

12 angry men

Psychology



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Group process in the film “ 12 angry men” The jury deliberation in the film, “ 12 angry men” is a portrayal of group dynamics. Group dynamics relates to the functioning, structure and the roles individuals play in a group. The jury in the film, consisting of twelve men, was drawn together to determine whether the boy was culpable of killing his father. The characteristics of group dynamics applicable to this case include personality conflicts, the operation of the jurors’ minds and their joint effort in determining the truth. The movie represents an entire spectrum of humanity, from the coldly analytical juror number four to the bigotry characteristic of juror number 10. Even though the jurors portrayed good and bad traits, all of them had an effect on the outcome.

The film conforms to the principles of group dynamics. As portrayed in the movie, the initial step in the decision-making process comprised of the making of individual decisions. Eleven of the jurors voted in favor of the boy’s conviction without an analysis of the evidence presented during the trial. There is a possibility of insinuating that groupthink might occur when the members are overconfident, thereby failing to think in a realistic manner. At the first stage, the individuals face an original choice dilemma, making the decision-making process riskier than decisions made after group discussion (Berkowitz 124).

Intervention from juror number 8 saved the mans life since the juror was sober enough to fall to the groupthink trap. The juror admitted that he was not sure of the guilt or innocence of the person in question, thereby proposing for a discussion of the case facts. The consequential debate was the second step in the decision-making process, which involved an examination of the personal opinions of each member. After analyzing the

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facts, the jurors unanimously decided that the man was not guilty. The unanimity comprises of the third step in group decision-making, which is parallel to investigations in Group polarization.

Studies in minority influence show a certain level of consistency with the events in the movie. Such studies are inclusive of the “ Asch-type conformity paradigm” by Serge Moscovici (Taylor 213). Other studies conforming to the events in the film include in-group and out-group minority studies, wherein the individuals in the minority groups are influential in making decisions as a group. Conversely, the dual-process hypothesis indicates that minorities in a group can change the thinking of the majority, thereby converting their opinions towards making decisions. The consistency between the studies and the movie is that the minority members of the group should be forceful and consistent, which is the most appropriate behavioral style. In this case, the minority members in the group should be influential, and they should argue in line with the existing social trends. Conversely, the issue discussed should not be of significant personal relevance to the group (Taylor 213). The considerations are consistent with the events in the movie.

Studies on stereotyping between individuals exaggerate differences between groups, thereby minimizing the differences existing within a group (Taylor 342). It is obvious that the majority of the jurors had stereotypes about children raised in slums. Such categorizations are inconsistent with the events in the movie since the man’s behavior was not compatible with the stereotyped behavior of minorities. Probability studies also show some level of inconsistency in the film’s events. There is virtually a zero chance that the not guilty verdict would overturn in such a manner, wherein 11 individuals defect to the minority side. Conversely, realistic studies suggest that people

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are likely to favor the view that the majority in the group hold, which is not the case in the film. Another perspective in consideration is that an individual's social position has an influence on his behavior (Taylor 354). The initial jury expectation was that the boy's social role could have led him to killing his father, which was a misrepresentation cleared out by the information provided during the group discussion.

Works cited

Berkowitz, Leonard. *Group Processes: Papers from Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. New York, NY: Academic Pr, 2000. Print.

Taylor, Shelley E. *social psychology* 11th edition. Prentice Hall, 2003. Print.