

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**