

Power, Communication and Conflict Resolution

Classic case study of conflict in society:

Stanford Prison Experiment: The Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) was a social psychology experiment that attempted to investigate the psychological effects of perceived power, focusing on the struggle between prisoners and prison officers. It was conducted at Stanford University on the days of August 14–20, 1971, by a research group led by psychology professor Philip Zimbardo using college students. In the study, volunteers were randomly assigned to be either "guards" or "prisoners" in a mock prison, with Zimbardo himself serving as the superintendent. Several "prisoners" left mid-experiment, and the whole experiment was abandoned after six days. Early reports on experimental results claimed that students quickly embraced their assigned roles, with some guards enforcing authoritarian measures and ultimately subjecting some prisoners to psychological torture, while many prisoners passively accepted psychological abuse and, by the officers' request, actively harassed other prisoners who tried to stop it. The experiment has been described in many introductory social psychology textbooks, although some have chosen to exclude it because its methodology is sometimes questioned.

The U.S. Office of Naval Research funded the experiment as an investigation into the causes of difficulties between guards and prisoners in the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps. Certain portions of it were filmed, and excerpts of footage are publicly available.

Milgram's Experiment:

The Milgram experiment on obedience to authority figures was a series of social psychology experiments conducted by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram. They measured the willingness of study participants, men from a diverse range of occupations with varying levels of education, to obey an authority figure who instructed them to perform acts conflicting with their personal conscience. Participants were led to believe that they were assisting an unrelated experiment, in which they had to administer electric shocks to a "learner." These fake electric shocks gradually increased to levels that would have been fatal had they been real.

What is Socialization?

It is the process in which the culture of a society is transmitted to children; the modification from infancy of an individual's behavior to conform with the demands of social life.

Our "self" emerges & continues to form through ongoing socialization (from early childhood through adulthood)

Implications:

- We need social interaction to develop full sense of "self"
- Our "self" is not static; it continues to develop over time

A look into the theoretical side:

C.H. Cooley referred to early socialization as developing one's

"looking-glass self"

"Looking-Glass Self" = the self-image we have based on

how we suppose others “see” us.

Social interactions are like a “mirror” we use see & adjust our “self”

Basic steps:

- Individual imagines his/her appearance to others
- Individual imagines other’s judgment of that appearance
- Individual feels/acts according to that imagined judgment

George H. Mead (1863-1931)

Claim: Our “self” emerges thru social interaction in which we learn to take the role of the “generalized other”

Taking the role of the “generalized other” is like taking the role of “society” (i.e., we learn to internalize society & make it part of us)

The “I” – (myself as I am); active source of behavior; self as subject

The “Me” – (myself as others see me); self as object

To remember:

Language acquisition is critical to developing a “sense of self” because:

- it facilitates social interaction with others, AND
- it teaches us that we (like other things) are objects with names

Basis of good communication:

- Caring about what others are saying (empathy)
- New information can be learnt from a communication (knowledge gaining exercise)
- Focused energy
- Joint communication between speaker and listener

Emotion work and labor

-Arlie Hochschild (1983) points out in her discussion of emotion work is the process of managing and showing emotions in the private domain, with family members and close associates.

Emotion work and labor

- emotion labor is “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Hochschild, 1983: 7) by service workers. Emotion labor the commercialization of feeling as codified by the management detaches the worker from his/her own self and ways of natural response.

-Surface acting and deep acting

Levels of Reframing

- Detoxification Reframing
- Definitional Reframing
- Metaphorical Reframing

Detoxification Reframing:

Reframing is about changing the verbal representation of an idea, concern, proposal, or question so that the party's essential interest is still expressed but unproductive language, emotion, position taking and accusations removed.

Example:

Framing: Hell will freeze over before I agree to work with that jerk again. It was torture last time we were on the same team, and I won't subject myself to his arrogance and sadism again.

Reframing: You had a very bad experience working together, and you do not want to repeat it. In particular you felt exposed to certain behaviours and attitudes that you do not feel you should have to deal with in the workplace (or elsewhere).

Definitional Reframing:

The focus is on redefining the issue or conflict so that the resolution process can be more integrative. This involves a conceptual reframing and often takes the form of presenting an issue as a mutual problem to be mutually solved.

Example:

Framing: We have to decide who has custody, where the children will live, and how much time they will spend visiting the other parent.

Reframing: We have to decide how we are going to share our responsibilities as parents and what kind of time the children will spend in each of our homes.

Metaphoric Reframing:

Attempts to find a new or altered metaphor for describing a situation or concept, thus changing the way in which it is viewed. Sometimes this means finding a metaphor that all parties can use or translating one party's metaphor into a metaphor recognized by the other party.

Example:

Framing: He just wants to be a Disneyland Daddy while I continue to slave away like Cinderella, doing all the unpleasant grunt work of being a parent.

Reframing: Being a parent is like climbing a mountain. It can be an exhilarating experience, but it involves a lot of hard work. The more work you put in, the more the exhilaration. We both need to participate in both aspects of the experience.