

Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 24: Conflicting Behavior- Part-I

Hello friends, welcome back. Today I am going to start a new unit module 8 titled conflicting behaviour. In this unit I am going to discuss about different kind of situations within group or any social situation when people interact, then how people tend to think about their own personal interest and at the same time there are members who think about the interest of the group members. These are two conflicting statements that I am quoting right now that thinking about their own personal interest or thinking about the group interest in long run. This creates a sense of conflict among members and how people tend to resolve those conflicts and what factors contribute to these kind of situations or conflicting situations. So, conflicting behaviour constitutes some kind of cooperation and competition.

The more there is cooperation the less are the chances that people will experience any kind of conflict among members, but on the contrary the more members are thinking about their own personal interest then definitely there are more chances that people will have conflicting experiences with each other. This is very simple layman understanding, but according to social psychologist there are certain mixed situations or mixed motive situations also that if person tries to cooperate maybe he will have all the benefits, but at the same time his cooperation will not contribute in the interest or benefit of the other person and the person will also have to experience some kind of losses. So, there are different kind of social situations where conflict evolves or arises and how people tend to experience different kind of difficulties in resolving those conflicting situations. So, let us talk about first of all that what is cooperation and competition.

As I mentioned when we talk about cooperation then definitely the outcome is benefit to every person, but when it is about competition when people are just focusing on their own personal interest then it is all about gaining at the expense of the others that means, other would lose at I would win. Therefore, conflicting behavior most importantly talks about cooperation and competition. So, cooperation is behavior in which groups work together to attain shared goals when they are cooperating the gains are maximum in terms of attainment of the common goal and at the same time experiencing maximum benefits. In cooperation the individual sees that every members is enhanced and at the same time personal rewards are also enhanced and there are the benefits from the interaction. Personal rewards are also being achieved the group benefit is also achieved and there is more beneficial interaction among all the members.

At the same time when we are talking about competition the person strives against another such as advantage or victory or satisfying ones own personal interest and the rewards must often come at the expense of others. That means, the other person will lose everything when you are only thinking about your own personal interest. There is no cooperation there is no consideration it is only competition that you are winning at the expense of others. The other person will have to lose everything when you are only focusing on your own personal interest.

But how the process within groups takes on? It is not that we will just declare that within a group cooperation is existing or conflict or cooperation is existing.

According to social psychologist cooperation and competition exist in any group based on games. People play different kind of games to either benefit one and all or only to benefit oneself. So, according to social psychologist people tend to cooperate and compete through the analysis of games which assumes that individuals are rational actors who are motivated to maximize their benefits. This is a very insidious and a ubiquitous characteristics of an individual that everybody wants to maximize his or her own benefits. It is very difficult to find any situation where one member is actually considering about the maximum benefit of the whole world group or world.

Most of the time the person thinks about maximizing his own benefits. So, according to social psychologist games are divided into two person or more than two persons. We cannot compete with ourselves that is for sure. We are only competing with the other person because our personal interest is dominating us. It is assumed that people are selfish or cooperative for a specific outcome.

Now, this cooperation can also be there for the selfish interest that you are cooperating the other person because you will get something in exchange. But at the same time you are also cooperating that the other person should also be benefit or you are cooperating that only you are benefiting and not the other person. May be the person has to experience some losses. So, there are three types of games. Games between two people that is also known as direct competition or more than two people.

If the competition is between two people it is about winning and losing. One will lose and the other will win. When the game is between two persons it is directly with competition and the winning strategy that I am playing the game in a with a competitive spirit that I will win the whole game. I will have maximum rewards. And the game between two or more than two people can be experienced in form of coalition formation cliques and teams that within the group may be some people are competing with the other members.

So, three or four members will form their own cliques and teams and then they will try to compete with the other left over members. So, this is game of two people which is direct competition or a game which is between more than two people. Then also there is competition that within the group itself may be a group has ten members. Four members will form their own teams or cliques and then they will compete with the other members of the group for their own benefit. This is game of direct competition.

The other is perfect or imperfect competition. In the game of perfect competition the moves are clear to both the parties. The two parties are playing games based on established rules and norms. The moves are very much clear and it is visible. On the other hand games of imperfect competition depend heavily on certain information being concealed from other players that is the imperfect competition.

Sometimes two teams or two members are competing with each other may be the moves of the other person are not clear because that moves and information is being concealed with whom you are competing. Then that competition becomes imperfect competition in the sense that the person is completely focusing on his own personal or selfish interest where the person also engages himself in all the form of illegitimate forms of games. And the other game is zero sum games or the perfect competition and non-zero sum games. Now in perfect competition one party will win and the other party will lose. So, the other the winning party will have the maximum benefits.

The one person winnings or rewards must be subtracted from that of the players collectively. May be the person will have six points out of ten and the other party will definitely will lose at the expense of the winning party. This is perfect competition or zero sum games where the winning and losing is clear to the other group members. Whereas in non-zero sum games there is a win-win situation when it is being found that the two competing parties will lose so many things at a time then at the end of the game they tend to create a situation where they will share all the winning and losses. All the gains and losses are being shared and balanced between two parties and there is a win-win situation.

So, in zero sum games one person's winnings or rewards must be subtracted from that of the other players collectively and such game is a game of perfect competition. Winner has all the rewards and the party who has lost the game will have minimum reward. Whereas in the game of non-zero sum games it describes a situation in which the interacting parties aggregate the gains and losses. They will share all the gains and losses and they create a win-win situation which is either less than zero or more than zero. But ultimately both the parties will bear the results.

So, this non-zero sum game is the win-win situation. But this win-win situation will only arise when the two competing parties at the same time while they are competing they also realize that they are losing something largely rather than winning. Under such circumstances they tend to reconcile, reconcile and they tend to compromise or they tend to create a win-win situation. So, the three forms of games on based on which we can consider about cooperation and competition is games between two people that is direct competition or more than two people, perfect and imperfect competition and zero sum games or the perfect competition and non-zero sum games. Based on this cooperation and competition social psychologists have also discussed about dilemma or social dilemma which is a very crucial situation when a person experiences where members at one point they want to cooperate.

But at the same time the same member also want to compete to have maximum gains. So, there is a dilemma among members what to do? If they will cooperate then maybe they will have less in benefits, if they compete they will have maximum benefit, but at the same time they do not want the other party or member to lose something at their end. So, social psychologists have talked about another situation which has mixed motives that either to compete or cooperate it is both the ways that is social dilemma which is a situation in which collective interest are at odds with personal interest where you know that if you will compete the other person will be at loss and if you do not cooperate then you will win the maximum benefits, but the other person again will have to bear some losses this is a social dilemma. So, social dilemma involves a conflict between immediate interest and long term collective interest and these are the challenging situations because acting in one's immediate interest is tempting to everyone this is a very normal human tendency to have maximum gains in one go as soon as possible and even though everybody benefits from acting in the long term collective interest it is difficult to act in the interest of the other members everybody wants to satisfy their own interest with immediate gains. So, the social dilemma has historically revolved around the metaphorical story of prisoner's dilemma.

So, social psychologists have explained this crucial situation very critical situation of social dilemma based on a very classical experiment of prisoner's dilemma. This was the case propounded by social psychologist Albert W. Tucker who has constituted this metaphorical story of prisoner's dilemma which is completely based on game theory that is perfect and imperfect competition. So, according to social dilemma it is a situation in which each person can increase his or her gains by acting in one way as I mentioned just now that every person wants to satisfy their immediate self interest, but if all or most persons do the same thing then the outcome experienced by all are reduced that is so obvious that when one is with is enjoying all the benefits and definitely the other persons will tend to not to have a maximum benefit. So, this is social dilemma that the person who knows that if I will satisfy my interest the other person will suffer, but at the same time how the person will try to cope up to have maximum benefits and not allow the other person to have reduced benefits.

So, the metaphorical explanation of the prisoner's dilemma explains social dilemma as based on two aspects either to cooperate or compete the more you cooperate for yourself then you will have maximum benefits if you compete then maybe the other person will lose maximum. So, if both cooperate they both experience larger gains that is that is a clear cut indication of cooperation that if two people cooperate that they experience larger gains and if both compete then each person experiences much smaller gains or losses because each person will have to lose something at the cost of the other. So, this is the outcome of cooperation and competition. Now, the most interesting pattern occurs when one chooses to compete while the other chooses to cooperate two people are there in the situation one says I will cooperate maybe under such circumstances the person will lose this is a vice versa situation if you compete while or you are not cooperating then you will have maximum benefits. So, this is a very critical situation which is a third situation that has been identified by Tucker in the prisoner's dilemma.

Now, in this case the first person who chooses to compete experiences much larger gain and the person who chooses to cooperate will have minimum gains although if you cooperate both the people try to cooperate they will have maximum gain if they both compete then again their outcome is different. So, this situation is called the prisoner's dilemma by Tucker as it reflects a dilemma faced by two suspects who have been caught by police they were engaged in some crime and they were declared as suspects and how the two persons compete and cooperate based on the interest their interest and the outcome. So, in the classical form of prisoner's dilemma the two suspects are arrested by police and the police have sufficient evidence for a conviction and they have separated and having separated both prisoners visit each of them to offer the same deal. That means, now the two persons have been convicted they have enough evidence against them, but they are being uh interrogated by the policemen separately to identify and testify who is cooperating and who is competing and based on this the sentence will be awarded. So, if one testifies that is defects to do what is best for oneself.

Now, if the person one person says makes a decision that I will do best for myself and I will not care for the other partner. So, in that case the prosecution against the other hand and the other remains silent the betrayer goes free and the silent accomplice receives the full 10 year sentence. Now, here the defect means to keep mum and the other person remains silent. So, the betrayer goes free and the silent accomplice receives the full 10 year sentence. Now, the person who remains silent is considered as the culprit and he receives the maximum sentence of 10 years.

Whereas, the person who defects that means, the person who is doing only what is best for oneself is to keep mum. So, that the police does not have any clue and will be considered as innocent he will be set free this is the one situation in prisoner's dilemma. Now, the other situation that arises is if both remains silent that is defect to doing what is best for oneself. Prisoner A, prisoner B if though if both of them decide to defect not to confess and not to say anything then the prisoners are sentenced only 6 months in jail for a minor charge. They have evidence, but they cannot prove it the police has evidence, but they cannot prove it because 2 prisoners remain silent they defect and the minimum sentence will be awarded to them in form of 6 month jail.

This is one and this is one way to cooperate. Now, another dilemma will be that if both confess if both cooperate they both will be convicted and receive a 5 year sentence. Now, the here both are cooperating with with the policeman they both are cooperating with each other and in the circumstances they are convicted and they are being sentenced 5 year jail each prisoner A and prisoner B. And the other 4th situation or dilemma that is being experienced in that situation is that if one confess and the other does not confess the police have enough evidence to convict both, but the person who confesses will receive a lighter sentence because the person who has who is cooperating and confessing is also helping the policemen to convict. Under such circumstances the person who has cooperated and confessed will also get a lighter sentence.

So, in all the 4 situations every dilemma has been identified based on cooperation and competition or defect that is to remain silent. So, if one confesses and the other does not the police have enough evidence to convict both, but the person who confesses will receive a lighter sentence because of the help he or she has given to the police. So, therefore, the situation captures the essence of many social dilemmas as people experience pressure to cooperate or compete. So, if you cooperate then there has to be a gain which is being shared by both the people. If you are competing then also you are pushing the other person to experience maximum losses.

If you remain silent and you cooperate both then again gains will be maximum. This is the diagrammatic representation of the classical prisoner's dilemma where we can see that how prisoner A and B they are confessing, they are defecting and they are competing and cooperating. So, here confession is cooperation and confession is cooperation and defect is actually competition, but if two of them decide to be silent and defect it is actually cooperation. So, this is how Tucker has identified 4 kind of dilemma in one social situation and how the Tucker has identified these kind of situations based on mixed motive either to cooperate, to compete or to defect. So, the result of such a situation is dealt with mixed motives that is either to confess or defect, to cooperate or compete where cooperation is to avoid the negative outcomes.

If two people are cooperating while remaining silent that is defection then negative outcome has been avoided by reducing the sentence and if you defect that is to do what is best for oneself only oneself then you are pushing the other person to experience minimum gain and have maximum gains. This is how prisoner's dilemma or social dilemma has been expressed explained by Tucker based on the classic prisoner's dilemma situation. This is how cooperation and competition leads to conflicting situations and how people tend to resolve these conflicts based on games that is perfect competition, imperfect competition, direct competition and non zero sum games which is the most winning strategy for any two parties who are engaging in competition, but also face losses and how they reconcile. So, I am done with the discussion in the next lecture I am going to talk about factors that promote cooperation that is all for this session. Thank you so much. .