F. Social Groups

1. A group is defined as:
Two or more people who identify with one another and who interact with intent or purpose.
A group is NOT a "crowd" (no identity) or a "category" (people with a similar status but no interaction – "women" or "Catholics")

a. Primary Groups are:
Small, personal and long lasting;
Ex: close friends and family
For instance, primary groups offers emotional security. This is an Expressive Function of groups.

b. Secondary groups are:
Large in membership, impersonal and temporary;
Ex: a classroom, professional meeting, or the corporate workplace
They are not as important as primary groups and have weak emotional ties between persons – but there is a STRENGTH in weak ties – "it's who you know, not what…"
Secondary groups build SOCIAL CAPITAL. This is of clear value and is an Instrumental Function of groups.
F. Social Groups

1. Social Groups Defined

C. In-groups and Out-groups:
Groups can be powerful through inclusion and exclusion. In-groups and out-groups are subcategories of primary and secondary groups that identify this social dynamic.

d. Reference group:
A reference group is a group that people compare themselves to — it provides a standard of measurement. In American society, peer groups (like sports teams) are common reference groups.
We obtain role-models and base our identities on those people within our reference groups.

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2. Network Theory
- or - ‘Six Degrees of Separation’
Through a chain of just five or six people, anyone in the world can be linked to anyone else.

a. Social Network Analysis (SNA) or “Social Network Theory” more generally, is an area of sociological study emerging in the 1970s (long before Facebook, LinkedIn and MySpace existed).

What is the value of social network analysis?
- careers might emerge as a result of social networking;
- neighborhood watch groups are an example of social networking;
- terrorist networks can be tracked and better understood through SNA.
- The Internet is both a technical network and a social network.
b. Metcalfe’s Law: As you add members to a “perfect” social network (where everyone knows everyone else one), it’s value to each member grows exponentially.

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c. Sociograms

i. "Sociograms" are social network diagrams. They consist of these symbols:

- = node (one person)     = weak link     = strong link

ii. A group of 2 is a dyad, 3 is a triad. Additional people add to the strength of networks exponentially (Metcalfe’s Law). A person to which many people are connected is known as a hub.

iii. In-groups, Out-groups and References-Groups can be mapped by sociograms, discovering connections and patterns of associations between people (the shape of the "social web") in a highly visual way.
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3. Group Conformity

Groups offer comfort in the anonymity (also called "deindividuation") they allow us and the reassurance that we get from shared agreements on our socially constructed realities (like statuses and roles).

The price we have to pay for that comfort, however, is CONFORMITY. The less we conform the greater our chance of ostracization (expulsion) from the group.

How then is group conformity created?
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3. Group Conformity

a. Asch conformity experiments (1951)
   * Studied our willingness to compromise our own judgments and go along with group opinion
   * He asked subjects to simply compare the length of lines on two cards; his goal was to pressure people into conforming to the wrong answer.

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3.a. Group Conformity – Asch Experiment

Note how the level of conformity rises sharply as the group size approaches a triad, then roughly levels off thereafter.

This indicates that it only takes a “third wheel” to influence decisions one way or the other.

i. Informational Conformity: distorting our own judgment
ii. Normative Conformity: wanting to fit in, not make waves

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3. Group Conformity

b. Milgram obedience experiment (1961)

Looked at the role authority plays in group conformity.

It’s not as easy for us to exercise our free will as we think!

- Psychiatrists had predicted that only 1/10 of 1% of Milgram’s subjects would give the maximum shock. Graduate students and faculty, college sophomores, and middle-class adults had predicted that only 1% or 2% of subjects would obey completely.

- Reportedly, nearly 65% of Milgram’s subjects obeyed fully. Our common sense about our independence was wrong.

The Context (map)
F. Social Groups

4. Secondary, large-group organization: BUREAUCRACY

a. A rational organizational model for social groups, designed to perform complex tasks efficiently.

Max Weber, in his (posthumous) 1922 book Economy and Society, outlined six general characteristics of bureaucracies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>MSC example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Hierarchy of Offices</td>
<td>Whipple Hall - Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Specialization of Duties</td>
<td>Pres, VP, Dean, Faculty, Staff, Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Rules and Regulations</td>
<td>Student/Faculty Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Impersonality</td>
<td>M-Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Formal Written Communications</td>
<td>Student/Faculty File</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Technical Competence</td>
<td>GED, A.A., B.S., M.A., Ph.D., M.D., etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More power, rule makers, more personal, higher degrees of competence

Less power, rule-followers, less personal, lower degrees of competence

F. Social Groups

4.c. Large Groups -- Bureaucracy

ii. Four Big Problems With Bureaucracies:

i. Bureaucratic Alienation
   * Potential to "dehumanize" individuals – people become merely a "cog in the machine;"

ii. Bureaucratic Ritualism
   * Following the organizations rules becomes a primary concern - bureaucratic "red tape;"

iii. Bureaucratic Inertia
    * Perpetuation of the organization for its own benefit;

iv. Bureaucratic Oligarchy
    * Centralized control and power in a small number of individuals.
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4. Example: McDonaldization

b. George Ritzer sez: Many of societies' organizations are beginning to reflect these four basic principles introduced by McDonald's:

i. EFFICIENCY (speed)
   * Do it quickly (drive-thrus, microwaves, self-serve soda fountains, etc.)

ii. CALCULABILITY (amount)
   * Emphasize quantity over quality

iii. UNIFORMITY (predictability)
   * Do it the same each time and leave nothing to chance;

iv. CONTROL THROUGH AUTOMATION (human error)
   * If possible, do it by machine: humans are the most unreliable and costly factor in the production process.

Some Problems with McDonald's Operating Principles:

4. The Irrationality of Efficiency
d. The Problem of Bureaucracies

i. Max Weber "The Iron Cage of Reason"
   - The "Iron Cage" represents our feeling of being "trapped";
   - The system of a bureaucracy (and its form of reason) is based on what's good for the institution, not necessarily the individual.

ii. Life becomes "dysfunctional," and our social participation lacks meaning ("anomie")
   because the social institution defeats the individual; a sense of "calling" cannot exist when life is meaningless.

iii. The solution? We must work collectively to change the system.
   Protests, boycotts, and other social movements have historically been the way in which old "paradigms" or models for institutional organization give way to new ones. The rise of Western democracies, civil rights for African Americans, and the "Occupy Wall Street" movement are examples.

Cultures of Bureaucracy

More power, rule makers, more personal, higher degrees of technical competence

Less power, rule-followers, less personal, lower degrees of technical competence
Cultures of **Resistance**

*Less power, new rule followers, rapid change*

**POWER**

![Collective Organization Triangle]

**Number of People**

*More power, redefine rules, more communal*