

# Groups and Organizations

# **Social Group**

**Two or more people who identify and interact with one another.**

- Not every collection of individuals forms a group.**
- Many people with a status in common—women, homeowners, soldiers, millionaires, college graduates, and Roman Catholics—aren't groups but categories.**

# Not Quite a Social Group

- **Crowd**
  - Temporary cluster of people
  - A group can have temporal status
- **A crowd can become a group, then a crowd again.**
  - A large gathering of people at a football game
  - A crowd that begins to riot might be considered a group.

# Primary Groups

Small social groups whose members share personal, lasting relationships.

- **Traits**
  - **Small**
  - 1. **Personal orientation**
    - Share activities, spend time together
  - 2. **Enduring**
    - Members think of it as end in itself rather than means to end
- **Primary relationships**
  - 1. **Family**
    - First group experienced in life
  - 2. **Members viewed as unique and irreplaceable**

# Secondary Groups

A large, impersonal social group whose members pursue a specific goal or activity.

- **Traits**
  - ❖ Large membership (impersonal)
  - ❖ Goal or activity orientation
    - Formal and polite
- **Secondary relationships**
  - ❖ Weak emotional ties
  - ❖ Short term
- **Examples**
  - Co-workers and political organizations

# Group Leadership

- **Two roles**
  - **Instrumental**: Task-oriented
  - **Expressive**: People-oriented
- **Three leadership styles**
  - **Authoritarian**: Leader makes decisions; Compliance from members
  - **Democratic**: Member involvement
  - **Laissez-faire**: Mainly let group function on its own

# Group Conformity Studies

**Groupthink:** Tendency of group members to conform, resulting in a narrow view of some issue

- **Asch's research**
  - Willingness to compromise our own judgments
- **Milgram's research**
  - Role authority plays
  - Following orders
- **Janis's research**
  - Negative side of groupthink

# Reference Group

A social group that serves as a point of reference in making evaluations and decisions

- **Stouffer's research**
  - We compare ourselves in relation to specific reference groups.
- **In-groups and out-groups**
  - Loyalty to in-group
  - Opposition to out-groups



# Group Size

- **The dyad**
  - A two-member group
  - Very intimate, but unstable given its size
- **The triad**
  - A three-member group
  - More stable than a dyad and more types of interaction are possible

# Social Diversity: Race, Class, and Gender

- Larger groups turn inward.
  - Members have relationships between themselves.
- Heterogeneous groups turn outward.
  - Diverse membership promotes interaction with outsiders. (other groups)
  - More Social parity= forming more ties w/ diverse backgrounds
- Physical boundaries create social boundaries.
  - If segregation of groups takes place, the chances for contact are limited.
- Networks
  - Web of weak social ties, people we know of or who know of us

# Formal Organizations

Large secondary groups organized to achieve goals efficiently; date back thousands of years.

- **Utilitarian**
  - Material rewards for members
- **Normative**
  - Voluntary organizations
  - Ties to personal morality
- **Coercive**
  - Punishment or treatment
  - Total institutions

# Bureaucracy

An organizational model rationally designed to perform tasks efficiently

- **Max Weber's six elements to promote organizational efficiency:**
  - Specialization of duties
  - Hierarchy of offices
  - Rules and regulations
  - Technical competence
  - Impersonality
  - Formal, written communications

# Organizational Environment

- **Factors outside an organization that affect its operation:**
  - Economic and political trends
  - Current events
  - Population patterns
  - Other organizations
- **Informal side of bureaucracy**
  - In part, informality comes from the personalities of organizational leaders.

# Problems of Bureaucracies

- **Bureaucratic alienation**
  - Potential to dehumanize individuals
- **Bureaucratic inefficiency and ritualism**
  - Preoccupation with rules, interferes with meeting goals
- **Bureaucratic inertia**
  - Perpetuation of the organization

**Oligarchy: The rule of the many by the few**

- Helps distance officials from the public.
- Michels: Concentrates power and threatens democracy

# **The Evolution of Formal Organizations**

## **Scientific Management**

**Application of scientific principles to the operation of a business or large organization**

- 1. Identify tasks and time needed for tasks**
- 2. Analyze to perform tasks more efficiently**
- 3. Provide incentives for worker efficiency**

# **New Challenges to Formal Organizations**

- **Race and gender**
  - Pattern of exclusion
  - “Female advantage”
- **Japanese organizations**
  - Value cooperation
  - Organizational loyalty
- **Changing nature of work**
  - Information-based organizations
  - Creative autonomy, competitive work teams, flatter organization, and greater flexibility



# McDonaldization of Society

- Efficiency: Do it quickly
- Uniformity: Leave nothing to chance
- Control: Humans are most unreliable factor

Each principle limits human creativity, choice, and freedom.

Weber: Rational systems are efficient but dehumanizing.

# Future of Organizations: Opposing Trends

- **Movement toward more creative freedom for highly skilled information workers**
- **Movement toward increased supervision and discipline for less skilled service workers**