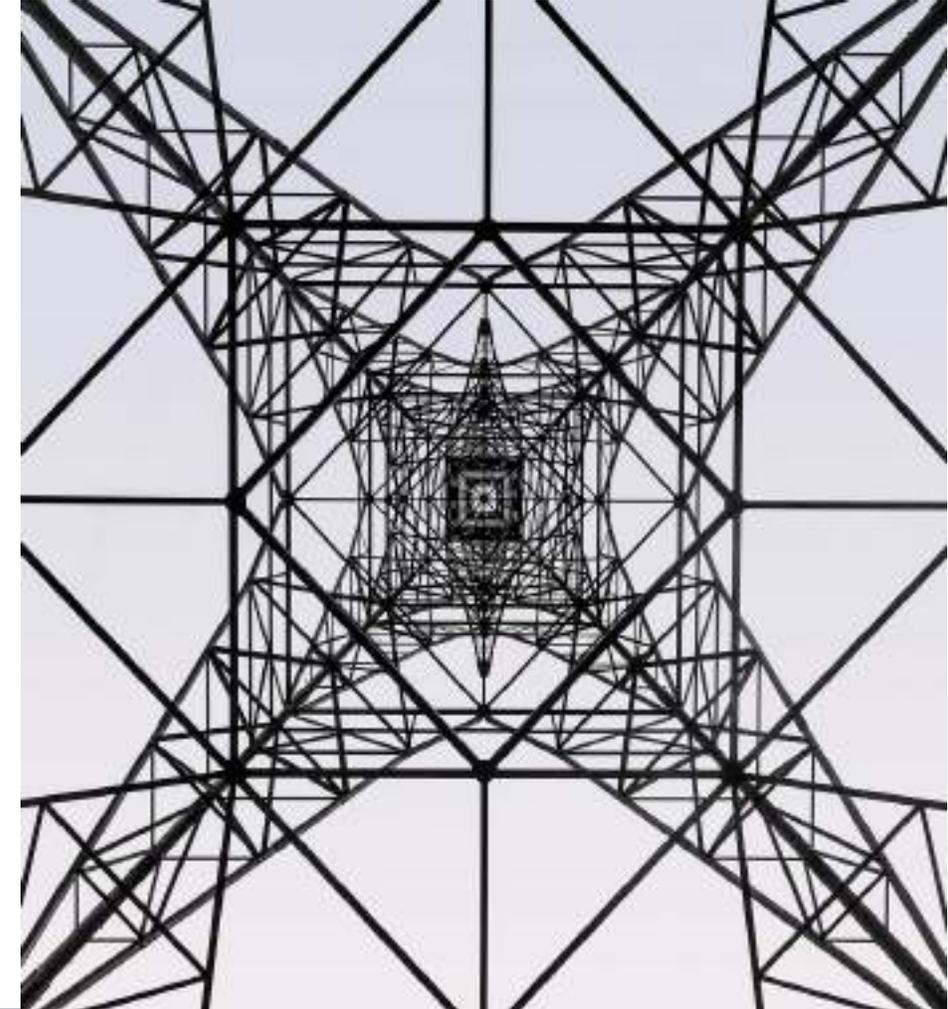
Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Structure

Group members are not connected to one another at random, but in organized and predictable patterns. In all but the most ephemeral groups, patterns and regularities emerge that determine the kinds of actions that are permitted or condemned: who talks to whom, who likes whom and who dislikes whom, who can be counted on to perform particular tasks, and whom others look to for guidance and help. These regularities combine to generate group structure—the complex of roles, norms, and intermember relations that organizes the group.

(i.e. Structure is the result of the underlying pattern of roles, norms, and relations among members that organizes groups.)



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Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Structure - Role

A coherent set of behaviors expected of people who occupy specific positions within a group.

Roles specify the general behaviors expected of people who occupy different positions within the group. The roles of leader and follower are fundamental ones in many groups, but other roles—information seeker, information giver, elaborator, procedural technician, encourager, compromiser, harmonizer—may emerge in any group (Benne & Sheats, 1948).



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Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Structure - Norm

A consensual and often implicit standard that describes what behaviors should and should not be performed in a given context.

Group members' actions and interactions are also shaped by their group's norms—consensual standards that describe what behaviors should and should not be performed in a given context.



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Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Unity

Just as a book is not just a set of sequenced pages, so a group is not just the individuals who compose it. A group, viewed holistically, is a unified whole; an entity formed when interpersonal forces bind the members together in a single unit with boundaries that mark who is in the group and who is outside of it.



Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Group Cohesion

The strength of the bonds linking individuals to and in the group.

All groups require a modicum of cohesiveness, else the group would disintegrate and cease to exist as a group (Dion, 2000).



Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Entitativity

As described by Donald Campbell, the extent to which an assemblage of individuals is perceived to be a single entity (a group) rather than an aggregation of independent, unrelated individuals; the quality of being an entity.



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Describing Groups

What factors determine a group's entitativity?

Donald Campbell (1958a), who originally coined the word entitativity, suggested that a group's entitativity depends on certain perceptual cues that perceivers rely on intuitively to decide if an aggregation of individuals is a true group or just a collection of people.

For example, the spectators at a football game may seem to be a disorganized mass of individuals who happen to be in the same place at the same time, but the tendency of the spectators to shout the same cheer, express similar emotions, and move together to create a "wave" gives them entitativity.

Theoretical Key Concept

Entitativity

Entitativity, according to Campbell, is substantially influenced by:

Common fate: Do the individuals experience the same or interrelated outcomes?

Similarity: Do the individuals perform similar behaviors or resemble one another?

Proximity: How close together are the individuals in the aggregation?

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Describing Groups

Labeling an aggregation a group is not just a matter of semantics, since people respond differently to groups than they do to clusters of individuals.

Theoretical Key Concept

Entitativity - Principles

The principle of **Common Fate** predicts that the degree of “groupness” you attribute to the cluster would increase if, for example, all the members began laughing together or moved closer to one another (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Bourguignon, 2002).

Your Confidence that this cluster was a real group would also be bolstered if you noticed that all four were reading from the same textbook or were wearing the same fraternity shirt (**Similarity**).

Finally, if the members got up and left the room together (**Proximity**), you would become even more certain that you were watching a group (Ip, Chiu, & Wan, 2006).

Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Primary Groups

primary group: A small, long-term group, such as families and friendship cliques, characterized by face-to-face interaction, solidarity, and high levels of member-to-group interdependence and identification; Charles Cooley believed such groups serve as the primary source of socialization for members by shaping their attitudes, values, and social orientation. (Cooley, 1909).

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Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Social Groups

social group: A relatively small number of individuals who interact with one another over an extended period of time, such as work groups, clubs, and congregations. These groups are larger and more formally organized than primary groups, and memberships tend to be shorter in duration and less emotionally involving. The boundaries of such groups are more permeable, so members can leave old groups behind and join new ones. These groups are, in general, more instrumental ones: they are likely to stress the performance of tasks rather than enjoying relationships. Various terms have been used to describe this category of groups, such as secondary groups (Cooley, 1909), associations (Maclver & Page, 1937), task groups (Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001), and Gesellschaften (Toennies, 1887/1963).

Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Collectives

collective: describes any aggregate of two or more individuals and, hence, would be synonymous with the term group (Blumer, 1951). Most theorists, however, reserve the term for larger, more spontaneous and looser forms of associations among people. Collectives are larger groups whose members act in similar and sometimes unusual ways.

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Describing Groups

Theoretical Key Concept

Categories

A **category** is an aggregation of individuals who are similar to one another in some way.

For example, people who live in New York City are New Yorkers, Americans whose ancestors were from Africa are African Americans, and those who routinely wager sums of money on games of chance are gamblers.

If a category has no social implications, then it only describes individuals who share a feature in common and is not a meaningful group. If, however, these categories set in motion personal or interpersonal processes—if two students in college become friends when they discover they grew up in the same town, if people respond to a person differently when they see he is an African American, or if a person begins to gamble even more of her earnings because her social identity includes the category gambler—then a category may be transformed into a highly influential group (Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005). In such cases, categories can be higher in entitativity and essentialism than other types of groups.

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Module 1 - Definition and Description of Psychological Groups

Main Questions from the Module 000.1

Id	Question
000.1.1	What's the definition of Group Dynamics?
000.1.2	What are the fundamental elements required to define a Psychological Group?
000.1.3	What's a Multiplex Network?
000.1.4	What's the possible and typical size of Psychological Groups?
000.1.5	What's the Bales' classification of possible Group Interactions?
000.1.6	Describe the Circumplex Model of Group Tasks by McGrath.
000.1.7	Describe the concept of Interdependence within Psychological Groups.
000.1.8	Describe the concept of Structure of a Psychological Group.
000.1.9	What's the definition of Role within the domain of Group Psychology?
000.1.10	What's the definition of Norm within the domain of Group Psychology?
000.1.11	Describe the concept of Unity within the domain of Group Psychology.

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Main Questions from the Module 000.1

Id	Question
000.1.12	What factors determine a group's entitativity?
000.1.13	How the Psychological Groups can be classified?
000.1.14	What's the definition of Primary Group?
000.1.15	What's the definition of Secondary (Social) Groups?
000.1.16	What's the definition of Collectives?
000.1.17	What's the definition of Categories?

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Main Questions from the Module 000.1

Id	Answers
000.1.1	<p>Group Dynamics</p> <p>Group dynamics are the influential actions, processes, and changes that occur within and between groups. Groups come in all shapes and sizes and their functions are many and varied, but their influence is universal. the tendency to join with others in groups is perhaps the singles most important characteristic of humans, and the processes that unfold within these groups leave an indelible imprint on their members and on society. To understand people, one must understand groups and their dynamcs (Forsyth, 2004).</p>
000.1.2	<p>A broad definition of Psychological Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group faces with communication or mutual dependance. • Groups share purposes and goals, and only such a things turn a mere aggregate of individuals into a “group”. • Groups share norms, roles and status (Social structure). • Groups come into existence when people became linked togheter by some type of relationship
000.1.3	<p>Multiplex Network</p> <p>Such a feature suggests how reality is more complex than any toy-model. When nodes can be connected by more than one possible link, and/or when nodes can be connected on more than one possible space, sience uses to represent such a systema the concept of Multiplex or Coupled Networks</p>
000.1.4	<p>Group Size</p> <p>A group can range in size from two members to many thousands. Very small collectives, such as dyads (two members) and triads (three members) are groups, but so are large mobs, crowds, and congregations (Simmel, 1902). Most groups, however, tend to be small, ranging between two and seven members (James, 1951). Classical researches have been confirmed by recent literature for what concern the fact that: “human groups gravitates to the smallest size, two” (Hare, 1976; Ruef, 2003).</p>

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Main Questions from the Module 000.1

Id	Answers
000.1.5	<p>Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship interaction (or socioemotional interaction) - Actions performed by group members that relate to or influence the emotional and interpersonal bonds within the group, including both positive actions (social support, consideration) and negative actions (criticism, conflict). Task interaction - Actions performed by group members that pertain to the group's projects, tasks, and goals.
000.1.6	<p>Circumplex model of group tasks</p> <p>A conceptual taxonomy developed by Joseph McGrath that orders group tasks in a circular pattern based on two continua: cooperative–competitive and conceptual–behavioral. Each of these basic categories can be further subdivided, yielding a total of eight basic goal-related activities.</p>
000.1.7	<p>Interdependence</p> <p>Some groups create only the potential for interdependence among members. The outcomes of people standing in a queue at the checkout counter in a store, audience members in a darkened theater, or the congregation of a large mega-church are hardly intertwined at all. Other groups, such as gangs, families, sports teams, and military squads, create far higher levels of interdependency since members reliably and substantially influence one another's outcomes over a long period of time and in a variety of situations. In such groups the influence of one member on another also tends to be mutual; member A can influence B, but B can also influence A in return. In other groups, in contrast, influence is more unequal and more one-directional</p>
000.1.8	<p>Structure</p> <p>Group members are not connected to one another at random, but in organized and predictable patterns. In all but the most ephemeral groups, patterns and regularities emerge that determine the kinds of actions that are permitted or condemned: who talks to whom, who likes whom and who dislikes whom, who can be counted on to perform particular tasks, and whom others look to for guidance and help. These regularities combine to generate group structure—the complex of roles, norms, and intermember relations that organizes the group. (i.e. Structure is the result of the underlying pattern of roles, norms, and relations among members that organizes groups.)</p>

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Main Questions from the Module 000.1

Id	Answers
000.1.9	<p>Role</p> <p>A coherent set of behaviors expected of people who occupy specific positions within a group. Roles specify the general behaviors expected of people who occupy different positions within the group. The roles of leader and follower are fundamental ones in many groups, but other roles—information seeker, information giver, elaborator, procedural technician, encourager, compromiser, harmonizer—may emerge in any group (Benne & Sheats, 1948).</p>
000.1.10	<p>Norm</p> <p>A consensual and often implicit standard that describes what behaviors should and should not be performed in a given context. Group members' actions and interactions are also shaped by their group's norms—consensual standards that describe what behaviors should and should not be performed in a given context.</p>
000.1.11	<p>Unity</p> <p>Just as a book is not just a set of sequenced pages, so a group is not just the individuals who compose it. A group, viewed holistically, is a unified whole; an entity formed when interpersonal forces bind the members together in a single unit with boundaries that mark who is in the group and who is outside of it. Unity can be study by means of Group Cohesion, i.e. the strength of the bonds linking individuals to and in the group. All groups require a modicum of cohesiveness, else the group would disintegrate and cease to exist as a group (Dion, 2000).</p>
000.1.12	<p>Entitativity, according to Campbell, is substantially influenced by:</p> <p>Common fate: Do the individuals experience the same or interrelated outcomes? - Similarity: Do the individuals perform similar behaviors or resemble one another? - Proximity: How close together are the individuals in the aggregation?</p>
000.1.13	<p>Group Calssification</p> <p>Primary Groups, Secondary (Social) Groups, Collective, and Categories.</p>

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Main Questions from the Module 000.1

Id	Answers
000.1.14	<p>Primary Groups</p> <p>primary group: A small, long-term group, such as families and friendship cliques, characterized by face-to-face interaction, solidarity, and high levels of member-to-group interdependence and identification; Charles Cooley believed such groups serve as the primary source of socialization for members by shaping their attitudes, values, and social orientation. (Cooley, 1909).</p>
000.1.15	<p>Social Groups</p> <p>social group: A relatively small number of individuals who interact with one another over an extended period of time, such as work groups, clubs, and congregations. These groups are larger and more formally organized than primary groups, and memberships tend to be shorter in duration and less emotionally involving. The boundaries of such groups are more permeable, so members can leave old groups behind and join new ones. These groups are, in general, more instrumental ones: they are likely to stress the performance of tasks rather than enjoying relationships. Various terms have been used to describe this category of groups, such as secondary groups (Cooley, 1909), associations (MacIver & Page, 1937), task groups (Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001), and Gesellschafte (Toennies, 1887/1963).</p>
000.1.16	<p>Collectives</p> <p>describe any aggregate of two or more individuals and, hence, would be synonymous with the term group (Blumer, 1951). Most theorists, however, reserve the term for larger, more spontaneous and looser forms of associations among people. Collectives are larger groups whose members act in similar and sometimes unusual ways.</p>

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Main Questions from the Module 000.1

Id	Answers
000.1.17	<p>A category is an aggregation of individuals who are similar to one another in some way. For example, people who live in New York City are New Yorkers, Americans whose ancestors were from Africa are African Americans, and those who routinely wager sums of money on games of chance are gamblers. If a category has no social implications, then it only describes individuals who share a feature in common and is not a meaningful group. If, however, these categories set in motion personal or interpersonal processes—if two students in college become friends when they discover they grew up in the same town, if people respond to a person differently when they see he is an African American, or if a person begins to gamble even more of her earnings because her social identity includes the category gambler—then a category may be transformed into a highly influential group (Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005). In such cases, categories can be higher in entitativity and essentialism than other types of groups.</p>