



Social Groups and Formal Organizations

(Chapter 5)

1



When you think of
a social group what
comes to your
mind?

2




Social Groups

A social group—persons who think of themselves as **belonging together**, and they **interact** with one another.


- **Aggregate**—individuals who temporarily share the same physical space but who do not see themselves belonging together.
- **A category**—consists of people who share similar characteristics but do not interact with one another.

3



What would you guess is
the difference between a
“primary” social group
and a
“secondary” social group?

4

- 
- **Primary Groups**—provide face-to-face interaction.
 - Primary groups give us an identity.
 - They are essential to our well-being.
 - Their values and attitudes become fused into our identity.
 - **Secondary Groups**—groups that are larger, anonymous, formal, and impersonal.
 - They are based on some common interest or activity.

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How influential are
primary groups?

Give an example of how
a primary group has
affected your thinking
(bad as well as good
influences).

6

Can you think of a situation in which you gave in to group pressure to do something very much against what you wanted?

Example: going along with the Little League Board by not asking questions about how money was being spent

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Groupthink

- o **Groupthink**—collective tunnel vision that groups sometimes develop.
- o Members think alike.
- o Any suggestion of alternatives is taken as a sign of disloyalty.

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What would you guess is the difference between "in-groups" and "out-groups"?

What are some examples where you felt like you were part of an "in-group" or "out-group"?

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- o **In groups**—groups toward which we feel loyalty.
- o **Out groups**—those toward which we feel antagonisms.
- o **Identification with a group** produces a sense of belonging, loyalty, and superiority.
 - These, in turn, produce rivalries between groups.

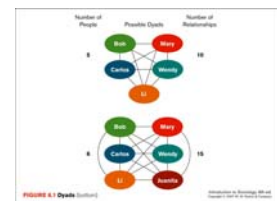
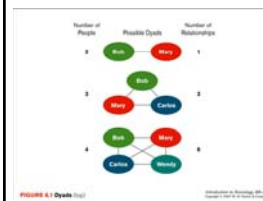
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Some social scientists say that this division into "us" verses "them" is natural.

Do you agree (or is it learned behavior)?

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How might the size of the group affect the dynamics of the group? stability? intensity? structure?



How might the size of the group affect the dynamics of the group?

- Larger groups tend to be **more stable** than smaller groups of two (*dyads*) or three (*triads*),
- The **intensity** within a group appears to diminish with increasing size,
- Groups of more than a dozen or so people usually develop a **formal structure**.

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When you think about the leader of a group, what characteristics make her/him a good leader?

Leadership of Groups

- **A leader**—someone who influences the behaviors, opinions, or attitudes of others.
 - **An instrumental leader**—keeps the group moving toward its goals.
 - **An expressive leader**—lifts the group's morale.
- **Authoritarian leaders**—give orders.
- **Democratic leaders**—try to gain consensus.
- **Laissez-faire leaders**—are highly permissive.
- Which leadership style do you prefer? Which do you believe is most effective?

What is the purpose of Organizations?

Organizations have been defined as a tool used by people individually or in groups to accomplish a goal or goals.

How can an organization be equated to a tool? What would be an example?

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Iron Law of Oligarchy

--groups and organizations come to be dominated by a **small elite**.

Does this seem to match your experience in the groups you've belonged to?

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Bureaucracies

What are the characteristics of a bureaucracy?

18

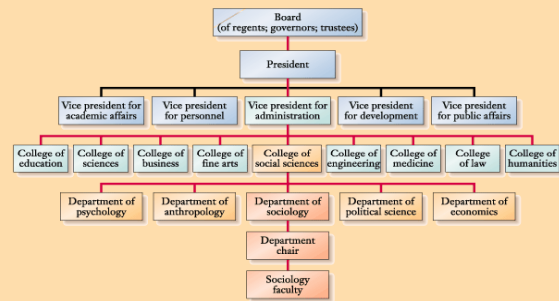
Bureaucracies (Max Weber)

Characteristics of Bureaucracies:

- (1) Clear cut levels (hierarchy).
- (2) Division of labor.
- (3) Written rules.
- (4) Written records.
- (5) Impersonality.
- (6) Hired for knowledge and/or skill (not nepotism)

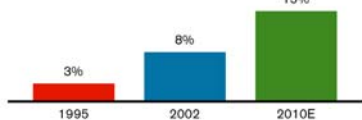
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The Typical Bureaucratic Structure of a Medium-Sized University

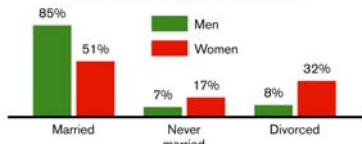


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Posts of executive vice president or higher held by women at the 500 largest companies



People earning more than \$100,000 a year



SOURCE: Gene Epstein, "More Women Advance but Sexism Persists," *Barron's*, 2003; available at www.collegejournal.com/success/work/workplaciversity/20030609-epstein.html, accessed spring 2006.

FIGURE 6.4 Balancing Act?

Introduction to Sociology, 6th ed.
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Bureaucracies and Work Alienation

What is work alienation?

- A feeling of not being "connected" to those around you
- A feeling of being a cog in a wheel

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Are there characteristics of your work or school that encourage alienation? What are they?


What characteristics help you to feel connected?

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Networks

- Social networks constitute a broad source of relationships, direct and indirect
- Social networks can be extremely important in business and politics.
- Women, people of color, and lower-income people typically have less access to the most influential economic and political networks than do white males in American society.

● ● ●



How is the internet used as a social network?

Professional network?

25

● ● ●

Conformity Research

In the Asch task, participants were shown a standard line and then three comparison lines. Their task was simply to say which of the three lines matched the standard.

When confederates gave false answers first, participants were more likely to conform by giving the wrong answer.

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