[Abby Gallegos]

[Name of Instructor]

[English]

[May 30, 2019]

Literature Review

# Introduction

Man is born with some inalienable rights. These are the rights that cannot be taken from man without his free will. Man is a social and political animal and he cannot survive without society. He has to be the conformist in order to enjoy his social life. Social life or group life is an undeniable phenomenon in this connected world. People are linked with one another and they share healthy bonds with each other. This social life is really healthy for a man as his personality gets developed in a group life. However, as everything comes with a price, so is the case with group life. In group life, comes the concept of groupthink. It is the social phenomenon which occurs when a person gives too much importance to his group rather than his own personality or self. That person has the key goal in mind that he has to maintain the harmony of the group at any cost. As a result, many voices remain unheard as they are unintentionally silenced. This is the dilemma of this modern life where the person loses his interest for the sake of his group life. This is one of the concepts that The Unthinkable strove to explain as around the world, there have been many disastrous cases where all unanimously suffered due to this groupthink phenomenon. As a matter of fact, groupthink is infamous for curbing freedom of expression, poor policy decisions, making killers and imposing tyranny of majority in the society.

# Literature Review

The unthinkable by Amanda Ripley is the master literary piece that examines the prospects for humanity when they are struck by a disaster-whether natural or man-made. This is the book that focuses on the response of humanity that how mankind would work out a solution when they are having difficult times of their lives (Ripley). The authors list several reactions here: resilience, groupthink, heroism, panic, risk factor and preparedness. This book aims to extract what human mind is capbale of and what happens when minds are not directed towards any positive side.

To begin with, Groupthink is not a modern phenomenon in this complex globalized world. It is a concept that has its roots in the antediluvian times. It is a sociological term that explains the significance of group in one’s life. Groupthink becomes an important concept as it changes the way a person thinks and often leads to poor decision-making. According to famous social thinkers, an individual always lives under the influence of his group and always remains under the influence of groupthink. His own thoughts get buried somewhere under the process of groupthink where he suppresses his own ideas in order to attain identity as a valuable member to the group.Now attempt is being launched to cure this tyranny of majority and eradicate the malignant side of groupthink as mentioned in (Sunstein and Hastie). Nevertheless, this problem still exists today.

Groupthink and its ominous side in curbing the freedom of expression dates back to centuries, but it is still existing in the modern world. Perhaps its first appearance can be seen in the way Greeks lived their life in their city-states. All population was considered one group apart from non- Greeks. They were having the same opinions, beliefs and customs. In this system of perfect conformity, if someone wanted to change the old customs or beliefs, he was ostracized in the society. Perhaps, this is what happened to the famous philosopher Socrates in the Council of 360. Socrates tried to change the old archaic ways of thinking and asserted his right of freedom. However, this became an omen for the groups there, and they tried to persecute Socrates for his noble deeds. Socrates was asked to give up his free thinking and join the groupthink, but he denied. As a result, he was given two choices either to give up his beliefs or to drink hemlock-a poisonous drink. Socrates chose hemlock and drank the whole cup. This silencing of opinion is common even today when one views totalitarian states. Hence, this states that groupthink curbs the freedom of expression and suppresses sane voices.

This groupthink is also notorious for poor decion-making process. Free thinking is limited when there is more importance to the groupthink, rather than an individual opinion. Even today, this concept is associated with the limitation on sane voices. This groupthink becomes so important that one doesn’t gives much importance to his own rational point of view. This is what happened in the decision related to famous Bay of Pigs Invasion. The then president kennedy decided to invade cuba and all the members supported him, even though they had some other perspectives as well. Another example is the Pearl Harbour Attack in the past where gourpthink took precedence over rational, sane concerns. This shows that no one can avoid the groupthink even when sitting on those high chambers of authority (*No One Is Immune from Groupthink*). Thus, groupthink and unconditional conformity leads to irrational decision-making.

Groupthink is making a buzz, these days, for another reason as well. This phycological phenomenon is getting associated with burgeoning evil of terrorism in the world. It is widely witnessed that people don’t think freely and they associate themselves with the groupthink. They do so to become good members of the group, and to show their unquestioned loyalty to the group. this groupthink is the reason that people become ready to kill their own species for the sake of conformity and harmony as illustrated in the (SIMON). People become killers and they don’t feel anything bad about it. Hence, groupthink is notorious for spreading terrorism in the world.

Furthermore, this groupthink is the concept that is associated with another social phenomenon- tyranny of the majority. This tyranny of the majority was the focus of the famous utilitarian philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. The book of JS Mill , on liberty, explains that even if one voice has difference of opinion, the whole humanity is not justified in silencing it (Mill). He called this groupthink a tyranny of majority where most members of the group exert their social pressure to make a person lose his individuality. Nevertheless, it is still dominant in several socities today. In short, this is how the groupthink imposes tyranny of majority on his members.

# Conclusion

In a nutshell, it may be concluded from the above discussion that group think is one of the social phenomena that is endangering the humankind today. It curbs freedom of thought, expression, makes killers and imposes tyranny of majority upon a person. This groupthink is associated with social harmony and social conformity. It is opined that it maintains the social equilibrium in the society, however, the ill side is equally manifest, too. Groupthink works best when under limitations. Otherwise, it becomes a cause in crippling the personality of a person, and taking away his individuality of opinion. Some people are trying to make groupthink smarter but, it is still in infancy. Hence, it is time that if a man is born is with some inalienable rights such as liberty, these ought not to be taken from him under any social, political, and economic situation.

# Works Cited

Simon, Bernd. "How group-think makes killers." *Scientific American Mind* 14.5 (2004): 22-27.

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. J. W. Parker and Son, 1859.

*No One Is Immune from Groupthink*.

Ripley, Amanda. *The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes - and Why*. Three Rivers Press, 2009.

SIMON, BERND. “HOW GROUP-THINK MAKES KILLERS.” *Scientific American Mind*, vol. 14, no. 5, 2004, pp. 22–27. JSTOR.

Sunstein, Cass R., and Reid Hastie. *Wiser: Getting Beyond Groupthink to Make Groups Smarter*. Harvard Business Press, 2015.