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philosopher, economist, and sociologist, introduced a powerful idea called class struggle. This concept explains how societies are shaped by Content cross-checked by Content quality
checked by Save Article Save Article Save Article Save Article Have you ever fought with your sibling over the last piece of clothing, the front seat, or food? Since they are your sibling you're probably going to fight with them anyway, but the fighting can get more intense when only one item is left. This theory for fighting is a simple way of describing the realistic conflict
theory. The realistic conflict theory says that when there are groups trying to get the same finite resources, there will be conflict. When you're fighting with your sibling over the last biscuit, your view of them gets tainted by the fight for the biscuit. Chances are, you start to see (or even fabricate) lots of their negative qualities. The same thing can
happen on a larger scale. The realistic conflict theory states that when two or more groups are fighting for scarce resources, they become prejudiced against and discriminatory towards the other group. Fig. 1. What would happen if these sisters only had one water bottle between them? The realistic conflict theory is a psychological theory of prejudice
that suggests competition for scarce resources as the reason for conflict between groups. Group members are more likely to perceive their group as the better one and to view intergroup differences as evidence of the other groups. This
conflict theory relies on the definitions of the in-group and out-group. The in-group is the group of people with whom you are fighting with for the resources. The out-group for
resources. Since you don't know the out-group as well as you know the in-group, you are more likely to stereotype and negatively judge the members of the out-group as well as you know the in-group, you are more likely to stereotype and negatively judge the members of the out-group as well as you know the in-group, even if those are incorrect assumptions. It is the competition for resources that causes prejudice between groups.
against each other. The goal here is to win the gold medal. Supporters of sports teams can often make claims against each other or even feel anger and aggression toward the supporters of the competing team because the other team's victory would be their loss. Before we continue learning about the realistic conflict theory, it's important to
understand its differences from the social identity theory. Social identity theory says prejudice happens when we choose to view other groups
unfavourably to ascertain that our group remains better. Social identity theory's main difference from realistic conflict theory is that it states that intergroup conflict can still happen even when there's no competition for limited resources. Both of these theories are viable explanations for why prejudice happens. They are focused on the cognitive
reasoning behind prejudice, saying that it's based on how we view others or ourselves. Can you think of other reasons why prejudice happens? Have you ever thought about how, even though some social psychology principles seem straightforward, someone developed them? Muzafer Sherif was the Turkish-American psychologist who developed this
theory, the realistic conflict theory. He was not only influential in his work in conflict theory, but he also is one of the psychologists who helped found the field of social psychologists who helped found the
his theory onto centre stage. The Robbers Cave experiment was not only the first studies to examine intergroup relations at three levels: group formation, inter-group conflict, and conflict
reduction. The sample consisted of 22 white boys, approximately 11 years of age, from similar socioeconomic backgrounds and Protestant families. There were a couple of key phases to the experiment. The first was the ingroup formation phase. During the first
week, each group spent time getting to know each other through group activities such as creating a flag for their group, hiking, or swimming. The goal was for each member to form an attachment with their group. Fig. 2. One of the bonding exercises was swimming together. To see if competition for rewards would lead to conflict, the researchers
designed the inter-group conflict phase, in which two groups competed against each other in a series of contests such as tug-of-war. The winning team received a reward. Inter-group competition is an example of negative interdependence, a condition in which victory for one group means a loss for the other. After competing against each other, the
boys became verbally and physically aggressive toward the out-group. These results show that competition leads to intergroup conflict and prejudice toward others. To bring Rattlers and Eagles together, the researchers set
tasks that required cooperation between the groups to achieve a common goal that both groups desired. Superordinate goals create a state of positive interdependence - both groups must work together to succeed. One of the superordinate goals used in the experiment was to get the truck delivering a movie out of a ditch. Both groups were interested
in seeing the movie, so they had to join forces and work together to pull the truck out of a ditch using a rope. Sherif found that conflict between the groups but that the groups dislike each other, working towards a
common goal can help lower the animosity. Just like all theories, realistic conflict theory has its benefits and drawbacks. Realistic conflict theory has been demonstrated in studies such as the Robbers Cave study. We can apply the understanding we get from realistic conflict theory has been demonstrated in studies such as the Robbers Cave study. We can apply the understanding we get from realistic conflict theory has been demonstrated in studies such as the Robbers Cave study.
group conflict so one way to reduce conflict is to increase resources. This can be employed in a school class or sports practice. If you're in maths class and there are enough calculators, there will be no conflict. While this can be a simple
solution for some cases, in other instances, the resource can't be multiplied. Many wars have been fought over natural resources such as land and petroleum. These resources cannot be increased like buying a calculator, making this strength limited in its capacity. In general, mutually exclusive goals exacerbate intergroup conflict. But the question of
whether group identity alone can explain prejudice between groups remains. The two previously hostile groups might now coexist with almost no prejudice, having achieved a common goal. However, it is possible the common goal worked because it created an overarching (shared) group identity. In this case, the nature of the goals would not be as
crucial in explaining prejudice as the boundaries of the group identity. According to social identity theory, mere identification with a group may be sufficient to develop a prejudice against out-groups and a preference for one's group, even when the groups are not competing with each other. In some cases, overarching goals alone do not reduce
conflict between groups. When efforts to achieve a common goal are unsuccessful, conflict can intensify. When groups cooperate but fail to achieve the common goal, it is common for the in-group to blame the out-group for the failure. Realistic conflict theory says that when there are groups trying to get the same finite resources, there will be
conflictSocial identity theory states that we categorise others and ourselves into groups. Our prejudice stems from this categorisation since we view members from our group as superior to bolster our self-esteem. Muzafer Sherif is the psychologist who first developed realistic conflict theory Sherif's study, the Robbers Cave experiment, was the first to
study realistic conflict theoryRobbers Cave experiment split its participants into two groups. The groups What is Sherif realistic conflict theory is a psychological theory of prejudice that suggests competition for scarce resources as the reason for conflict between groups. However, if the groups work together to
achieve a shared goal, this reduces conflict and fosters co-operation. What is a strength of realistic conflict theory? Realistic conflict theory? Realistic conflict theory? Realistic conflict theory? Realistic conflict theory?
includes conflicts between countries competing over natural resources or conflicts arising between supporters of two frequently competing for scarce resources. Out-group
members are perceived as a threat and considered inferior. Who pioneered the realistic conflict theory? Sherif (1966) pioneered the theory to explain his findings from the Robbers Cave study. Save Article At StudySmarter, we have created a learning platform that serves millions of students. Meet the people who work hard to deliver fact based
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updated to ensure accuracy and relevance. Learn more In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation among 22 boys in Oklahoma. Initially
separated into two groups, they developed group identities. Introducing competitive tasks led to hostility between groups. Later, cooperative tasks reduced this conflict, highlighting the role of shared goals in resolving group tensions. The Robbers Cave experiment is one of the most cited studies in social psychology. Muzafer Sherif, Carolyn Sherif
and others in the 1950s conducted the study. Muzafer Sherif argued that intergroup conflict (i.e., conflict between groups) occurs when two groups compete for limited resources. When individuals who don't know each other are brought together to interact in group activities to achieve common goals, they produce a group structure with hierarchical
statuses and roles. Once formed, two in-groups are brought into a functional relationship under conditions of competition, and group frustration, attitudes, and appropriate hostile actions about the out-group and its members will be standardized and shared in varying degrees by group members. The field experiment involved two
 physical, mental, and social talents. Neither group was aware of the other's existence. They were then, as individual groups, picked up by bus on successive days in the summer of 1954 and transported to a 200-acre Boy Scouts of America camp in the Robbers Cave State Park in Oklahoma (with researchers doubling as counselors). The members of
each group got to know one other, social norms developed, leadership and group structure emerged. At the camp the groups were kept separate from each other and were encouraged to bond as two individual groups through the pursuit of common goals that required cooperative discussion, planning and execution. During this first phase, the groups through the pursuit of common goals that required cooperative discussion, planning and execution.
did not know of the other group's existence. The boys developed an attachment to their groups throughout the first week of the camp, quickly establishing their own cultures and group norms, by doing various activities together like hiking, swimming, etc. The boys chose names for their groups, The Eagles and The Rattlers, and stenciled them onto
shirts and flags. The now-formed groups came into contact with each other, competing in games and challenges, and competing for control of territory. Sherif now arranged the "competition between the groups was to occur over the next 4-6 days. In this phase it was intended to bring the two groups into competition with each
given to the "losers." The Rattlers" reaction to the informal announcement of a series of contests was absolute confidence in their victory! They spent the day talking about the contests and making improvements on the ball field, which they took over as their own to such an extent that they spoke of putting a "Keep Off" sign there! They ended up
putting their Rattler flag on the pitch. At this time, several Rattlers made threatening remarks about what they would do if anybody from The Eagles bothered their flag. Situations were also devised whereby one group gained at the expense of the other. For example, one group was delayed getting to a picnic and when they arrived the other group
 had eaten their food. At first, this prejudice was only verbally expressed, such as through taunting or name-calling. As the competition wore on, this expression took a more direct route. The Eagle's cabin, overturned beds, and stole private property. The groups became so
aggressive with each other that the researchers had to physically separate them. During the subsequent two-day cooling-off period, the boys listed features of the two groups. The boys tended to characterize their own in-group in very favorable terms, and the other out-group in very unfavorable terms. Keep in mind that the participants in this study
were well-adjusted boys, not street gang members. This study clearly shows that conflict between groups can trigger prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior. This experiment conflict theory. Sherif and colleagues tried various means of reducing the animosity and low-level violence between the groups. The
Robbers Cave experiments showed that superordinate goals (goals so large that it requires more than one group to achieve the goal) reduced conflict significantly more effectively than other strategies (e.g., communication, contact). A number of improvised reconciliatory opportunities (such as a bean-collecting contest, or the showing of a film, or the
shooting of Firecrackers to celebrate the Fourth of July) did not lead to any appreciable lessening of tensions between the Eagles and the Rattlers. Sherif et al. concluded that such contrived contact opportunities were not going to lessen tensions between the groups. They now arranged for the introduction of a number of scenarios presenting
superordinate goals which members of the two antagonistic groups could not easily ignore, but the attainment of which was beyond the resources and efforts of one group alone. These scenarios were played out at a new location in the belief that this would tend to inhibit recall of grievances that had been experienced at Robbers Cave. The first
 superordinate goal to be introduced concerned a common resource used by both groups. Their water supply, which had suddenly stopped flowing. All of the drinking water in the camp staff blamed this on "vandals." Upon investigations of the
extensive water lines by the Eagles and the Rattlers as separate groups, they discovered that an outlet faucet had a sack stuffed into it. Almost all the boys gathered around the faucet to try to clear it. Suggestions from members of both groups concerning effective ways to unblock the obstruction were thrown in from all sides simultaneously which led
to cooperative efforts clearing the obstacle itself. The joint work on the faucet lasted over 45 minutes. When the water finally came on, there was common rejoicing. The Rattlers did not have canteens with them and were thirstier. No protests or "Ladies
first" type of remarks were made! The next superordinate goal to be introduced was a favorite feature-length movie for boys of their age. Two films had been chosen in consultation with children's movie experts and brought to the camp along with other stimulus materials. In the afternoon, the boys were called together, and the staff suggested the
possibility of watching either "Treasure Island" or "Kidnapped": Both groups yelled approval of these films. After some discussion, one Rattler said, "Everyone that wants Treasure Island" even though a few dissensions were expressed to this
choice. Then the staff announced that securing the film would cost $15 and the camp could not pay the whole sum! After much discussion, it was accepted even though, as a couple of homesick Eagles had gone home, the contribution per person per group was
unequal. At supper that night, there were no objections to eating together. Some scuffling and sticking chewing gum on each other occurred between members of the two groups, but it involved in such encounters. Other problem-solving superordinate goals introduced in this phase included the
joint use of a tug-of-war-rope, and both groups of boys "accidentally" came across a stuck-in-a-rut truck carrying food for both groups. In the event, the joint pursuit of such superordinate goals saw a lessening of intergroup conflict. At breakfast and lunch on the last day of camp, the seating arrangements were considerably mixed up insofar as group
membership was concerned. Realistic conflict theory posits intergroup hostility and conflict arise when groups compete for limited resources. It emphasizes that competition over scarce resources (material goods, power, or social status) can lead to prejudice, discrimination, and animosity between groups. The theory was solidified by the classic
Robbers Cave experiment conducted by Muzafer Sherif in the 1950s. Three key points from RCT are: Resource Scarcity and Competition: When groups perceive that they compete for limited resources, hostility can arise. Formation of Ingroup on Dynamics: Through competition, groups develop a strong sense of "us" (ingroup) versus
"them" (outgroup). This distinction can lead to negative stereotyping and increased animosity. Superordinate Goals: Intergroup hostility can be reduced when conflicting groups collaborate on goals that neither group can achieve on its own. These goals supersede their smaller individual goals and encourage cooperation. Realistic Conflict Theory
suggests that competition over limited resources can drive intergroup hostility, but collaborative efforts towards shared objectives can help mitigate this conflict. The events at Robbers Cave mimicked the kinds of conflict that plague people all over the world. The simplest explanation for this conflict is competition. Assign strangers to groups, throw
the groups into competition, stir the pot, and soon there is a rise in hostility between groups. For example, in times of high unemployment, there may be high levels of racism among white people who believe that black people (or asylum
seekers) have taken their jobs. The study was a field experiment which means it has high ecological validity. However, the Robbers Cave study has been criticized on a number of issues. For example, middle-class boys
randomly assigned into two separate groups are not rival inner-city gangs, or rival football supporters. Ethical issues must also be considered. The participants were deceived, as they did not know the true aim of the study. Also, participants were not protected from physical and psychological harm. Nor should the results be generalized to real life
because the research used only 12-year-old white middle-class boys and excluded, for example, girls and adults. In the Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 23 white, 24 white, 25 
by doing various activities together, like hiking, swimming, etc. The boys chose names for their groups, The Eagles and The Rattlers. During a four-day series of competitions between the groups prejudice began to become apparent between the two groups (both physical and verbal). During the subsequent two-day cooling-off period, the boys listed
features of the two groups. The boys tended to characterize their own in-group in very favourable terms, and the other out-group in very unfavorable terms. Sherif then attempted to reduce the prejudice, or inter-group in very unfavorable terms. Sherif then attempted to reduce the prejudice, or inter-group in very favourable terms.
forcing the groups to work together to reach common goals, eased prejudice and tension among the groups. This experiment conflict theory), the idea that group conflict can result from competition over resources. Campbell, Donald T. (1965). Ethnocentrism and other altruistic
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Hood, W. R., & Sherif, C. W. (1961). Intergroup conflict and cooperation: The Robbers Cave experiment (Vol. 10). Norman, OK: University Book Exchange. Olivia Guy-Evans is a writer and associate editor for Simply Psychology. She
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including the Journal of Clinical Psychology. Would you like to donate to psychologyrocks?If you have found the site helpful and would like to donate to help me to keep this page going, it would be most appreciated! © Amanda J Wood, 2016-2017 Social psychological model of intergroup conflict Realistic conflict theory (RCT), also known as realistic
group conflict theory (RGCT),[1][2] is a social psychological model of intergroup conflict.[3] The theory explains how intergroup hostility can arise as a result of conflicting goals and competition over limited resources, and it also offers an explanation for the feelings of prejudice and discrimination toward the outgroup that accompany the intergroup
hostility.[1][3][4] Groups may be in competition for a real or perceived scarcity of resources such as money, political power, military protection, or social status.[1] Feelings of resentment can arise in the situation that the groups see the competition over resources as having a zero-sums fate, in which only one group is the winner (obtained the needed
or wanted resources) and the other loses (unable to obtain the limited resource due to the "winning" group achieving the limited resource first).[1][2] The length and severity of the conflict is based upon the perceived value and shortage of the given resource.[1][3] According to RCT, positive relations can only be restored if superordinate goals are in
place.[1] The theory was officially named by Donald Campbell, but has been articulated by others since the middle of the 20th century.[5][6] In the 1960s, this theory developed from Campbell's recognition of social psychologists' tendency to reduce all human behavior to hedonistic goals. He criticized psychologists like John Thibaut, Harold Kelley,
and George Homans, who emphasized theories that place food, sex, and pain avoidance as central to all human processes. According to Campbell, hedonistic assumptions do not adequately explain intergroup relations.[5][7][8] Campbell believed that these social exchange theorists oversimplified human behavior by likening interpersonal interaction
to animal behavior.[5] Similar to the ideas of Campbell, other researchers also began recognizing a problem in the psychological understanding of intergroup behavior.[7][8] These researchers noted that prior to Campbell, social exchange theorists ignored the essence of social psychology and the importance of interchanges between groups.[7] To the
contrary of prior theories, RCT takes into account the sources of conflict between groups, which include, incompatible goals and competition over limited resources.[1][5] The 1954 Robbers Cave experiment (or Robbers Cave experiment (or Robbers Cave experiment) by Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn Wood Sherif represents one of the most widely known demonstrations of RCT.[4] The
Sherifs' study was conducted over three weeks in a 200-acre summer camp in Robbers Cave State Park, Oklahoma, focusing on intergroup behavior.[3] In this study, researchers posed as camp personnel, observing 22 eleven- and twelve-year-old boys who had never previously met and had comparable backgrounds (each subject was a white eleven to
twelve-year-old boy of average to slightly above average intelligence from a Protestant, middle-class, two-parent home).[3][8] The experiments were conducted within the framework of regular camp activities and games. The experiments were conducted within the framework of regular camp activities and games.
housed together in one large bunkhouse. The boys quickly formed particular friendships. After a few days the boys were split randomly into two approximately equal groups. Each group was unaware of the other group's presence. The second stage was the "friction phase", wherein the groups were entered into competition with one another in various
camp games. Valued prizes were awarded to the winners. This caused both groups to develop negative attitudes and behaviors towards the outgroup. At this stage 93% of the boys' friendship was within their in-group. The third and final stage was the "integration stage". During this stage, tensions between the groups were reduced through
teamwork-driven tasks that required intergroup cooperation.[8] The Sherifs made several conclusions based on the three-stage Robbers Cave experiment.[3][8] From the study, they determined that because the groups were created to be approximately equal, individual differences are not necessary or responsible for intergroup conflict to occur.[8]
As seen in the study when the boys were competed for resources that only one groups can attain.[7][8] The Sherifs also established that contact with an outgroup is insufficient, by itself, to reduce negative attitudes
[8] Finally, they concluded that friction between groups can be reduced and positive intergroup relations can be maintained, only in the presence of superordinate goals that promote united, cooperative action.[3][8] However a further review of the Robbers Cave experiments, which were in fact a series of three separate experiments carried out by the
Sherifs and colleagues, reveals additional deliberations. In two earlier studies the boys ganged up on a common enemy, and in fact on occasion ganged up on the experimenters themselves constitute a third group, and one that is
arguably the most powerful of the three, and that they in fact become the outgroup in the aforementioned experiment. [10] Lutfy Diab repeated the experiment with 18 boys from Beirut. The 'Blue Ghost' and 'Red Genies' groups each contained 5 Christians and 4 Muslims. Fighting soon broke out, not between the Christians and Muslims but between
the Red and Blue groups.[11] RCT offers an explanation for negative attitudes toward racial integration and efforts to promote diversity.[2][12] This is illustrated in the data collected from the Michigan National Election Studies survey, most whites held negative attitudes toward racial integrate schools
via school busing in the 1970s. In these surveys, there was a general perceived threat that whites had of African Americans.[12] It can be concluded that, contempt towards racial integration was due to a perception of blacks as a danger to valued lifestyles, goals, and resources, rather than symbolic racism or prejudice attitudes formulated during
childhood.[1][12] RCT can also provide an explanation for why competition over limited resources in communities can present potentially harmful consequences in establishing successful organizational diversity.[6] In the workplace, this is depicted by the concept that increased racial heterogeneity among employees is associated with job
dissatisfaction among majority members.[6][13] Since organizations are affixed in the communities to which their employees belong, the racial makeup of employees in a white community, white employees are less accepting of workplace diversity in the workplace diversity in the workplace.
[6] RCT provides an explanation of this pattern because in communities of mixed races, members of mixe
determined that violence between different groups escalates in relationship to shortages in resources. [2][15] When a group has a notion that resources are limited and only available for possession by one group, this leads to attempt to remove the source of competition. [15] Groups can attempt to remove their competition by increasing their group's
capabilities (e.g., skill training), decreasing the abilities of the outgroup's competition (e.g., expressing negative attitudes or applying punitive tariffs), or by decreasing the abilities of the outgroup (e.g., denying immigrant access).[1][15] Realistic conflict theory originally only described the results of competition between two groups of equal status.[2]
[16] John Duckitt suggests that the theory be expanded to include competition between groups of unequal status and their resulting correlation with prejudice. [16] Duckitt concluded that there are at least two types of conflict based on ingroups of unequal status and their resulting correlation with prejudice.
competition with an outgroup.[16] The first is 'competition with an equal group' and is explained by realistic conflict theory.[3][16] Thus being, group-based threat that leads ingroup members to feel hostile towards the outgroup which can lead to conflict as the ingroup focuses on acquiring the threatened resource.[1][3][16] Thus being, group-based threat that leads ingroup members to feel hostile towards the outgroup which can lead to conflict as the ingroup focuses on acquiring the threatened resource.[1][3][16] Thus being, group-based threat that leads ingroup members to feel hostile towards the outgroup which can lead to conflict as the ingroup focuses on acquiring the threatened resource.[1][3][16] Thus being, group-based threat that leads ingroup members to feel hostile towards the outgroup which can lead to conflict as the ingroup focuses on acquiring the threatened resource.[11][3][16] Thus being the outgroup which can lead to conflict as the ingroup focuses on acquiring the threatened resource.[11][3][16] Thus being the outgroup which can lead to conflict as the ingroup focuses on acquiring the threatened resource.[11][3][16] Thus being the outgroup which can lead to conflict as the ingroup focuses of the outgroup which can lead to conflict the outgroup which can lead to conflict the outgroup focuses of the outgroup which can lead to conflict the outgroup which can lead to 
conflict is 'domination of the outgroup by the ingroup's attitudes on some focal issue and sometimes, the
dominant group's deeper values to avoid further conflict. The second response that may occur is unstable oppression. This occurs when the subordinate group rejects the lower status forced upon them, and sees the dominant group then may view the subordinate group rejects the lower status forced upon them.
seen as unjustified, the dominant group will likely respond to the subordinates' rebellion is viewed as justified, the subordinates are given the power to demand change. [16] An example of this would be the eventual recognition of the civil rights movement in the 1960s in the United States. [7] [17] When group
conflict extends to nations or tribes, Regality Theory argues that the collective danger leads citizens to start having strong feelings of national or tribal identity, preferring strong, hierarchical political system, adopting strong feelings of national or tribal identity, preferring strong feelings of national or tribal identity, preferring strong feelings of national or tribal identity.
complex Discrimination Group conflict Group threat theory Intergroup relations Minimal group paradigm Prejudice Social psychology Stereotypes ^ a b c d e f g h i j Jackson, Jay W (1993). "Realistic Group Conflict Theory: A Review and Evaluation of the Theoretical and Empirical Literature". Psychological Record. 43 (3): 395-415. ^ a b c d e
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 Realistic conflict theory is a social psychological model of inter-group conflict. The theory explains that inter-group conflict can arise due to the competition among groups over the scarce resources and conflicting goals. Moreover, it also defines how the feeling of prejudice and discrimination can arise among groups towards one another. The inter-group conflict can arise due to the competition among groups over the scarce resources and conflicting goals.
based on the value and limitedness or shortage of resources. Realistic conflict theory also suggest the remedy to prevent inter-group conflict along with feeling of prejudice and discrimination among groups towards one another. Donald T. Campbell Realistic Conflict Theory This social psychology model of inter-group conflict was officially named by
Donald T. Campbell though, articulated by other social psychology theorists since mid-twentieth century. This theory came into being due to Donald T. Campbell criticism on social exchange theorists who correlate human behavior and
inter-group relations adequately. Furthermore, social exchange theorists just oversimplify human behavior by linking interpersonal interactions with animal behavior. Muzafer Sherif Robber's Cave State Park Field Study Muzafer Sherif was among one of the researcher who articulated realistic conflict theory in mid twentieth century. He tested this
theory via several field experiments at American summer camps. In 1954, Muzafer Sherif conducted a field study in robber's cave state park. The purpose of the field experiment was to analyze inter-group competition and cooperation. The subjects of the study was two groups of 11 years old boys. These boys did not know each other and came from
 different areas. They were randomly assigned into each group. Initially both groups were kept separately, one group did not know that another while they were hiking, swimming and playing. They bonded so much that they gave their groups names Eagles and
Rattlers. After one week both groups were told about the presence of other group and compete with them in different contests such as football, baseball etc... the tournament was based on a point system and whichever team wins will get a trophy and other prizes
which are valued by kids such as, pocket knives. Though, members from the winner groups both were very eager to win the competition. When the competition begin researcher observed that both groups got very hostile towards one another. Boys of one group
fought with the boys of other group. They vandalized camps each other competition for limited resources create inter-group conflict. Moreover, the group were
separated for few weeks to cool off before the second phase of study. The second phase was about restoring relationship and peace among groups. Firstly, each group members were told about the positive traits of other group members. This method failed to achieve the
objective of restoring peace among groups. Secondly, both group were put together for fun activities such as, they saw fireworks together they failed to bond because they did not like and interact with one another. Either methods did not work to restore the
relationship among groups. At last researcher tried third method called superordinate goals refer to the mutual goals that can be attained with cooperation. The researcher tried third method called superordinate goals refer to the mutual goals that can be attained with cooperation. The researcher tried third method called superordinate goals refer to the mutual goals that can be attained with cooperation.
the water system was broke. In order quench their thirst all the boys had to work together to fix the water system. Ultimately, this mutual goal bring the boys of both groups. The groups were told that the movie they wanted
see was supposed to be delivered in the truck but the truc
competition among groups for limited resources or reward (competition in which only one group is winner and other is loser) create inter-group conflict. The winner group had low degree of frustration whereas, loser group had high level of
frustration. Simple contact between groups failed to repair their relationship was based on nature of goals. He believed that the
relationship among groups or individuals depend on the nature of goals. If individuals or groups have shared goals which require mutual cooperation for attainment; it will develop friendly relationship among groups and individuals. Whereas, if the goals are mutually exclusive for which groups have to compete with one another; it will create conflict
and hostile relationship among groups. Moreover, shared goals or subordinate goals prevent inter-group hostility and conflict between groups. Written by; Khushdil Khan Kasi The Robbers Cave experiment, conducted by Muzafer Sherif in the 1950s, studied intergroup conflict and
cooperation among 22 boys in Oklahoma. Initially separated into two groups, they developed group identities. Introducing competitive tasks led to hostility between groups. Later, cooperative tasks reduced this conflict, highlighting the role of shared goals in resolving group tensions. The Robbers Cave experiment is one of the most cited studies in
social psychology. Muzafer Sherif, Carolyn Sherif, and others in the 1950s conducted the study. Muzafer Sherif argued that intergroup conflict (i.e., conflict between groups) occurs when two groups compete for limited resources. When individuals who don't know each other are brought together to interact in group activities to achieve common
goals, they produce a group structure with hierarchical statuses and roles. Once formed, two in-groups are brought into a functional relationship under conditions of competition, and group frustration, attitudes, and appropriate hostile actions about the out-group and its members will be standardized and shared in varying degrees by
group members. The field experiment involved two groups of twelve-year-old boys at Robber's Cave State Park, Oklahoma, America. The twenty-two boys in the study were unknown to each other and all from white middle-class backgrounds. They all shared a Protestant, two-parent background. The researchers randomly divided the boys into two
groups, with efforts being made to balance the groups' physical, mental, and social talents. Neither group was aware of the other's existence. They were then, as individual groups, picked up by bus on successive days in the summer of 1954 and transported to a 200-acre Boy Scouts of America camp in the Robbers Cave State Park in Oklahoma (with
researchers doubling as counselors). The members of each group got to know one other, social norms developed, leadership and group structure emerged. At the camp the pursuit of common goals that required cooperative discussion,
planning and execution. During this first phase, the groups did not know of the other group's existence. The boys developed an attachment to their groups throughout the first week of the camp, quickly establishing their own cultures and group norms, by doing various activities together like hiking, swimming, etc. The boys chose names for their
groups, The Eagles and The Rattlers, and stenciled them onto shirts and flags. The now-formed groups came into contact with each other, competing in games and challenges, and stenciled them onto shirts and flags. The now-formed groups came into contact with each other, competing in games and challenges, and stenciled them onto shirts and flags. The now-formed groups came into contact with each other, competing in games and challenges, and and challenges,
intended to bring the two groups into competitive activities (e.g. baseball, tug-of-war etc.) were arranged with a trophy being awarded on the basis of accumulated team score. There were also individual prizes for the winning group such as a medal and a
multi-bladed pocket knife with no consolation prizes being given to the "losers." The Rattlers" reaction to the informal announcement of a series of contests and making improvements on the ball field, which they took over as their own to such an extent that they
spoke of putting a "Keep Off" sign there! They ended up putting their Rattlers made threatening remarks about what they would do if anybody from The Eagles bothered their flag. Situations were also devised whereby one group gained at the expense of the other. For example, one group was delayed
getting to a picnic and when they arrived the other group had eaten their food. At first, this prejudice was only verbally expressed, such as through taunting or name-calling. As the competition wore on, this expression took a more direct route. The Eagle's cabin,
overturned beds, and stole private property. The groups became so aggressive with each other that the researchers had to physically separate them. During the subsequent two-day cooling-off period, the boys listed features of the two groups. The boys tended to characterize their own in-group in very favorable terms, and the other out-group in very
unfavorable terms. Keep in mind that the participants in this study were well-adjusted boys, not street gang members. This experiment conflict between groups can trigger prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior. This experiment conflict between groups can trigger prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior.
the animosity and low-level violence between the groups. The Robbers Cave experiments showed that superordinate goals (goals so large that it requires more than one group to achieve the goal) reduced conflict significantly more effectively than other strategies (e.g., communication, contact). A number of improvised reconciliatory opportunities
(such as a bean-collecting contest, or the showing of a film, or the showing of Eirecrackers to celebrate the Fourth of July) did not lead to any appreciable lessening of tensions between the groups. They now
arranged for the introduction of a number of scenarios presenting superordinate goals which members of the two antagonistic groups could not easily ignore, but the attainment of which was beyond the resources and efforts of one group alone. These scenarios were played out at a new location in the belief that this would tend to inhibit recall of
grievances that had been experienced at Robbers Cave. The first superordinate goal to be introduced concerned a common resource used by both groups. Their water supply, which had suddenly stopped flowing. All of the drinking water in the camp came from a reservoir on the mountain north of the camp. The water supply had failed, and the Camp
staff blamed this on "vandals." Upon investigations of the extensive water lines by the Eagles and the Rattlers as separate groups, they discovered that an outlet faucet to try to clear it. Suggestions from members of both groups concerning effective ways to unblock the
obstruction were thrown in from all sides simultaneously which led to cooperative efforts clearing the obstacle itself. The joint work on the faucet lasted over 45 minutes. When the water finally came on, there was common rejoicing. The Rattlers did not have
canteens with them and were thirstier. No protests or "Ladies first" type of remarks were made! The next superordinate goal to be introduced was a favorite feature-length movie for boys of their age. Two films had been chosen in consultation with children's movie experts and brought to the camp along with other stimulus materials. In the afternoon
the boys were called together, and the staff suggested the possibility of watching either "Treasure Island" or "Kidnapped": Both groups yelled approval of these films. After some discussion, one Rattler said, "Everyone that wants Treasure Island" or "Kidnapped": Both groups yelled approval of these films. After some discussion, one Rattler said, "Everyone that wants Treasure Island" or "Kidnapped": Both groups yelled approval of these films. After some discussion, one Rattler said, "Everyone that wants Treasure Island" or "Kidnapped": Both groups yelled approval of these films. After some discussion, one Rattler said, "Everyone that wants Treasure Island" or "Kidnapped": Both groups yelled approval of these films. After some discussion, one Rattler said, "Everyone that wants Treasure Island" or "Kidnapped": Both groups yelled approval of these films.
Island" even though a few dissensions were expressed to this choice. Then the staff announced that securing the film would cost $15 and the camp would pay the balance. This was accepted even though, as a couple of homesick
Eagles had gone home, the contribution per person per group was unequal. At supper that night, there were no objections to eating together. Some scuffling and sticking chewing gum on each other occurred between members of the two groups, but it involved fewer boys on both sides than were usually involved in such encounters. Other problems
solving superordinate goals introduced in this phase included the joint use of a tug-of-war-rope, and both groups of boys "accidentally" came across a stuck-in-a-rut truck carrying food for both groups. In the event, the joint pursuit of such superordinate goals saw a lessening of intergroup conflict. At breakfast and lunch on the last day of camp, the
seating arrangements were considerably mixed up insofar as group membership was concerned. Realistic conflict theory posits intergroup hostility and conflict arise when groups compete for limited resources. It emphasizes that competition over scarce resources (material goods, power, or social status) can lead to prejudice, discrimination, and
animosity between groups. The theory was solidified by the classic Robbers Cave experiment conducted by Muzafer Sherif in the 1950s. Three key points from RCT are: Resource Scarcity and Competition: When groups perceive that they compete for limited resources, hostility can arise. Formation of Ingroup and Outgroup Dynamics: Through
competition, groups develop a strong sense of "us" (ingroup) versus "them" (outgroup). This distinction can lead to negative stereotyping and increased animosity. Superordinate Goals: Intergroup hostility can be reduced when conflicting groups collaborate on goals that neither group can achieve on its own. These goals supersede their smaller
individual goals and encourage cooperation. Realistic Conflict Theory suggests that competition over limited resources can drive intergroup hostility, but collaborative efforts towards shared objectives can help mitigate this conflict. The events at Robbers Cave mimicked the kinds of conflict that plague people all over the world. The simplest
explanation for this conflict is competition. Assign strangers to groups, throw the groups into competition, stir the pot, and soon there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) there is a lot of evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) the evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) the evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) the evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) the evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) the evidence that when people compete for scarce resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) the evidence resources (e.g., jobs, land etc.) tha
levels of racism among white people (or asylum seekers) have taken their jobs. The study was a field experiment which means it has high ecological validity. However, the Robbers Cave study has been criticized on a number of issues. For example, the two groups of boys in the study were artificial, as was the
competition, and did not necessarily reflect real life. For example, middle-class boys randomly assigned into two separate groups are not rival inner-city gangs, or rival football supporters. Ethical issues must also be considered. The participants were deceived, as they did not know the true aim of the study. Also, participants were not protected from
physical and psychological harm. Nor should the results be generalized to real life because the research used only 12-year-old white middle-class boys and excluded, for example, girls and adults. In the Robbers Cave field experiment, 22 white, 11-year-old boys were sent to a special remote summer camp in Oklahoma, Robbers Cave State Park. The
boys developed an attachment to their groups throughout the first week of the camp by doing various activities together, like hiking, swimming, etc. The boys chose names for their groups throughout the first week of the camp by doing various activities together, like hiking, swimming, etc. The boys chose names for their groups throughout the first week of the camp by doing various activities together, like hiking, swimming, etc. The boys chose names for their groups throughout the first week of the camp by doing various activities together.
physical and verbal). During the subsequent two-day cooling-off period, the boys listed features of the two groups. The boys tended to characterize their own in-group in very favourable terms, and the other out-group in very unfavorable terms. Sherif then attempted to reduce the prejudice, or inter-group conflict, shown by each group. However,
simply increasing the contact of the two groups only made the situation worse. Alternatively forcing the groups to work together to reach common goals, eased prejudice and tension among the groups conflict can result from
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