**Introduction to Sociology**

Chapter 8 “Groups”: Assignments

**8.1 Groups unite and divide**

**Q1.**

List 5 groups you are affiliated to. What kind of affiliations do you have to these groups? Different types of affiliations to one group are possible.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Group** | **Type of affiliation** |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |

**Q2.**

Some groups can also be considered to be voluntary associations. Give an example from your own environment and explain why this example fits the characteristics of a voluntary organization.

**Q3.**

Consider the statement by Putnam (Chapter 8), regarding the existence of civil societies. He posed that governmental institutions functioned very differently between the North and South in Italy. In the North, so he claimed there was more of a civil society. Fill in the theory schema below to fit this argument.

(P)

(C)

(O) In the North of Italy, governmental institutions function more effectively than in the South.

**Q4.**

Explain in your own words what a “civil society” is, and why this is vital for social cohesion.

**Q5.**

How does the concept of “civil society” relate to the concept of “organizational cohesion”?

**Q6.**

Does high organizational cohesion imply high intergroup cohesion?

**Q7.**

What are the most important group boundaries in your society? Between which groups is there a lack of social cohesion?

**8.2 Group segregation**

**Q1.**

Consider the following hypothetical network, depicting two groups and their individual members’ ties.

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Q1a. How many group-bridging ties are there in this example? And how many group-bonding ties?

Q1b. What is the group segregation index here? What does this number mean?

Q1c. Suppose the economics students all follow a class along with the sociology students, to increase their understanding of sociological insights. As a result, some new friendships between students of the two majors emerge. What will this likely do to the group segregation index, assuming that students don’t end their existing friendships?

**Q2**

Think about your five best friends. How homogenous is your best-friends network in terms of gender and ethnicity? Are there other dimensions that make your network homogenous?

**Q3.**

Think about the marriages (or cohabitation) within your own family (parents, grandparents). For each of these marriages, describe whether they are endogamous or exogamous. Which group affiliation do you consider (e.g., ethnicity, education)?

**8.3 The Causes of Group segregation**

**Q1.**

Consider the following press release from the United States census of 2010: *“Interracial and interethnic married couples grew by 28% percent over decade*”, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-68.html>. Give three possible factors that may have influenced this development and explain *how* they may have affected intermarriage rates.

**Q2.**

According to structural opportunity theory, why will ties more easily emerge among those who share foci?

**Q3.**

Can you think of an example in which third parties may promote or disincentivize the formation of interethnic romantic relationships?

**8.4 In-group favoritism**

**Q1.**

Suppose you have become interested in the minimal group paradigm and want to set up your own experiment. However, you still struggle with deciding on an appropriate group characteristic. What is a prerequisite for group characteristics based on which minimal group experiments are set up? Explain also why this is an important consideration when deciding on a group characteristic. Can you give an example of a group characteristic that would be unsuitable for a minimal group experiment?

**Q2.**

What is “social identity”? How does this concept relate to “personal identity”, and what role does it play in intergroup situations according to social identity theory?

**Q3.**

How does social identity theory relate to the minimal group paradigm? And how do these concepts together relate to in-group favoritism?

**8.5 Social context and in-group favoritism**

**Q1.**

It is argued in the textbook that intergroup cohesion is “contingent on social context”. Explain in your own words what this means.

**8.6 Group Threat Theory**

**Q1.**

Explain in your own words how sometimes, in-group favoritism may lead to decreasing intergroup cohesion, according to group threat theory. Make sure to define concepts and theories you refer to.

**Q2.**

Consider again the case of the Robbers Cave Experiment. While in week 2 of this experiment, conditions favored the development of intergroup competition, this was overcome in week 3. Explain how this was done and come up with an example applying this solution to a real-life situation.

**Q3.**

Group threat theory is a well-known theory in the sociology of intergroup relations. Core to this theory are two propositions: the *economic competition proposition* and the *cultural competition proposition.*

Q3a. How could you use these propositions to understand contemporary intergroup conflicts? Give an example and explain.

Q3b. Use one of these propositions to derive a new hypothesis.

**Chapter generic questions**

**Q1.**

Read the following article in *The Conversation*: “*Are Americans becoming more xenophobic?*” published in 2017, which can be found here: <https://theconversation.com/are-americans-becoming-more-xenophobic-70509>

Q1a. Which groups were discerned in the study, and what kind of affiliation do people have with this group?

Q1b. The article mentions how the findings are consistent with group threat theory. Which manipulation in the described experiment represents this group threat? Who and what is being threatened?

**Q2.**

Suppose you want to know whether homophily plays a role in determining who becomes friends with whom in a school class. You have unlimited time and funds for this study, but it is of utmost importance to ensure that you study the purest possible effect of (a certain kind of) homophily. Make sure you answer the following questions in your design: (1) What does your research design look like? Which form of homophily do you study? Which steps do you have to take to ensure you are studying the effect of homophily, rather than structural constraints or meeting opportunities? Does this research design consider revealed preferences, or stated preferences?