SOCIOLOGY

Concepts and Applications in a Diverse World

F I F T H E D I T I O N

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tact. What do their experiences teach us about learning and socialization?

3. According to Cooley and Mead, how does socialization during childhood occur?

4. Describe how Erikson's theory of socialization is different from Cooley's and Mead's. Describe the stages in Erikson's theory.

5. Assess the issue of whether children sent to day care are reared as effectively as children raised in the home. Summarize the research on both sides of the issue.

6. Describe the four agencies of socialization discussed in the chapter in terms of the special contributions that each makes to the socialization of the young.

7. Describe the three most important forms that socialization can take. State what each accomplishes and give an example of each.

8. How does the primary socialization of children in Japan and the United States differ?

9. Summarize the research on the issue of whether adults go through a single, common sequence of development. How does the adult development of women and men differ?

10. Compare and contrast the functionalist and conflict perspectives on the process of socialization.

Answers

Multiple-Choice

1. B; 2. A; 3. C; 4. B; 5. E; 6. A; 7. C; 8. B; 9. C; 10. D

True/False

1. T; 2. F; 3. F; 4. F; 5. T; 6. T; 7. T; 8. F; 9. F; 10. T

Fill-In

1. a clean slate
2. sociobiology
3. imitation, play stage, game stage
4. I, me
5. trust versus mistrust
6. peer group
7. view role models
8. harmony, mutual dependence
9. resocialization
10. a rite of passage

Matching

1. G; 2. H; 3. A; 4. I; 5. D; 6. B; 7. C; 8. J; 9. E; 10. F

For Further Reading

Adler, Patricia A., & Adler, Peter. (1998). *Peer power: Preadolescent culture and identity.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. This very engaging book describes what socialization and identity are like for young children. It especially focuses on the influence of peers in these arenas.

Ariès, Philippe. (1965). *Centuries of childhood. A social history of family life.* New York: Vintage. The book is an eye-opening look at what childhood was like and how children were viewed in some preindustrial European societies.

Elkin, Frederick, & Handel, Gerald. (1988). *The child and society* (5th ed.). New York: Random House. This classic work provides a comprehensive overview of sociological research on the socialization process during childhood.

Gilligan, Carol, Lyons, Nona P., & Hammer, Trudy J. (eds.). (1990). *Making connections.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. This in-depth study of growing up among adolescent females in the United States suggests that U.S. culture inculcates in them a lack of confidence and feelings of uncertainty.

Lewontin, R. C. (1984). *Not in our genes.* New York: Pantheon. This book is about biological and sociobiological explanations of socialization and human development. As the title suggests, the author is a critic of such approaches, but his analysis is complete and fair.

Mead, Margaret. (1961). *Coming of age in Samoa.* New York: Dell. (Original work published 1928.) Although Mead's work has been unfavorably criticized, it is still a classic analysis of the adolescent period in a society quite different from American society.

Rymer, Russ. (1993). *Genie: An abused child's flight from silence.* New York: HarperCollins. This is a truly fascinating book about Genie, the girl discussed in the chapter who suffered severe isolation in childhood. The author discusses controversies regarding language socialization as well as describes how the scientific community treated Genie and the abilities she developed in early adulthood.

Turkle, Sherry. (1995). *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet.* New York: Simon & Schuster. Children today grow up using computers, and this sociologist argues that computers and how we use them play a part in shaping our self-concepts during the process of socialization.

FOUR

Groups and Organizations

MYTHS AND FACTS: ***About Groups and Organizations***

Types of Groups
Primary Groups
- Characteristics
- Cultural Variation

Secondary Groups
In-Groups and Out-Groups
Reference Groups
Social Collectivities

Group Structure and Process
Status and Role
Leadership
Decision Making in Groups
Group Cohesion
Group Conformity

Organizations
Bureaucracy
- Characteristics of Bureaucracies
- A Critique of Bureaucratic Organization

The Human Relations Approach
The Informal Structure
Gender in Organizations

Sociological Perspectives on Organizations

APPLYING SOCIOLOGY: ***Diagnosing Organizational Culture: Helping Organizations to Function Better***

The Functionalist Perspective
The Conflict Perspective

OTHER WORLDS, OTHER WAYS: ***China: Cultural Values and Group Behavior—Social Loafing in Organizations***

The Interactionist Perspective

The Future of Bureaucracy
Bureaucracy and Oligarchy
Limits to Bureaucracy

SOCIOLOGY OF MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY: ***Impact on Groups, Organizations, and Bureaucracies***

SOCIOLOGY ON THE INTERNET

Study and Review

It has been five hundred years since European explorers first made landfall in the Western Hemisphere. For most of those years, it made little difference to the Yanomamo Indians, as the Europeans gradually transformed the Americas. However, the good fortune of the Yanomamo (also called Yanomama) in avoiding the encroachment of the newcomers could not last forever.

The Yanomamo people live in remote portions of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil, scattered in 125 villages that contain between 40 and 250 people each (Chagnon, 1992; Smole, 1976). Their territory is so remote that most of these villages had little or no contact with outsiders until the 1970s. The Yanomamo territory is heavily forested, its rolling hills covered with palm, hardwood trees, scrub brush, and vines. The Indians live in huts made from the poles, vines, and leaves of the tropical rain forest. They subsist by hunting monkeys, pigs, and wild turkeys and gathering wild fruits, nuts, and tubers. They also have gardens, where they cultivate plantain, banana, sweet manioc, and maize. Although rain forests seem lush to those unfamiliar with them, wild game and flora are sparse and the soil is shallow. Therefore, the Yanomamo must periodically find new hunting areas and move their gardens as the topsoil is depleted. In the terms used in Chapter 2, the Yanomamo have a mixed hunting-and-gathering and horticultural subsistence pattern.

Yanomamo daily life in these small villages is casual and personal. Everyone knows everyone else. Some people wake before dawn to build up the fire, and then they visit others to make plans for the day or maybe go back to sleep. When it is light, men or women prepare breakfast, and the men who will hunt that day leave the village. Other men go out to work in their garden, transplanting banana cuttings or felling trees and clearing brush. Women collect firewood and help with planting and weeding. By midmorning, it is too hot and humid to continue working, so everyone retires to bathe in a stream, eat a meal, and rest in their hammocks. Children play close to the adults all day and learn what they need to know to be good Yanomamo by watching the adults hunt, cultivate, or rest. In late afternoon, as the weather cools, some men and women go back to working in the gardens or gathering firewood, while others relax in the shadows and take hallucinogenic drugs. The large evening meal is a time to relax and socialize with others. Successful hunters show their solidarity with others in the group by giving away much of the meat they caught that day. Both men and women participate in food preparation, although women do the larger share. After dusk, fires are prepared for the night; if a person's fire has gone out, he or she simply borrows a few glowing sticks from a neighbor to restart it. Daily routines in one Yanomamo village are described thus:

> Life is public both within and without the village-house. People know how one another's children behave and how a man treats his wife. They know what food others eat, what game a hunter captures, and what game was not successfully retrieved. Yanomama may respond to the activity of others with indifference, vocal anger, casual interest, or laughter. (Early & Peters, 1990, p. 5)

In Yanomamo society, no one would have to fend for himself or herself; the community ties discussed in Chapter 1 are elaborate and comprehensive. The daily routines just described are repeated from one season to the next, and there are not great variations in wealth and poverty. There are distinctions: Men have higher status than women. Someone not born in a particular village is considered an "outsider" and discouraged from participating in some Yanomamo activities. A headman in a village has some privileges that others do not have. Yet, for the most part, life for the Yanomamo is highly egalitarian and personal.

Lest this picture seem idealized, the Yanomamo are also known as "the fierce people" because they can be aggressive and violent. Men settle disputes by battling one another with clubs, and elders proudly flaunt their scars as signs of their bravery over the years. Women can be cruelly beaten by their husbands or kidnapped by raiders from another Yanomamo village. Yet, the Yanomamo social structure, as with all social structures at their level of subsistence, is relatively small, simple, and personal. Everyone knows everyone else and his or her place in the social order.

Myths & FACTS

ABOUT GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Myth Individual decision making is clearly superior to group decision making: "If you want something fouled up, just depend on a committee to decide what to do."

FACT Research has demonstrated that group decisions are more reasoned and reliable than individual decisions. In this case, the old commonsense saying, "Two heads are better than one," is supported by empirical evidence.

Myth Groups are cautious and reserved in making decisions. That explains why it takes so long for groups to reach a decision.

FACT Group decisions tend to be more extreme—sometimes more daring, other times more cautious—than those made by individuals. This tendency has been referred to as the *risky shift* phenomenon and described as *group polarization.*

Myth Bureaucracies are slow and inefficient.

FACT Although bureaucracies can be legitimately criticized for being inflexible and rigid, they are extremely efficient in accomplishing well-structured and straightforward tasks that involve a uniform sequence of events.

Myth Computer technology is decentralizing the workplace by allowing more people to be their own boss and run their business from their home.

FACT The impact of computers on the workplace is more complicated than this. Although some workers do benefit, others who work at home are isolated employees with little power to influence the conditions of their work or to bargain for health benefits or other advantages.

As the Europeanization and bureaucratization of the Western Hemisphere proceeded, it finally affected Yanomamo life and social structure. In the 1950s, missionaries made contact with some Yanomamo villages, bringing them the Bible and "civilized" life. Over the following two decades, farmers in Brazil and Venezuela gradually encroached on Yanomamo lands, clearing forests for cropland. In the 1980s, gold was discovered in Yanomamo territory, bringing prospectors and miners looking for wealth. In 1993, Brazilian gold miners were blamed for the massacre of forty Yanomamo men, women, and children and the burning of their village. The mining companies have also been accused of wreaking havoc on the Yanomamo's environment and introducing deadly diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria. After centuries of isolation, the Yanomamo are being unwillingly drawn into a very different type of social organization, characterized by large, impersonal, formal organizations quite alien to their traditional way of life. Impersonal organizations and decisions made by people they are unfamiliar with change their lives in ways over which they have little control; corporations and bureaucracies, often located in foreign lands, now shape their fate.

Traditional Yanomamo life and the new world they now confront represent the extremes of the types of groups that humans create in order to survive. As described in Chapter 2, social structure is one of the fundamental elements that is found in all societies, and groups and organizations are two important manifestations of social structure. A *social group* was defined as a collection of people who are aware of

This Yanomamo group lives in a remote region of Brazil and has managed to retain much of its traditional culture and way of life into the twenty-first century. Their way of life is vastly different from that of most peoples today where large groups and formal organizations predominate.

their membership, have common goals and interests, share statuses and roles, and interact with one another. People live out their lives in a vast network of such groups. A Yanomamo male is born into and socialized by a family, goes out to hunt with a small group of other men, and sits around the fire in a casual group in the evening to exchange stories. In modern industrial societies, similar small groups can be found, but large and impersonal groups such as business, educational, and government organizations—unknown in traditional Yanomamo society—have become much more prominent. In an almost infinite variety of ways, groups and organizations shape our relationships with others and guide our behavior. This chapter analyzes the most important types of groups and organizations in terms of their structures and how they function to influence behavior.

Types of Groups

You should be able to describe the major types of social groups and discuss their functions.

There are many different types of social groups, and each plays a different part in our lives. The study of groups and group processes begins by distinguishing among the groups that perform different functions for people and for society. One central distinction between groups is that between those in which we have close personal ties with people and those in which we do not. Along these lines, sociological analysis makes an important distinction between primary and secondary groups.

Primary Groups

Characteristics **Primary groups** are *small in size and characterized by personal, intimate, and nonspecialized relationships between their members.* A family, a friendship group, an athletic team, and a pair of lovers are examples of primary groups. Primary groups usually involve face-to-face contact; generate strong feelings of group loyalty and identification; and provide warm, supportive, and emotionally gratifying ties with others. In fact, one of the major functions of primary groups in society is to provide people with a relatively secure refuge in which they can be themselves without fear of rejection or ridicule. In

addition, primary groups function as mediators between the individual and other parts of society (Dunphy, 1972). The family, for example, provides socialization in the values and norms of society. Likewise, peer groups serve as buffers that help us cope with the impersonal or alienating elements of school or work. We can tolerate some degree of such impersonality because of the support that we receive in primary groups. Finally, primary groups play a central role in shaping our personalities and self-concepts. It is typically from family and friends that we gain a sense of who we are and of our value and worth. However, even when primary groups perform the same function in two different cultures, cultural values and traditions still stamp some distinct patterns and meanings on how people in primary groups relate to one another.

Cultural Variation Friendships are primary groups that fulfill many of the functions of primary groups mentioned, and they perform some similar functions in all cultures. Yet, there are some significant differences, especially in the social meanings attached to friendships and how friends relate to one another (Barnlund, 1989). In Japan, for example, friendship is surrounded by obligation and responsibility. To take on a friend means to take seriously the obligation to assist that person in any difficulties he or she might have. In fact, this obligation is taken so seriously that Japanese are more reluctant than people in the United States to take on new friendships. They seem more aware of and sensitive to the burden that friendship creates, while in the United States people tend to think in terms of "the more friends the better." As a part of the burden of friendship, Japanese see friendships as more permanent than do people in the United States, as lifelong connections and responsibilities. The ending of a friendship is seen very negatively in Japan, whereas in the United States it is viewed as common and sometimes necessary—not good, but something that happens because people move, change, or become interested in new things. Even when separated by some geographic distance, Japanese friends are reluctant to say their friendship has ended. Such reluctance is also found, to an extent, in the United States, but friends are usually more willing to let friendships go in the United States.

Friends in Japan avoid arguments, disagreements, and other sorts of conflict as much as possible (Halloran, 1969; Ozaki, 1978). Japanese are surprised at the amount of explicit conflict that can occur between friends in the United States. With the strong emphasis placed on individualism in the United States, people consider open conflict to be an honest display of one's feelings and may feel that Japanese are being dishonest or insincere when they don't tell friends what they truly think. The Japanese approach, however, is not a matter of dishonesty but of maintaining harmonious social relations (see the discussion of Japanese cultural values in Chapter 2). For the Japanese, harmony is more important than what they might consider a selfish display of emotion. In addition, the Japanese identity is more firmly grounded in social relationships, like friendships, whereas people in the United States tend to idealize the isolated self. In the United States, people will break off friendships over some conflict or other and then become reconciled and resume the friendship at a later date. Japanese avoid letting conflict build to the point that it threatens a relationship. There is conflict in Japan and friendships do break up; reconciliations, however, are rare.

Thus, although the status of "friend" can be found in all cultures, the social meaning of the primary group of "friends" is quite variable and shaped by cultural values. This variability illustrates the emphasis of the interactionist perspective on the emergence of social meanings through social interaction. In preindustrial societies, much of life revolved around primary groups. As noted in Chapter 2, family and kinship played an important role in hunting-and-gathering, horticultural, and agricultural

societies. However, the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1887/1963) observed how this changes with the coming of industrialization, and he distinguished between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft types of societies (see Chapter 2). The type of group that dominates in gesellschaft (industrial) societies is the secondary group.

Secondary Groups

Secondary groups are *based on task-oriented, impersonal, and specialized ties with people; they may be small but are often large.* Business organizations, universities, the U.S. Army, and hospitals are all examples of secondary groups. Consider the last time that you dealt with people who work in the registrar's office or other unit in your school. Unless these people were close friends, your relationship with them was probably secondary in nature. In your role as a student, for example, the people who work in the registrar's office interact with you in a contractual way, rather than a personal, primary fashion. Despite their impersonality, secondary groups are very important in an industrial society because they enable us to achieve specified goals. By treating you in an impersonal way, the registrar's office at your school can process hundreds of students each day. Were the relationship unspecialized—if you decided to chat with the clerk about football because you were both interested in the topic—the major goal of the registrar's office, to register students in classes, would not be achieved as quickly or completely, or perhaps at all.

The distinction between primary and secondary groups is one of degree. Some primary relationships may involve certain secondary elements, and some of the interchanges in a secondary group may be warm and personal (see Figure 4.1). Likewise, over time, one type of group can change into the other. The important point is to understand the extent to which a particular group has primary or secondary characteristics and thus serves different functions in social life.

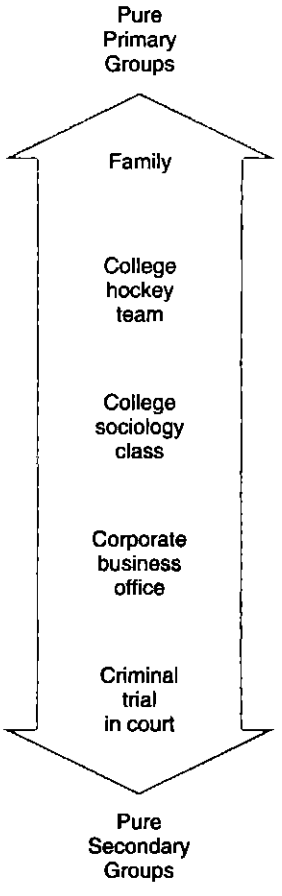


FIGURE 4.1 The Continuum of Primary and Secondary Groups

In-Groups and Out-Groups

In addition to noting the distinction between primary and secondary groups, sociologists also call attention to how people view their own and other groups. William Graham Sumner (1906) coined the terms *in-group* and *out-group* to distinguish between groups that generate quite different feelings. An **in-group** is *one that we feel positively toward and identify with, and that produces a sense of loyalty or "we" feeling.* **Out-groups** are *those to which we do not belong and that we view in a neutral or possibly hostile fashion.* We view out-groups as "they," as different from and less desirable than ourselves. In-groups might include

your family, your friends, the church you attend, or the bowling team to which you belong. Out-groups might include bowling teams that compete with yours, those who hold different religious beliefs, your supervisors at work, or the administrators and faculty at your university. In-groups and out-groups depend on a person's perspective: One person's in-group is another's out-group. In addition, in-groups and out-groups may be primary or secondary, large or small. Your baseball team, which may be a primary group, may be an in-group for you but an out-group for opposing teams. Likewise, a high school, which is a secondary group, can serve as an in-group for its members but an out-group for people attending other high schools.

All groups have boundaries to distinguish those who belong from those who do not, and boundaries help to distinguish in-groups from out-groups. In some groups, the boundaries are clearly demarcated by formal entrance rituals. People join a religion by undergoing a formal ritual such as baptism; one becomes a physician by graduating from medical school and passing the required examinations; a person enters a fraternity by successfully enduring "hell" week or other hazing ceremonies. In other groups, boundaries are defined by certain visible signs: wedding rings may define a married pair; clothing styles can signify one's allegiance to particular groups; skin color identifies one as a member of a particular racial group. For many groups, however, there are no rituals or visible signs to demarcate boundaries. For these groups, identification and we-feelings are important elements in defining boundaries and maintaining membership. Among friends, for example, membership is defined by one's loyalty to the group as measured by how much time is spent with them or what one is willing to do for them. Although we-feelings are important in many groups, they are especially important in groups that possess few other mechanisms for defining group boundaries. (Chapter 2 discussed the role of argot, or a group's special language, in helping identify group boundaries.)

In-groups and out-groups are important because of the roles they play in social life. The loyalty generated among members of an in-group, for example, can motivate people to endure many hardships together. People will give, sacrifice, or suffer a great deal to help members of their families, whereas the needs of an acquaintance or stranger would be ignored. In addition, we often stereotype members of an out-group, and those stereotypes influence the way we treat the members of that group. The elderly, for example, are often stereotyped as being frail and senile, and younger people's treatment of them often reflects this view—sometimes to the point of being condescending and insulting. As will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, discrimination against a group can arise from such stereotypes. Finally, threats from an out-group can increase loyalty and cohesion among in-group members. The most obvious example is warfare, in which nations view each other as threatening and people on both sides rally together to overcome the foe.

Reference Groups

A **reference group** is *a group that people use as a standard in evaluating or understanding themselves, their attitudes, and their behavior.* A person in college, for example, may adopt the attitudes, clothing styles, and leisure interests of other college students. One need not be enrolled in college, however, to use college students as a reference group. Some high school students may identify with their college counterparts, attend college athletic events, and adopt the clothing styles of college students as a standard of fashion. Thus people are not necessarily *members* of the reference groups they use as standards.

Reference groups can be very powerful and pervasive elements in our lives, serving as sources of values, attitudes, and standards of conduct. Because we regard membership in or acceptance by these groups as important, we adopt their perspective on many things, often

without being aware that we have done so. This process is illustrated by a classic study of political attitudes among college students. Theodore Newcomb (1943, 1958) initiated his study in the 1930s at Bennington College, an exclusive women's college in Vermont. At the time, Bennington had a young and very liberal faculty, whereas the students came from families that were generally conservative. When students first enrolled at Bennington, they tended to hold the conservative views of their parents. That did not last, however. Newcomb found that there was a strong likelihood that the students' political attitudes would become more liberal the longer they attended Bennington. The reason was that the prestige of a student at Bennington depended in part on her political stance. To be accepted by other students, to gain entrance to sororities, to be elected to student office—all were easier if one had liberal political attitudes. Many of the students adjusted their attitudes accordingly. In short, the reference group for the students in relationship to political and social attitudes gradually changed from their parents to the faculty and other students. This liberalizing influence of college was further documented in the 1970s in a study that found that college students' sex-role attitudes and religious beliefs became less traditional over time, especially for those who eventually graduated (Funk & Willits, 1987). A restudy of the original Bennington women in the 1980s offers yet further support for the importance of reference groups in shaping attitudes (Alwin, Cohen, & Newcomb, 1991). Throughout their lives, the impact of college experiences on the political attitudes of these women persisted. Of course, some of their attitudes did change over time, but change was most likely to occur because of the impact of other reference groups, especially their spouses, their friends, and their children. When change occurred, it was typically to bring their attitudes closer into alignment with postcollege reference groups to which they were exposed.

A few Bennington students maintained their conservative views, retaining their parents as a reference group for their political attitudes. Newcomb found that these students maintained closer contacts with their families, telephoned their parents more frequently, and made numerous trips back to their home community. They were also less likely to participate in campus politics or the major sororities and clubs. Instead, they joined groups on campus that were isolated from the mainstream of campus events. It was easier to maintain their parents as a reference group if they kept closer ties with them and reduced ties with liberal students and other similar groups.

Reference groups, then, serve as standards against which we assess ourselves and the validity of our beliefs and values. They also serve as sources of aspiration. When people attend college, for example, they learn the goals other college students aspire to and may come to value those goals themselves. As we move from one group to another, such situations can create difficulties, of course. Friends who do not attend college, for example, may not understand why your attitudes are changing as you attend college because they do not use college as a reference group as you do. They may view your pulling away from them as insensitivity, but you are actually beginning to assess yourself by the standards of a different group.

Social Collectivities

Some collections of people that are commonly called groups do not qualify as such under the restricted way that sociologists use the term. The term *social category* refers to people who share some characteristic in common, such as Italians, Muslims, rock fans, golfers, or racquetball players. The term *aggregate* refers to people who happen to be in the same place at the same time, even though they may not interact with one another. Examples would include people riding the same bus or people in an elevator together.

Such collectivities do not qualify as a social group in the sociological sense because they do not have interrelated statuses and roles or an awareness of sharing something in common. Such social collectivities are important, however, because social categories, and especially aggregates, can transform themselves into a group if the members begin interacting and other group characteristics develop.

Group Structure and Process

You should be able to describe the social structure of groups and explain the processes involved in group decision making and ensuring group conformity.

In the previous section, groups were distinguished in terms of the functions they perform. Sociologists also distinguish between groups in terms of their size, ranging from small groups, where people engage in face-to-face interaction, to large, impersonal organizations. Much social life is lived out in small groups. Even in large organizations, much social activity occurs in small groups, as when, for example, people in a corporation meet to make business decisions or teachers in schools counsel students. These small-group settings are sufficiently important to understanding social life that sociology devotes considerable attention to studying their structure and the process of social interaction that takes place within them (Hare, 1976).

Status and Role

As indicated in Chapter 2, statuses and roles are two central elements of social structure, and they can be found in all groups—large or small, primary or secondary—because all groups have a social structure. These statuses and roles organize and coordinate the behavior of group members in relation to one another and indicate what behaviors are appropriate for each group member. In this fashion, they contribute to stable and orderly social interaction in groups. This phenomenon can be illustrated by examining the group structure of youth gangs.

Sociologists have studied youth gangs since early in the twentieth century, often using participant observation research as described in Chapter 1 (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Jankowski, 1991, Whyte, 1965). These gangs tend to be informally structured, and their membership can shift from week to week. Nonetheless, by spending a good deal of time with these gangs, sociologists have been able to identify the statuses and roles that constitute a part of their social structure. These statuses and roles define the rights and obligations of each member of the gang. Chapter 2 discusses how differences in status do not always imply differences in ranking or prestige. In most youth gangs, however, some statuses are ranked in terms of prestige or importance. Usually one or a few members of the gang can be identified as the leader, and these people are accorded more respect or deference. A person might become a leader because the person is big and tough and can best others in a physical confrontation. Or the person may be especially smart or crafty, be willing to commit serious crimes or deal drugs, or be willing to risk arrest. The leader is also often an older member of the gang, who has had many opportunities to develop skills and display prowess and toughness. Irrespective of how they become leaders, inhabiting that status means that those individuals have more control and influence over others and may have some privileges that others don't have (as in an extra share of the take from drug proceeds). In some gangs, leaders are expected to lend money to other gang members but not to borrow from them. Leaders also often have additional responsibilities for deciding what activities or crimes the gang will take on and for settling disputes among gang members.

The status structure of a gang can also influence the expectations for conformity to group norms and roles. Leaders and other high-status

people, for example, are often under greater pressure to conform than are other members of the group. While all gang members are expected to help one another—this is a general expectation for anyone in the role of "gang member"—leaders and other high-status people are expected to offer more extensive and continuous assistance. When a gang member is in serious trouble—say, with the police—it is the leaders who are most expected to provide help, even if it might be costly to, or bring police attention to, the leader.

Beyond the leader role, the specialized roles that emerge in gangs depend on the specific circumstances of each gang. Some members might be especially adept at dealing drugs, others at acquiring and using guns. Some gang members may be especially skilled at finding entertaining social activities for the gang to participate in. Gang members, of course, do not talk about "statuses," "roles," and "social structure" and may not even have labels for all of the statuses in their group. Nonetheless, sociologists, by observing what gang members say and do, can identify the various features of the gang's social structure and how they influence members' behavior.

As mentioned, membership in youth gangs shifts over time; this drifting into and out of such groups is common. Sociologists have studied the group dynamics involved in joining and leaving such groups. One influential factor is how many social connections a person has in the group (McPherson, Popielarz, & Drobnic, 1992). The more connections, such as friendships or obligations to individuals in the group, people have, the less likely they are to leave the group. This fact is especially true when those connections involve people who are similar to one another in terms of gender, race, or some other important characteristic. Generally, high-status individuals in a group have a greater network of connections than those of less status, partly because they are likely to have been in the group longer. Knowledge of such group dynamics is helpful to group leaders, who can work to increase the connections of new members in the group as a way of reducing the likelihood they will drift away.

So, studies of youth gangs by sociologists illustrate how group structure—statuses and roles—shapes behavior by defining which behaviors are appropriate for each position in the group. You probably belong to at least one informal group of friends that has some parallels to these youth gangs. Certainly the status and role structure of your group will not mirror exactly those of youth gangs, but you should be sensitive to the statuses and roles that do exist. Which people have higher status? Who has influence over whom? Who initiates activities, makes decisions, or settles disputes? Who can get away with nonconformity? Who has the greatest impact in determining whether a new person will be permitted to join the group? The precise form of a particular group's social structure depends on many factors. One such factor is leadership, which is used to illustrate some further dimensions of group structure and process.

Leadership

One of the most important, and more thoroughly investigated, statuses in groups is that of leader. **Leadership** refers to *the exercise of influence over a group such that group behavior is directed toward particular outcomes or goals* (Hollander, 1985). In some groups, leadership is a formal position, as with a teacher in the classroom. In other settings, leadership is informal, shifting, and sometimes difficult to determine clearly. In peer groups, athletic teams, or a crowd at a homecoming party, it is often difficult to predict who will guide the actions of the group, and leadership may shift from one person to another over time.

Two important roles that leaders perform and that need to be performed in all groups are *task* and *socioemotional roles* (Bales, 1953; Fiedler, 1981). **Task roles** (also called **instrumental roles**) are *the actions of leaders that move the group toward*

achieving its goals. Examples of task leadership would include a teacher directing students, a manager overseeing the activities of a group of employees, or a mother working to support her family. **Socioemotional roles** (also known as **expressive** or **relationship-oriented roles**) are those in which *leaders work to produce harmony, enjoyment, relaxation, or high morale among group members.* A surgeon who jokes to ease tension, an employer who hosts a party for his or her employees, or a friend who listens to the complaints of a buddy—all would be performing socioemotional roles.

These two leadership roles can be performed by the same person or by different people. It is sometimes difficult for the same person to accomplish both because they are, to a degree, inconsistent with each other. In a family, for example, a mother who works outside the home may have to insist that her children mow the lawn while she is away when they would prefer to play. Her exercise of authority and her absence—both called for by her position as instrumental leader—may, in fact, increase tension or disharmony in the family. Socioemotional leadership, by contrast, would call for listening, understanding, and sympathy—all of which may make it more difficult to get the lawn mowed. Furthermore, the two roles sometimes call for different skills. The task role may require skills in coordination and command, whereas the socioemotional role may require patience and understanding. Although some people possess all these skills, many do not.

In addition to variations in how they perform their task and socioemotional roles, leaders differ in their degree of *directiveness.* Different levels of directiveness can influence the attitudes and behaviors of group members (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939; White & Lippitt, 1960). *Autocratic leaders* are thoroughly directive, dictating all actions and techniques to be used in achieving group goals. *Democratic leaders* allow group members to take part in shaping the policies of the group and choosing procedures for accomplishing group goals. Group members are allowed more freedom in deciding what their own actions will be. *Laissez-faire leaders* withdraw from participation in the group and give group members almost complete freedom to make decisions and choose alternative actions.

There are more tension and conflict with directive leaders than with less-directive types. In autocratic groups, for example, more hostility and aggression are generated and scapegoating is common with a single individual often serving as the target of the group's hostility. In addition, group members are more positive toward groups with nondirective leaders, and less-directive leadership creates more satisfaction among group members, greater interest in the group, and more friendly and enjoyable relationships among group members. Directive leaders, however, appear to encourage more productivity. Although some studies find no differences in productivity as a result of leadership, few studies conclude that nondirective leadership is more productive (Fiedler, 1967; Shaw, 1976; Whitcomb & Williams, 1978).

With an understanding of the impact of leader directiveness on group behavior, it can be seen that having a directive leader is sometimes beneficial and sometimes not. In battle or in surgery, for example, there is neither the time nor the luxury for debate, freedom, or choice. In a work group, directive leadership may be less satisfying to group members but still preferable because it enhances productivity. Evidence shows, however, that democratic rather than authoritarian directiveness in leaders is more influential and results in higher employee productivity and commitment (Tjosvald, Andrews, & Struthers, 1992). In groups where membership and participation depend on people's satisfaction and interest, however, nondirective leadership may be necessary to hold the group together. Among friends or in charity drives where participation is voluntary, nondirective leaders may be essential to avoid the disintegration of the group. In other words, the best style of leadership depends on the type of group involved and the goals of the group

(Fiedler, 1981). It also depends on the environment in which the group carries out its work. In a stressful environment where the group experiences hindrances to its work, a less-structured group without clear-cut leadership seems to do better; in a quiet, stable, positive environment, groups with structured leadership outperform less-structured groups at the same tasks (Worchel & Shackelford, 1991). It can be seen, therefore, that many factors come into play to influence leadership in groups, and sociologists need a lot of information (about group goals, environment, membership characteristics, and so on) before making recommendations about the most effective leadership for a particular group.

Finally in regard to leadership, considerable research and controversy over the years have been generated over the role of gender. Popular wisdom, which is supported by some research, suggests that men are more natural leaders and women more natural followers (Eagly, 1983). In group settings, it is held, men are more influential and women are more likely to be influenced. Certainly, the traditional sex-role stereotype of women as the weaker and more passive of the two sexes is consistent with this view. Research also suggests, however, that much or all of this difference in leadership capacity results from the fact that, in a society where gender differences still persist, men have more formal opportunities to hold leadership positions, thus gaining experience at and demonstrating a capacity for leadership. There may be a self-fulfilling prophecy at work: The cultural stereotype of men as leaders results in men being pressured to take such positions, and the experience they gain in those positions imparts more leadership abilities to them than to women. Nevertheless, it is not gender, per se, that affects leadership but rather the opportunities made differentially available on the basis of gender. As women gain more opportunities in leadership and management roles, things should begin to change, and recent research reports a less clear-cut gender effect on leadership (Gurman & Long, 1992; Hegstrom & Griffith, 1992; Sapp, Harrod, & Zhao, 1996).

Decision Making in Groups

This discussion of the social structure of groups has considered issues related to social interaction among group members, such as the degree of directiveness in the interaction between leaders and members. Another area of social interaction among group members that has been extensively studied is decision making in groups.

Some people believe that "two heads are better than one"—that group decisions are superior to those made by individuals. Others believe that decision making by groups is inherently inefficient and faulty. What is the reality behind these contradictory commonsense notions? Actually, it depends on whether the group is solving a problem or exercising judgment and making choices. Research has demonstrated that groups are clearly superior to individuals in everything except speed when it comes to solving problems. Groups come up with a wider range of solutions to problems, and the solutions are better and more accurate (Shaw & Costanzo, 1982). There are a number of probable reasons for the superiority of group performance in problem solving: More individual effort and creativity are brought to bear in a group; groups are more likely to recognize and reject errors; the ablest and most confident group members strongly influence the group decision; and greater interest in the problem is aroused in a group and people are more highly motivated to seek a solution (Phillips & Wood, 1984; Watson, Michaelsen, & Sharp, 1991).

Many decisions that groups make are not related to problem solving but rather involve judgment, assessment, and choice among a number of alternatives. And no alternative is necessarily correct. For example, deciding how to spend a weekend has this judgmental character. Group

decisions on judgmental issues are characterized by a phenomenon known as **group polarization:** *The decisions tend to be more extreme than those made by individuals* (Kogan & Wallach, 1964; Myers & Lamm, 1976). This phenomenon was originally identified as a *risky shift:* People in groups tend to make more daring and bold choices than they would if acting individually. To some extent, this tendency contradicts the commonsense notion that groups are cautious and reserved. Continuing research has shown, however, that although group discussion *does* bring about a shift in the decisions of individuals, the shift *need not* be in the direction of more risk. If the group's position is cautious and conservative, then individuals tend to shift their decisions in that direction. In short, group decisions tend to be more extreme—either more daring *or* more cautious—than decisions made individually by the same people. This phenomenon has been found to occur in many diverse settings, including people making business decisions as well as burglars deciding whether a location is an appropriate target (Cromwell, Marks, Olson, & Avary, 1991; Williams & Taormina, 1992).

There are several possible reasons for the group polarization phenomenon (Hong, 1978; Mackie & Cooper, 1984). First, it may be that during group discussions, people shift their decisions in directions that appear to be more highly valued by the group. In other words, people tend to adopt the values of the group in making decisions. Another reason for group polarization may be that people shift their opinions because they have been persuaded by the information and arguments emerging from group discussion. Group members who hold extreme positions may feel more strongly about their positions, argue more persuasively, and thus have greater influence on the group's decisions. Finally, especially in groups exhibiting a risky shift, people in groups probably feel less responsibility for the decisions and thus less inhibited in making risky ones.

Group Cohesion

One of the more important group characteristics is **group cohesion,** or *the degree to which groups stick together and members feel committed to one another and attracted to the group.* In other words, cohesive groups tend to stick together, even under adversity, whereas less-cohesive groups more easily disintegrate under pressure or competing demands. More-cohesive groups have higher levels of morale and less difficulty retaining members and are often more persistent and effective in achieving their goals.

One example of how cohesion affects group performance can be found in studies of behavior in combat. For the military to be effective, soldiers must continue to fight as a cohesive group even under the most adverse conditions—combat, where deprivation, injury, and death are routine. Applied sociologists have been conducting research and helping the military services establish policies that will result in the most cohesive fighting force. The focus of much of this research has been on the role of primary groups in motivating soldiers to fight. Beginning with studies of the German army during World War II, sociologists showed that many German units continued to fight well even when they were badly outnumbered and had probably lost the war (Shils & Janowitz, 1948; Stouffer et al., 1949). It was not a belief in the Nazi cause that produced this tenacity in battle, because many German soldiers showed little commitment to the Nazi ideology. Instead, sociologists discovered that it was the solidarity and loyalty that soldiers felt toward others in their squad or platoon that motivated their effective combat performance under adverse conditions. They did not want to let their buddies down or feel their buddies' wrath should they not pull their weight. All the research done by sociologists during World War II and since shows the same thing: Group solidarity is one of the most effective factors in keeping soldiers going in combat.

A number of group characteristics can increase a group's cohesiveness: small size, frequent opportunities for group members to interact with one another, being together for a long period of time, similar characteristics among group members, and strong distinctions between those who belong to the group and those who do not (Hechter, 1987). Building on these findings, sociologists have experimented with having teams of soldiers train together and be transferred to new units together as a way of enhancing primary-group ties and group cohesion. In comparison to training and transferring soldiers individually, this approach does produce higher levels of both morale and performance (Moskos, 1970; Segal, Schubert, & Li, 1991). Findings on group cohesion have also been used to support arguments against permitting women to serve in combat. Since more cohesive groups are those whose members are similar to one another, the argument is that combat units with gender differences in them will be less cohesive than those that are all male (or, presumably, all female). To this point, no research exists on this presumed effect of gender, so it is still an open question. However, these examples point to ways in which knowledge about group cohesion are used to design more effective groups.

Group Conformity

Although groups can provide support and security, they can also be controlling and coercive. They can be powerful instruments for getting people to conform to group norms. An early experiment by the social psychologist Muzafer Sherif (1936) documented that in ambiguous situations people tend to conform to the expectations of those around them. When we find it difficult to judge on our own what are proper actions to take, we turn to others to help us make the judgment. And, Sherif found, people denied that the group had influenced their behavior. A particularly nightmarish illustration of such conformity occurred in March 1968 in the Vietnamese village of My Lai. On orders from their superiors, American soldiers shot and killed hundreds of Vietnamese men, women, and children, even though they offered no resistance and may not have been Vietcong soldiers or supporters (Hersch, 1970). Why was there such conformity, with a horrendous outcome, at My Lai? Although any such incident is extremely complicated, we can identify a few factors that contributed to its occurrence.

One element, obviously, that influenced the soldiers' behavior was fear. As one reporter who was in Vietnam put it: "You're scared to death out there. We just wanted to go home" (quoted in Hersch, 1970, p. 48). Fear alone, however, is an insufficient explanation, because some people react to fear with bravery, some by withdrawal, and others by committing inhumane acts. There was another important dimension at My Lai that day: The soldiers were a part of a group in the army with an established authority structure and leadership. Military officers were in command, and their authority over enlisted men was understood and recognized by all. Some of the soldiers probably assumed that officers in positions of authority had good reason for giving the order to shoot. For other soldiers, their reluctance to defy authority was probably more overpowering than the atrocities they were ordered to commit. Few things are more deeply ingrained in a soldier's awareness than the necessity to obey the commands of superior officers. In battle, prompt obedience to orders can save lives, and the punishment for disobedience can be severe. Confronted with the dilemma of either conforming or perhaps being severely disciplined for refusal, some of the soldiers—with little time to think over the issues—chose to conform because it probably seemed to be the less risky path in the long run.

There was yet another factor in operation at My Lai: The ambiguity of clearly defining who the enemy was and where battle lines were drawn. Vietnam was a guerrilla war, and "the enemy"—the Vietcong—was elusive. They wore

no uniforms to distinguish them from civilians; they often lived in areas where they fought and thus could melt back into the population after battle; and civilians—young and old, men and women—were often used to carry weapons and supplies and to participate in battles or in terrorist activities. In just such ambiguous situations, Sherif has shown us, there is a strong tendency to conform to the expectations and actions of others around you. For many of the soldiers at My Lai on that day, conformity meant joining in the shooting.

Irving Janis (1982) has found that when groups make decisions, there are pressures to avoid controversy that might cast doubt on the wisdom of the group's decision. This process, which Janis dubbed **groupthink,** *involves pressuring group members to make decisions unanimously, sometimes at the expense of critical thinking and the realistic appraisal of alternatives.* The pressure is especially strong in highly cohesive groups (Schafer & Crichlow, 1996; Street, 1997). Dissenters might be ridiculed or ignored, or group members might withhold their doubts about a decision rather than threaten the camaraderie that accompanies group consensus. Janis even concludes from his research that some historical fiascoes resulted in part from groupthink. He attributes the lack of preparedness at Pearl Harbor in 1941, for example, to the unwillingness of high government officials to challenge the existing consensus that the Japanese would not attack. More recent researchers have suggested that groupthink influenced the decision to launch the space shuttle *Challenger* in 1986, which exploded a minute after launch, killing all seven astronauts onboard. After analyzing events leading up to the disaster, researchers concluded that problems with the shuttle might not have been ignored had groupthink not played a part (Moorhead, Ference, & Neck, 1991).

This discussion has barely touched on the myriad ways in which small groups influence human behavior. This topic is discussed again at numerous points in the remainder of this book. For now, however, we need to recognize that the small groups that we belong to are frequently parts of larger organizations. It is to these organizations that we now direct our attention.

Organizations

You should be able to compare Weber's analysis of bureaucracies with the human relations approach and explain the functioning of informal structures in organizations.

As pointed out earlier, primary groups play a central role in our lives. Today, however, we spend much of our time in secondary groups such as schools, factories, government offices, or banks. Sociologists refer to these types of secondary groups as **formal organizations:** *large, special-purpose groups that are explicitly designed to achieve specific goals* (Aldrich & Marsden, 1988; Hall, 1998). Like other groups, formal organizations are characterized by sets of interrelated statuses, roles, and norms, although these features are more complex in organizations than in smaller groups. Formal organizations also involve clearly established rules, regulations, and standards of conduct that are designed to coordinate people's behavior to achieve specific organizational goals. There are many different types of formal organizations (see Table 4.1).

There has been considerable debate among sociologists over the central features of formal organizations. This chapter will present two major models of formal organizations—the bureaucratic and the human relations models—and then assess them using the theoretical perspectives. As it does so, try to evaluate the models from your own experiences in formal organizations—the schools you have attended, the places you have worked, and the religious groups to which you have belonged.

TABLE 4.1 Types of formal organizations

Type	Membership	Benefits	Examples
Voluntary	People join of their own volition and receive no financial compensation	Members gain some personal gratification from pursuing a hobby or goal	New York Road Runners Association, the United Way, U.S. Olympic Committee
Coercive	People are required to join for either their own benefit or societal good	Society or some groups benefit from the membership of some in these organizations	Schools with compulsory education, prisons, the military when there is a compulsory draft
Utilitarian	People are not forced to join a particular organization but feel compelled to join some organization	People join because it would otherwise be difficult or impossible to achieve personal goals	Organizations from which we make a living
Mutual benefit	Membership could be either voluntary or coercive	Members of the organization are the main recipients of its benefits	Schools, churches, labor unions
Service	Membership could be either voluntary or coercive	Clients of the organization are the main beneficiaries	Stores, social service agencies, community mental health centers, auto repair shops
Commonweal	Membership could be either voluntary or coercive	It provides a service to the general public rather than to specific clients	Environmental Protection Agency, the Rockefeller Foundation

Note: From *Formal Organizations: A Comparative Approach* by Peter M. Blau and W. Richard Scott, 1962 (San Francisco: Chandler); *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations* by Amitai Etzioni, 1975 (Glencoe, IL: Free Press).

Bureaucracy

The sociologist Max Weber (1925/1947) characterized those formal organizations that dominate modern societies as **bureaucracies:** *rationally created formal organizations that are based on hierarchical authority and explicit rules of procedure.* Weber recognized that bureaucracies existed in preindustrial societies as well, such as ancient Egypt and China and in the Roman and Byzantine empires. Not until the past few centuries, however, with the emergence of large societies based on complex technologies, have bureaucracies come to permeate people's daily lives. The reason is simple. Spontaneous, casual, and personal relationships—such as those found in primary groups—are inefficient when it comes to coordinating the activities of many people working toward specific goals. Imagine trying to build a library with no hierarchical authority among the workers or explicit rules of procedure. If no workers felt like mixing cement, the walls could not be built. If the electricians decided to spend the day at the beach, the drywallers could not construct the walls. To cope with these problems, the trend in modern societies has been toward *rationalization*—the replacement of spontaneous, shifting, and ambiguous rules of procedure with explicit rules that are based on the most efficient means to achieve practical goals. This growing rationalization has resulted in the development of bureaucracies.

Characteristics of Bureaucracies Weber's analysis of bureaucracy was based on an *ideal type,* which is an abstract description based on many observations of actual bureaucracies. An ideal type highlights the essential features of such organizations. Although no single bureaucracy fits this ideal type exactly, Weber identified six characteristics that make bureaucracies distinctive.

First, bureaucracies are characterized by a *division of labor*—each person is responsible for a specific, specialized set of tasks at which that person is to become proficient. In a university, for example, we turn to the campus police rather than the physics department for traffic control and to the food service rather than the registrar to prepare a luncheon.

Second, bureaucracies also have a *hierarchy of authority* that specifies the chain of command—who must answer to whom (see Figure 4.2). This hierarchy is typically pyramidal, with each person responsible to a particular person above and responsible for the activities of particular people below. Without a hierarchy of authority, there would be little centralized control. In most universities, faculty members have authority over students in that they can require the students to write papers and take examinations to pass a course. In turn, the faculty are accountable to the chairpersons of their departments and the deans of their college or school.

Third, people's conduct and job responsibilities in a bureaucracy are governed by *formal rules and procedures* that typically appear in written form. In a university, for example, the university bulletin is a set of rules that specifies what each student must do to earn a degree. One university bulletin, for example, specifies that a sociology major must complete 124 course credits, including 38 credits in sociology course work, in order to receive his or her college degree.

Fourth, *specialized skills and knowledge* are established as criteria for occupying a position in the bureaucracy. In a university, faculty positions require a certain educational background and research experience, usually including a Ph.D. The steam plant engineer, responsible for maintaining the heating system, may have been trained through experience and promoted from apprentice positions in the university.

Fifth, many positions in the bureaucracy are full-time occupations, with *career ladders and advancement* occurring within the organization. This aspect of bureaucracies enhances their stability over time and the commitment of people to the organization. Advancement is usually determined by merit, seniority, or both. Other criteria, such as friendship or family ties, are generally not considered, at least not openly, because they might result in positions being filled by unqualified people.

Finally, relationships in bureaucracies are ideally characterized by *impartiality and impersonality.* People relate to one another as positions in the bureaucracy rather than as individuals with special needs and qualities, because personal considerations might interfere with efficiency and fairness. College professors assign grades on the basis of students' performance, not on the basis of how friendly, interested, or enthusiastic they appear to be. To do otherwise might result in unqualified people receiving college degrees.

A Critique of Bureaucratic Organization With these characteristics, bureaucracies clearly have certain advantages, at least with respect to some tasks (Champion, 1975; Gross & Etzioni, 1985; Zand, 1974). Bureaucracies are orderly and stable, and the people in them know who can do what and when they will do it. They are also speedy and efficient organizations for accomplishing certain kinds of things, especially well-structured and straightforward tasks that involve a uniform sequence of events. Automobile or breakfast cereal factories, for example, benefit from bureaucratic organization, as do military organizations and prisons. College students, however, who are no strangers to bureaucracy because virtually all institutions of higher education today are bureaucratic, may disagree that bureaucracies are speedy and efficient. You are undoubtedly familiar with the laments—sometimes

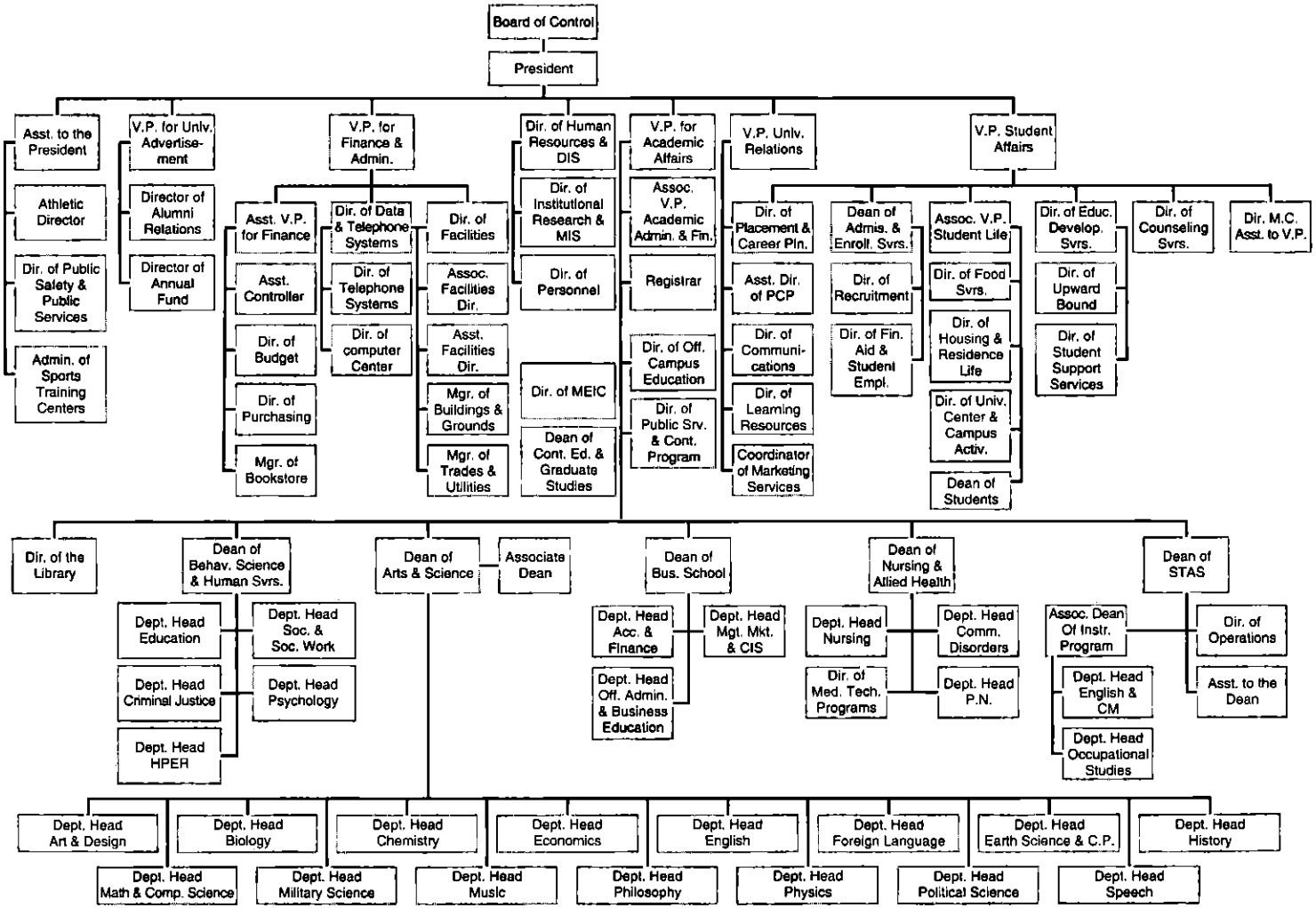


FIGURE 4.2 Administrative Organization of a University

cynical, sometimes resigned—that are directed at bureaucracies: "You can't beat the system," "We're drowning in red tape," or "It's the old (name your institution here) shuffle." These comments point to the fact that, despite their advantages, bureaucracies have shortcomings.

One of the major shortcomings of bureaucracies is that their strong emphasis on following established rules and regulations can lead to rigidity and inflexibility. The rules become ends in themselves rather than means of achieving organizational goals. Early in the twentieth century, Thorsten B. Veblen (1912) coined the term *trained incapacity* to refer to a situation in which people have been trained so completely to follow the rules that they are unable to act independently or innovatively. They develop bureaucratic "tunnel vision." Such behavior arises when participants forget the overall goal of the organization and become totally preoccupied with the means of obtaining that goal.

The normal operation of bureaucracies, then, can have the effect of stifling creativity. Bureaucratic rules and regulations are designed to apply to standard situations; they become inefficient and sometimes useless when applied to the novel or unusual. Bureaucracies tend to reward obedience to rules rather than the creation of new ways to achieve goals. The sociologist Robert Merton (1968) has even argued that a *bureaucratic personality* develops, which emphasizes conformity, rigidity, and timidity. Along similar lines, C. Wright Mills (1959, p. 171) feared "the ascendency of the cheerful robot"—the person who willingly accepts and obeys authority in bureaucratic settings rather than questioning, challenging, and innovating.

Another shortcoming of bureaucratic organization is widely known as the Peter Principle. It can be stated succinctly: In a hierarchy, employees tend to rise to their level of incompetence (Peter & Hull, 1969). To illustrate, a person may be hired or promoted into a position for which she is competent, let's say as an ad designer in a marketing division of a corporation. Good performance at that level may lead to further promotions. At some point, says the Peter Principle, there is a good chance that the person will be promoted to a position for which she is not competent. Suppose she is promoted to a management position but her strengths are not in managing people but in designing creative advertising. Once she is in this new position, mechanisms operate to retain her there: Those who promoted her do not want to admit a mistake, and she may work to protect her position, concealing her incompetence by relying on competent secretaries and subordinates in the bureaucracy. She has risen to her level of incompetence.

One critic pointed to a final shortcoming of bureaucracies by arguing that bureaucrats are like crabgrass in that both proliferate rapidly and resist efforts to cut back their number (Joyner, 1978). That critic might have been thinking of Parkinson's Law, which states that work in a bureaucracy tends to occupy the number of workers assigned to it and fill the time available for its completion, regardless of the actual amount of work involved (Parkinson, 1962). Bureaucrats must *appear* to be busy or they may be considered expendable. If a task can be finished in less than the time available for it, they may actually create work to fill the remaining time. Eventually, they come to regard this "make-work" as very important, and they feel burdened under the load. Thus, according to Parkinson, bureaucracies tend to grow even when the work they do does not. Parkinson's Law may be behind the tendency of governments at every level to expand.

Although this list of the shortcomings of bureaucracies may paint a rather grim picture of incompetence and inertia, reality in most organizations is not quite that bleak. Most bureaucracies perform reasonably well, and most bureaucrats are conscientious and reasonably competent. Nevertheless, bureaucratic organizations do have the tendencies described here, and efforts must be made to structure them in ways that reduce the negative impacts.

The Human Relations Approach

Anyone who has experienced bureaucratic life can recognize that Weber's characterization of bureaucracies ignores several important considerations. In particular, Weber's view says little about *people* and their hopes and needs. To incorporate these elements into the operation of organizations, the human relations model of organizations has emerged. The *human relations approach* is based on the assumption that the social, psychological, and physical needs of people who work in organizations must be considered if the organizations are to be productive and efficient (Hall, 1998). The human relations model rose to prominence in the 1920s and 1930s following investigations in a number of industrial settings. Elton Mayo (1933), for example, was called in to a textile mill near Philadelphia to find reasons for an astonishingly high turnover rate of 250 percent a year among employees. Various incentive schemes had failed to resolve this problem, and Mayo experimented with a number of changes. He gave the workers a rest period, let workers on each group of machines decide when they would stop, and made a nurse available to them for injuries. Following these changes, a sense of group cohesion and unity emerged, and productivity increased while turnovers declined. In part to extend Mayo's work, a series of investigations was conducted between 1927 and 1932 in the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company near Chicago, where telephone equipment was assembled (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Various improvements were made in the work conditions, such as the provision of rest breaks and a shorter workday. As a consequence, the productivity of the workers improved. Today we recognize that the link between these environmental factors and work performance is complicated, but these early investigations laid the foundation for the human relations approach to formal organizations.

Proponents of the human relations approach argue that the feelings, desires, and aspirations of workers must be satisfied, at least to a degree, if organizations are to be efficient (Argyris, 1964; Likert, 1967). The desire for companionship or creativity, for example, cannot be "turned off" once employees cross the factory gate or the office door. Rather, these personal elements—an anathema to Weber's bureaucratic model—should be considered in the structure of a formal organization. For example, satisfying social contacts in the work environment could be provided by organizing the work flow and rest breaks so that people have opportunities for relaxed conversation with other workers. Alternatively, work groups can be made smaller so that primary-group relations and cohesiveness are more likely to develop.

Proponents of the human relations approach to organizations argue against a rigid hierarchy or authority structure. Within the framework of this approach, supervision should be supportive and personal rather than dictatorial or exploitive. In addition, workers should play a role in the decision-making process whenever possible, and supervisors should be accountable to the people under them. Although supervisors have greater authority than their subordinates, the former should be attentive to the latter's concerns or complaints, especially if identifiable grounds exist for the dissatisfaction. In fact, the relationship between supervisors and their subordinates can be viewed as having many of the qualities of a primary group. The bond between supervisor and worker should not be solely utilitarian—it should be a broader tie that involves many more personal elements.

The major elements of the bureaucratic and human relations models are presented in Figure 4.3. The human relations approach does not reject every element of Weber's bureaucratic model. Clearly, a division of labor, a hierarchy of authority, rules and procedures, and special qualifications to hold positions are necessary. The impersonality of Weber's approach is explicitly rejected, however, and adherence to rules is viewed flexibly rather than rigidly. In addition, whereas Weber conceived of authority

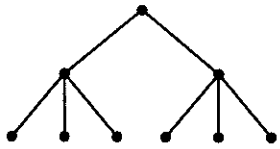
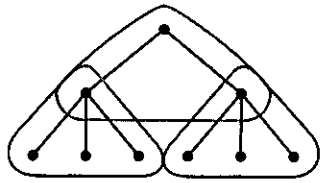
	Bureaucratic Model	Human Relations Model
		
Hierarchy of Authority	Extensive	Important but not as rigidly defined
Division of Labor	Extensive	Extensive
Formal Rules and Procedures	Extensive	Important but often circumvented or ignored
Impartiality	High	Low
Types of Management	Authoritative	Participative

FIGURE 4.3 Approaches to Formal Organizations

flowing down the hierarchy, the human relations model offers employees some input into the decisions made by those above them. This approach seems most suitable for organizations in which extreme discipline is not necessary, tasks are not rigidly uniform, or employee motivation or morale is important. Thus a university, a hospital, or an advertising firm might benefit from this type of organization (Champion, 1975; Hall, 1998; Scott, 1998).

The Informal Structure

All organizations develop some type of informal structure. This structure involves personal relationships guided by norms and rituals that emerge separately from the formal rules and regulations of the organization. Informal structures perform a number of functions. First, they provide people with personal ties that the formal structure lacks. We all enjoy being with people who like and respect us, whether at work or at play, and organizational rules severely restricting or eliminating such ties are likely to be ineffective. Even in organizations modeled on the human relations approach, concern about the personal needs of the organization's members is to a degree utilitarian: The purpose is to increase productivity. People seek primary relationships, as has been noted, because such relationships are pleasurable and help reduce stress. So people in organizations become friends, fall in love, and develop close ties with one another—all largely independent of organizational dictates.

The informal structure does more, however, than simply provide for personal relationships. It also helps people protect themselves

against what they perceive as unreasonable or dangerous demands of the organization. The workers at the Hawthorne plant mentioned earlier, for example, informally regulated the speed at which they worked so that they did not have to work too fast. Sarcasm and ridicule were used to control those who were inclined to work harder. They were castigated as *rate busters* and singled out for a *binging*, being hit on the arm. These actions, although mild, expressed the displeasure of the group and encouraged conformity to informal group norms.

In addition, the informal structure permits adaptations to situations or demands that are not provided for in the formal structure. In some cases, adaptation may involve violating official rules to help achieve organizational goals. During the Korean War, for example, the sociologist Roger Little (1970) lived with an army rifle company in Korea and observed an informal practice called *scrounging*, which involved collecting all the supplies abandoned by other companies upon leaving an area. Officially, discarded supplies must be turned in to a central supply depot, but the supply sergeants usually kept the equipment as a barter bank. If their company developed a supply shortage because of carelessness or a slowdown in official supply channels, items in the barter bank could be traded for the scarce supplies. Although officially illegal, scrounging was tolerated and sometimes encouraged by company commanders because it was an efficient way to keep their units fully supplied. In fact, supply sergeants who were highly skilled at scrounging were in great demand among the units.

Finally, the informal structure in organizations makes it possible to adjust to individual variations in skills, resources, and characteristics. We are not, after all, mindless, emotionless automatons, waiting to do the bureaucracy's bidding. Some people are faster than others, some more intelligent, some more outgoing. Although bureaucratic rules may consider all people in a given position to be the same, people take these differences into account informally.

Gender in Organizations

Gender is one difference that often shapes how people are treated by the informal structure of organizations. Sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1993) found this in one large corporation that she has studied at length. One characteristic of organizations that she found to be important is *relative numbers*, or the ratio of people with a particular characteristic in an organization to those who do not have that characteristic. In the case of gender, men substantially outnumber women in the upper-management ranks. Or to put it more colloquially, women in management are often "tokens." Kanter found that this characteristic of corporations substantially influenced the opportunities for women and their behavior. For one thing, it made these women highly visible; they became symbols for "what women can accomplish." Because of this, they felt tremendous pressures to work harder, to avoid making mistakes, and to perform better than the men. They also sometimes felt lonely because they were different from other members of the work group; when a group has token status, it is easy for the majority group to exaggerate the differences between tokens and the others, and this may lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion on the part of the token.

Of course, the visibility of token women in corporations has positive benefits for some; for example, it can lead to getting more attention and this can sometimes enhance possibilities for advancement in the corporation. However, Kanter's point is to show how a person's position in the structure of an organization—in this case, a group's relative numbers—shapes opportunities and behavior. Presumably, any tokens in an organization, such as men in a largely female corporation, would have similar experiences. Kanter argued that women's experiences in corporations would change when their numbers grew and they were no longer tokens. However, as Chapter 8 shows, that may not be happening. As the number of women in corporations grows, it appears that male managers feel their posi-

In an ideal bureaucracy, people should be treated on the basis of the skills and expertise they bring to the organization. However, characteristics such as gender can lead people to be treated differently, especially when few people in the organization possess that characteristic.

tions threatened and sometimes respond by discrimination in wages or promotions—women get paid less and are less likely to be promoted to the top ranks (DeLaat, 1999; Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). There is often a "glass ceiling" beyond which women find it difficult to be promoted. So, even though corporations may claim that gender is irrelevant to how they operate, Kanter's and others' research on the informal structure of organizations documents that gender is very influential in terms of opportunities and behavior.

Applied sociologists have played an important part in understanding how organizations work and designing them to operate more effectively and with fewer negative consequences. Applying Sociology: Diagnosing Organizational Culture describes some of this work.

Sociological Perspectives on Organizations

You should be able to compare and contrast the functionalist, conflict, and interactionist perspectives on formal organizations.

The sociological approaches to the study of formal organizations just presented are either explicitly or implicitly functionalist in orientation. To round out an understanding of organizations, it is useful to make this functionalist emphasis

APPLYING SOCIOLOGY

Diagnosing Organizational Culture: Helping Organizations to Function Better

The concept of *culture* is introduced in Chapter 2 as a characteristic of a society or a whole group of people. Organizations and bureaucracies can also possess a culture. **Organizational culture** refers to *the ideas, values, knowledge, behaviors, and material objects that are shared by members of a particular organization* (Schein, 1992). Like other cultures, organizational cultures are shared; they are passed on from one generation in the organization to the next; they contain beliefs, values, norms, and languages; and they are powerful influences on peoples' behavior, often in ways that people are not aware. One of the ways that applied sociologists assist organizations is by providing **organizational diagnoses:** *using the theories, methods, and research findings from sociology and other social sciences to assess the cultures of particular organizations and how those cultures affect organizational operation* (Harrison, 1991). When organizations believe they have problems with people, groups, or interpersonal relationships, they turn to sociologists and organizational diagnoses as a way of understanding and solving these problems. These problems, after all, can make an organization less competitive or less effective at achieving its goals. Let's look at some examples.

As we have seen in this chapter, groupthink is a problem organizations can face. An organization's culture might promote ways of making decisions that encourage groupthink rather than a more careful and critical assessment of all alternatives. In conducting an organizational diagnosis related to groupthink, sociologists rely on past research that shows what social conditions are conducive to groupthink and how groups can be changed to reduce it. They may also collect data on how the organization operates, possibly through direct observation or with surveys. Armed with this information, the sociologist recommends changes that would reduce the likelihood of groupthink. Depending on the particular organization, the following might be included among the recommendations:

1. Organizational managers should encourage the open airing of doubts and objections to any decision.
2. Outsiders should participate in the decision-making process to challenge the positions of group members.
3. Several independent groups should be set up to study the issues.
4. Other groups should be brought into the decision-making process to avoid being isolated from competing viewpoints.
5. Conflict should be built into the decision-making process. This can be done either by assigning each group member to be a devil's

explicit and then contrast it with the conflict and interactionist approaches to organizations.

The Functionalist Perspective

Functionalists view organizations as systems of interrelated parts that are organized to achieve goals in a way that enhances efficiency and productivity (Parsons, 1956; Scott, 1998). An elaborate division of labor, for example, is viewed as beneficial because each worker becomes highly proficient at a small task that can be learned quickly. Efficiency is enhanced as the work process is broken into units that can be rapidly accomplished by individual workers. Consensus regarding the overall goal of the organization, whether it involves assembling a product or providing a service, is assumed to be widespread.

advocate and criticize the group decision or by structuring the decision making into a debate where both sides of the issue are fully aired.

These sociological recommendations focus on the group process by which a decision is made rather than on telling the business which decision to make.

Organizational culture can also influence the opportunities and treatment of women in organizations. When women, for example, are treated in a particular way by an organization over a long period of time, that mode of treatment can become normative, or seen as the only appropriate way of treating women. In other words, it becomes a part of the organizational culture (DeLaat, 1999). People follow these patterned ways of doing things without questioning them. It may be, for example, that women have never been placed into certain positions, so the organizational culture defines these positions as "men's" positions, although this may not be explicitly stated. Or it may be that a request for child-care leave or part-time work is seen as disloyalty or a lack of strong commitment to the organization. The hidden assumption, or norm, in such an organizational culture is that loyalty and commitment can be demonstrated only by full-time commitment and always choosing organizational involvement over family involvement. As we saw in Chapter 2, elements of culture, such as these assumptions, are often implicit and unstated. In doing an organizational diagnosis, applied sociologists try to make those cultural elements explicit so that their impact can be evaluated and alternatives considered.

Cultures are meaning systems that provide social definitions of reality. When the meaning systems in organizational cultures encourage definitions of reality that are male-centered, this can create difficulties for women working in the organizations. For example, considerable research shows that women are more inclined than men to share their problems with others (Tannen, 1994b). Women do this, in part, as a way of seeking empathy and support but also as a way of establishing connections and developing intimacy with others. However, in an organizational culture where the meaning system is male-oriented, such sharing of problems might be misinterpreted to mean that women have more problems than men or that they are incapable of solving problems on their own. Men who keep their problems to themselves may appear to be more competent. Once again, an organizational diagnosis would try to discover these implicit meanings so that their consequences can be considered.

The nature of the tasks necessary to accomplish goals is important in determining whether the organization takes a bureaucratic or human relations form. Some organizations combine elements of more than one of these models, having some divisions organized according to one model and some based on the other. A pharmaceutical company might organize its production and distribution divisions on the basis of bureaucratic organization and its marketing departments on the basis of the human relations approach. The different tasks of each division dictate the structure most suited to it.

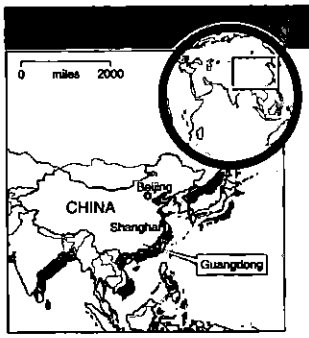
Conflict is recognized as an element of organizational life, arising as individuals adapt to organizational demands or as the organization responds to internal or external events. Functionalists, however, view this conflict as either an

unwanted organizational element that needs to be kept within reasonable limits or as a catalyst for organizational changes that will result in greater efficiency and productivity.

The functionalist perspective also views organizations as one of many parts of larger social and cultural systems. As in all systems, these parts must be reasonably well integrated, and this connectedness means that the workings of one part of the system may be affected by elements of other parts of the broader social and cultural system. Other Worlds, Other Ways: China illustrates this fact by showing how cultural values can affect how well people in organizations work and thus how well organizations achieve their goals.

The Conflict Perspective

Despite the overwhelming functionalist bent of sociologists studying organizations, there have been efforts to assess organizations and bu-



OTHER WORLDS, *Other Ways*

CHINA: CULTURAL VALUES AND GROUP BEHAVIOR—SOCIAL LOAFING IN ORGANIZATIONS

The value system of China has traditionally emphasized a collectivist orientation, which still persists today (Hofstede, 1980; Li, 1978). Collectivism is a set of values that places more emphasis on the group and group goals than on the individual. It discourages individual achievement and the advancement of self-interest, especially when these come in conflict with group needs. Chinese society focuses on collective action and social interests rather than personal goals. Although the coming of communism to China in 1949 may have given additional emphasis to this value orientation, collectivism predates the Communist Revolution and finds expression in Confucian beliefs about uprightness, duty, and obligation that go back thousands of years. It leads people to act on the basis of what best serves their in-group and to condemn those who pursue their own personal interests. In a collectivist environment, a major force is cooperation rather than competition.

This collectivist orientation in China is quite at odds with the individualistic, competitive values of the United States, where people emphasize self-sufficiency, control, and pursuit of personal goals that may clash with group goals. With these widely varying cultural orientations, it should not be surprising that people in China and the United States respond quite differently to some of the group and organizational processes discussed in this chapter. One impact these values have is on how well people work in groups—whether they work hard to achieve the goals of the group or take it easy and let others do the work. The term *social loafing* refers to the tendency for people in groups to put out less effort to achieve goals than when working alone (Comer, 1995; Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). When in a group, the social-loafing attitude is: "I can coast and others will take up the slack and do the work."

Social loafing is more likely to occur in large groups, in groups that are low in group cohesion, and in situations where people are not held accountable for their individual tasks (Comer, 1995; Karau & Hart, 1998). In addition, cultural orientation affects social loafing. A study was done of the work of managerial trainees in a variety of manufacturing

reaucracies from the conflict perspective (Heydebrand, 1977; Scott, 1998; Zey-Ferrell, 1981). From this perspective, organizations are viewed as mechanisms of social control within the context of a struggle between interest groups. Power relations and a class struggle exist *before* an organization develops, and organizational properties reflect those underlying power and class relations. The goals of the organization, the technology used, the division of labor—all reflect the interests of dominant groups and support their interests, giving them an advantage over subordinate groups. The division of labor, for example, places the worker at a substantial disadvantage in relationship to the owners. When the work process is broken down into simple units, individual workers become expendable because others can quickly learn their jobs, which involve few skills. This procedure is highly coercive because workers who can be replaced easily are likely to make few demands on management. This is not to say that

and service organizations in Guangzhou, China, and in the United States (Earley, 1989). Social loafing was found among the workers in the United States but not among the Chinese workers. In the United States, workers put out more effort when working alone toward a goal than when working in a group. In China, it was the reverse. The collective ethic in China leads workers to place group goals ahead of their own personal interests. They value the group goals and are at least as willing to work toward the group goals as toward their own personal goals. They seem to gain satisfaction from group accomplishments. In addition, Chinese workers expect other workers to make contributions rather than to loaf, and they are willing to work without worrying that others will take advantage of them by loafing. By contrast, workers in the United States place more value on individual accomplishments and rewards. When placed in a group, they loaf when someone else will take up the slack and work to achieve the group goals. And workers in the United States, unlike those in China, assume that other workers will loaf, and thus they will be taken advantage of if they do not loaf.

The collective orientation in Chinese culture has other implications for group processes. There is evidence, for example, that Chinese internalize stronger conformist values than do people in the United States and that they are socialized to place greater value on unity and cooperation in groups and to avoid anger and hostility toward group members. The Chinese also seem to place more value on strong leadership in groups and to see that leadership as legitimate and essential to group accomplishments (Hofstede, 1980; Wilson, 1977).

These cultural differences have important implications for the policies of organizations and agencies. For example, work groups that depend on cooperation and that do not provide rewards for individual accomplishments may enhance performance in collectivist cultures such as China and Japan. The same programs, however, may reduce productivity because of social loafing if implemented unchanged in the United States. The way people respond to the same group structures, such as leadership, and the same group processes, such as work groups, depends on the cultural orientation of the people involved.

these organizations are not also efficient and productive. It has been shown, however, *that* bureaucracies have weaknesses that reduce their efficiency but that these inefficiencies are insufficient motivation for organizational change. Inefficiencies are tolerated because bureaucratic organization still coerces and controls subordinates effectively, and these coercive purposes are as important in determining organizational structure as the *productivity* that the structure offers.

Although the human relations model diverges in many ways from the bureaucratic model, organizations of this sort are nonetheless mechanisms of domination. From the conflict perspective, the human relations approach simply offers management new ways of controlling through subtle *manipulation* (Carey, 1967; Rice, 1982). It points to ways of inducing workers to increase their productivity voluntarily, irrespective of increases in economic return to workers. In other words, subtle manipulation of a worker's environment replaces direct coercion through a hierarchy of authority, but the goal is still the same: to further the interests of management *by getting more* productivity from workers.

In the 1980s and 1990s, many corporations in the United States tried to introduce elements of the human relations model into work settings (Waldman, 1987). They hired consultants to run programs to provide attitudinal training and changes in values among their employees. The idea was to change the corporate culture from a highly bureaucratic one to one that emphasized partnership between management and employee, cooperation, teamwork, and company loyalty. This *transformation work* presumably represented a new ideology of management. However, Harley Shaiken, a professor of work and technology, is skeptical that anything substantially new has developed: "Unfortunately, most of the so-called transformation work today is really just a substitute for giving workers real autonomy and responsibility" (quoted in Waldman, 1987, p. 1). At one insurance company, a training program was followed by a 20 percent increase in work quotas, and employees who objected were fired. The goal of most of these programs is simple: to increase corporate productivity by changing worker apathy into complaisance or corporate loyalty.

The Interactionist Perspective

Interactionists tend to shift the focus from formal structure and hierarchy in organizations to informal structure (Day & Day, 1977; Fine, 1984; Strauss, Fagerhaugh, Suczek, & Wiener, 1985). From this perspective, formal organizations are not rigid, static structures emphasizing only rationality and efficiency. Rather, they constitute a *negotiated order,* which is created out of the formal structure through the social interaction prescribed by the informal structure. The formal structure is important, but it comes to life only as people interact with one another. People with varying amounts of power and resources and with various characteristics "negotiate" with one another regarding what is acceptable and appropriate organizational behavior. Models of formal organizations would include this informal structure because it is an essential element in understanding how effectively an organization achieves its goals. The interactionist perspective, when taken in conjunction with the functional and conflict views, rounds out an understanding of formal organizations.

The Future of Bureaucracy

You should be able to explain the potential dangers of the bureaucratic tendency toward oligarchy and discuss possible future trends in bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy and Oligarchy

What lies in store for the future? It seems reasonable to assume that large bureaucratic orga-

nizations are here to stay and will continue to flood our lives with secondary relationships. Industrial societies are sufficiently large and technologically complex that such organizations appear to be inevitable. Need we be concerned about this trend? There appear to be some potential dangers associated with bureaucracies that are especially chilling in democratic societies. In 1915, Robert Michels pointed out that bureaucracies display a tendency toward **oligarchy:** *Power tends to become concentrated in the hands of a few people at the top of organizations.* Michels referred to this tendency as the *iron law of oligarchy.* As Michels put it: "Who says organization, says oligarchy" (Michels, 1915/1966, p. 256). As such organizations become more powerful, people are in danger of losing more and more control over events in their daily lives, of finding themselves powerless and dominated by a few individuals they do not even know.

For Michels, the iron law of oligarchy derives from three elements of organizations. First, to operate effectively, any large organization must develop mechanisms for coping with administrative and decision-making problems, and it is more efficient if only a few people are responsible for this function. Spreading authority over a large number of people can cause uncertainties about who is empowered to do what and conflicts over incompatible decisions. Second, those who emerge as leaders in organizations tend to be adept at influencing and controlling members, and they can use the resources of the organization to maintain their position. They can, for example, place loyal followers into strategic positions in organizational administration. Finally, in many organizations, most rank-and-file members do not have the time, energy, resources, or desire to contest the power of the leadership.

In many ways, Michels's argument is persuasive. We can plainly see that, in many large U.S. organizations, such as Exxon or IBM, control and decision making are concentrated among a few people at the top. In addition, political decisions are concentrated in the hands of a relatively few powerful politicians at the state and national levels. Because democracy presumably rests on the consent of the governed, and because individual freedom and autonomy are basic values in the United States, oligarchical organizations and governments pose a potential threat. Yet, the conflict perspective informs us that there are social mechanisms that can counter the tendency toward oligarchy. Namely, people can form interest groups and join organizations that can serve as countervailing forces to the leaders of political or organizational hierarchies. Such civic engagement involves average citizens being active in groups that connect people with the social and political life of their communities and that help shape the economic, political, and legal structures of those communities. This has been done effectively by the civil rights movement a few decades ago and by the environmental movement today. Both groups have been able to change the direction of some of the policies of oligarchical organizations in dramatic ways.

Finally, bureaucratic organizations can be designed to reduce oligarchical tendencies. Power and control can be dispersed among a number of semiautonomous groups to keep one from gaining total dominance over the others (Olsen, 1978). This *balancing of power* can be seen in the structure of many colleges and universities. Although the administration has a great deal of decision-making authority, this power is balanced by a board of trustees or board of control (which is typically composed of community members) and faculty groups (such as an academic senate) that maintain some control over curriculum-related decisions.

Predictably, there is no ultimate solution to the problem of oligarchy. Bureaucracies present a formidable test of democratic principles, most of which were formed in an era of small communities and town hall meetings, long before the appearance of the huge organizations so common today. At the same time, as Michels pointed out, bureaucracies are beneficial in structuring an enormous social organization,

and modern societies would be hard-pressed to maintain their current lifestyle without them. The challenge, then, is to ensure that the balance of power does not slip too far toward oligarchy. In this quest, sociological knowledge of groups and organizations can be extremely helpful in seeking and achieving the proper balance. These issues are explored in more depth in Chapter 13.

Limits to Bureaucracy

Although large organizational and bureaucratic structures are likely to be central features of modern life in the future, are there limits to how far their reach will extend? Are there trends in the opposite direction? Answers to these questions are both controversial and speculative, but some thoughts can be offered (Bartos, 1996). First of all, the U.S. economy is shifting from an industrial economy based on the production of goods to an economy that emphasizes service, information, and consumption. (See Chapters 2 and 15.) Along with this change has come a shift from manual labor jobs that require little more than muscle power to more professional occupations that require intellectual skills and high levels of education. Such occupations, including those of doctors, teachers, scientists, lawyers, and social workers, are less likely to involve complete dependence on highly bureaucratic organization. These professionals do at least some of their work in what are called *professional organizations* or *postentrepreneurial organizations,* which are smaller, are less hierarchical, and have fewer rules and procedures (Champion, 1975; Kanter, 1989). Professionals have more autonomy in when, where, and how they do their work and are more likely to treat coworkers as equals. In professional organizations, supervisors are more likely to serve as coordinators who make materials and resources available for other professionals to do their work. Organizations in a service economy are still bureaucratic to a degree, but the nature of the work being done by some of them benefits from a more professional, less hierarchical emphasis. That is not true of all of them, however. Even in the service and educational industries, workers who are doing manual labor still tend to be in highly bureaucratic environments. So, the shift to a service and information economy may produce changes in some employees' lives, but those whose jobs involve well-structured and repetitive tasks that can be rationalized will likely continue to work in highly bureaucratic settings.

Another development that may have implications for bureaucratization and centralization is the revolution in computer technology and communications. The growing availability of personal computers, facsimile machines, modems, and communications satellites points to the possibility of decentralizing the workplace and removing people from some of the bureaucratic structures. In 1980 the futurist Alvin Toffler coined the phrase *electronic cottage* to describe the workplace that such technologies would make possible. People could work in their homes, linked to other people and work settings through fiber-optic cables and radio signals. Professors' lectures could be projected to many distant settings, and secretaries could work at home and send their products out over telephone lines or through the mail on computer disc. Today, business executives in many locations hold meetings through televised conference calls. Toffler believed that technology would enable many more people to become self-employed and allow others to work much more independently of bureaucratic organizations.

Some of Toffler's projections have come true, with over 21 million people working at home in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998: 413). Electronic technology has been a boon, especially for people who can do their work alone (for example, writers or other creative people) and for those who are independently employed and do not need a large office in which to meet and work with clients. Of

those who work at home, 60 percent are self-employed. Another one-fifth are people who take work home from the office after hours, and 16 percent are *telecommuters,* employees whose bosses allow them to work at home instead of the office at least one day of the week.

These numbers, along with other research, tell us a couple of things about Toffler's vision of the impact of computer and telecommunications technology on work (Volti, 1995; Wellman et al., 1996). First, although many people do work at home, a good number of them are still part of a bureaucratic organization. Although physically separated from others in the bureaucracy, these home workers must still interact with office people and are constrained by the rules of the bureaucracy. Second, the people who benefit most from this trend are professionals and creative people because their tasks can best be done in nonbureaucratic settings. These workers are least likely to be in highly bureaucratic settings anyway. Third, some home workers gain little advantage, other than convenience, from working at home: They still do low-paying, boring, repetitive work for large corporations. Some such workers, for example, input information from insurance policies and claims reports into computer files for insurance companies. Many such workers are women with young children at home. They often work on a piece-rate basis and are deprived of the opportunity for unionization and company-supplied health and retirement benefits. The irony in their situation is that such home-based work was banned in many industries, such as textiles, early in the twentieth century because it promoted the exploitation of workers. Computer technology seems to be expanding such exploitive workplace environments again. In fact, many labor unions have pushed for extending bans on such work. As one union spokesperson put it: "If history is any guide, we can say with certainty that abuse of electronic homeworkers is inevitable. . . . An early ban would try to prevent a repeat of past experiences in a new guise" (quoted in Volti, p. 168).

As with so many things, the impact of these new technologies will be complicated. Some groups will benefit while others will definitely be hurt. Groups that benefit will be those with the educational credentials or other resources that will enable them to take advantage of changing conditions. Groups without significant resources could find themselves worse off. Furthermore, these changes may not produce a significant overall limitation on bureaucracies in modern societies as a whole, although they will have an impact on which people will be affected by bureaucracies and in what form these people will be affected. How will the modern technologies of media and communication affect formal organizations and bureaucracies? The Sociology of Media and Technology insert explores this issue.

Sociology of Media and Technology

Impact on Groups, Organizations, and Bureaucracies

This chapter is about groups, organizations, and bureaucracies, and how they have and will affect society. The modern technologies of media and communication have pervasive and profound impacts on this, although the impacts are often complex and even contradictory. One impact of some of these technologies is to encourage people to withdraw from some groups and organizations into the more private realms of home and family (Putnam, 1996). Since the 1950s, the amount of time that people spend visiting neighbors and engaging in informal socializing has declined significantly. In addition, memberships in clubs and voluntary organizations, such as the PTA, the League of Women Voters, or a labor union, have dropped by one-half. Between 1900 and 1950, the United States was a nation of "joiners"; since then, people have fled to more personal and familial pursuits.

One reason for this decline in group and organizational involvement has undoubtedly been television: As the number of households with a television has steadily increased from less than 10 percent in 1950 to virtually all households today (see Figure 3.3), people have steadily withdrawn from involvement outside the home, and leisure time has become primarily private. Today, one need not go outside and be with others in order to be entertained. In fact, since most households have multiple television sets, family members need not even interact with one another; they can be entertained separately. In addition, research shows that people who watch more television join fewer groups and engage in less civic involvement than do those who watch less television (Putnam, 1996). Such privatization of social life comes at the expense of nearly every other type of group activity outside the home. The disturbing element of this trend is that it is through "joining"—coming together with others in various groups and organizations—that people can resist the dominance of bureaucracies and oligarchies. When people withdraw from civic life, formal organizations and bureaucracies become even more powerful and controlling.

Modern communications technologies also have an impact on how people interact in groups and organizations. Some technologies promote more passive and secondary social relationships. Television and radio audiences passively receive messages. Social interaction on the Internet, on the other hand, is more active but still secondary in nature: People's interaction is often specialized and narrowly focused, revolving around particular hobbies, personal interests, or job-related needs on various newsnets, lists, or chat rooms (Wellman et al., 1996). In addition, interaction on the Internet involves less "social presence" than does face-to-face social interaction: Many of the social cues that guide our interactions with others, such as facial expressions, vocal intonations, or body postures, are missing. This may make it more difficult for people to develop full primary relationships until they have a face-to-face meeting (which, of course, does sometimes follow the development of a relationship online). On the other hand, less social presence may free people from being treated badly or unequally because of their gender, race, or physical characteristics. This may produce more egalitarian social contacts than occur when people are aware of all these social characteristics in face-to-face contact.

Communications technologies also influence the possibilities for oligarchic or bureaucratic control of information and social interaction. For example, the sender of messages in conventional television and print media is typically a large formal organization, such as a commercial business or a government agency. This is so because only such large organizations have the resources to afford the equipment required to communicate through these media. The audiences for messages are largely anonymous to one another, and the communication is largely unidirectional, with a passive audience who can shape media content only indirectly. Furthermore, the message is not tailored to particular individuals and their reactions; the mass audience receives one standardized message. With this format, conventional media technologies enable those who control them, such as large corporations or powerful political groups, an opportunity to manipulate the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of the audience.

More recent computer-mediated communications technologies, on the other hand, have some strikingly different characteristics. For one thing, large corporations and organizations do not control the messages sent over such media as the Internet; in fact, there is no passive audience, since the technology of the Internet is inherently interactive. Thus, a true culture emerges on the Internet, with the development of norms to guide behavior and a specialized argot to enhance communication. Some of the argot has developed to describe behaviors online, such as *spam* (indiscriminately sending messages to many addresses on the Net) and *flame* (a hostile and aggressive response to someone on the Net); some of the argot describes the computer and telecommunications technology on which the Net rests, such as *baud rates* or *nodes*. Life online involves a true subculture, as described in Chapter 2: a group that shares some of the values and norms of the larger culture of which it is a part, such as U.S. culture, while having some values and norms that are distinctly its own. Such subcultural emergence does not occur with conventional media because the audience cannot participate directly in the interaction out of which subcultures emerge.

Because the Web is so accessible and interactive, some commentators see it as an empowering technology, possibly overcoming the privatizing and oligarchical tendencies of conventional media (Mukerji & Simon, 1998). Individuals can come into contact

Electronic innovations such as the Internet are so new that their impact on social life is uncertain: They may increase bureaucratic and oligarchic tendencies or work against them.

with a wide array of groups and organizations, or they can use the technology to form new organizations and attract and communicate directly with a large audience of people with similar interests. If this occurs, then the technology of the Internet may erode the bureaucratic monopoly of communications that previously existed. In the past, most people depended on television, newspapers, and magazines for information about events and opinions, and those same people had limited opportunities to communicate their opinions and positions with others. Computer-mediated communications technology means that thousands of sources of information and opinion are instantaneously available, and each recipient of messages can also create and send messages to those thousands of people.

Developments in the field of computers and communications technology are so new and so rapidly changing that sociologists cannot be sure that what has just been said about the impact of these technologies will continue to hold true. Will the technologies enhance bureaucratic and oligarchic tendencies or work against them? As just shown, evidence to support both of these conclusions can be found. In addition, we cannot be sure that the computer-mediated communications technologies of today will be the same in decades to come. This is an area that social scientists will continue to study very carefully.

SOCIOLOGY ON THE INTERNET

Begin by going to the Dead Sociologists Index described in Chapter 3. Review what Max Weber had to say about bureaucracy. What do you learn here that was not covered in the text discussion of bureaucracy?

The textbook discusses a number of different types of formal organizations, such as coercive and commonweal (see Table 4.1). You can use a search vehicle on the Internet to find examples of these types of organizations and learn about their structure and membership. In the search box, type two key words, such as "organization" and "commonweal." You can begin to describe these organizations in terms of what goals they pursue, how they get their members, and how large and bureaucratic they are. You can also search for some of the other concepts discussed in this chapter, such as primary group or groupthink. Searching on groupthink produces many Web sites. Report back to the class on what you learn about groupthink at these Web sites beyond what was discussed in the text.

Another useful search is for "community networks" which are based in part on computer-mediated communications technologies. One of these is the Blacksburg (Virginia) Electronic Village (http://www.bev.net). These communities use modern communications technologies to link their citizens together. Describe these community networks and discuss ways in which they might empower citizens and serve as a counterforce to the oligarchical power of bureaucracies and large formal organizations.

Summary

1. Five types of groups are of frequent interest to sociologists: primary groups, secondary groups, in-groups, out-groups, and reference groups. Social groups are distinct from collectivities, such as social categories and aggregates.

2. Statuses and roles provide the basis for the social structure and help coordinate the behavior of group members. Structure and coordination contribute to the stability of social interaction in groups. One of the most important statuses in groups is that of leader.

3. Group decisions on judgmental issues are characterized by *group polarization*—originally identified as a *risky shift.* Group cohesion is an important factor in producing enduring and effective groups. The term *groupthink* refers to tendencies in highly cohesive groups toward encouraging unanimity of opinion and consensus at the expense of critical abilities and the realistic appraisal of alternatives.

4. Certain types of secondary groups are known as *formal organizations,* which are large special-purpose groups that are explicitly designed to achieve specific goals. The formal organizations that dominate modern societies are called *bureaucracies.*

5. Bureaucracies have been criticized for their impersonality, and out of this critique has emerged the human relations approach, which is based on the assumption that the social, psychological, and physical needs of people who work in organizations must be considered in order for organizations to be productive and efficient.

6. All organizations develop some type of informal structure, referring to personal relationships that are guided by norms and rituals that emerge separately from the formal rules and regulations of the organization.

7. Each sociological perspective offers some special insight into organizations and how they operate. Functionalists stress how organizations operate to coordinate people's behavior and help them achieve complex and difficult goals efficiently. The conflict perspective sees organizations as mechanisms of social control and coercion. Interactionists stress the importance of the informal structure and a negotiated order in organizations.

8. Bureaucracies display a tendency toward oligarchy. Yet there are also forces in modern societies that counter this tendency and work toward democratization and the decentralization of power in societies and organizations. The mass media and modern technologies of communication also have wide ramifications for groups and organizations, displaying tendencies toward the concentration of control but also toward decentralization and the empowerment of the average citizen.

STUDY *Review*

Key Terms

bureaucracy
expressive roles
formal organization
group cohesion
group polarization
groupthink
in-group
instrumental roles
leadership
oligarchy
organizational culture
organizational diagnosis
out-group
primary group
reference group
relationship-oriented roles
secondary group
socioemotional roles
task roles

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which of the following types of groups has a major function of providing people with a secure refuge in which they can act without fear of ridicule or rejection?
   a. Secondary groups.
   b. Primary groups.
   c. Reference groups.
   d. Social categories.

2. Reference groups most clearly do which of the following?
   a. Produce a sense of loyalty or "we" feeling.
   b. Make for task-oriented, impersonal exchanges between people.
   c. Involve personal, intimate, and nonspecialized relationships between people.
   d. Serve as standards for people to evaluate their own attitudes and behaviors.

3. Which of the following statements is true about leadership in groups?
   a. Nondirective leaders produce more positive feelings toward the group among group members than do directive leaders.
   b. Nondirective leaders produce more tension in the group than do directive leaders.
   c. Nondirective leaders encourage higher group productivity than do directive leaders.
   d. Laissez-faire leaders are more directive than are autocratic leaders.

4. Groups are superior to individuals in making decisions in all of the following ways *except*
   a. groups make speedier decisions.

b. groups come up with a wider range of solutions to problems.
c. groups come up with better solutions to problems.
d. groups come up with more accurate solutions to problems.

5. Research by sociologists during World War II has concluded that German soldiers fought well under adverse conditions because
   a. the Germans had superior equipment.
   b. the Germans felt loyalty toward others in their military unit.
   c. the Germans were strongly committed to the Nazi ideology.
   d. the Germans had strong ties to their families.

6. According to research, the pressure toward groupthink is especially strong in
   a. social collectivities.
   b. out-groups.
   c. highly cohesive groups.
   d. groups with laissez-faire leaders.
   e. groups during group polarization.

7. Which of the following is true of bureaucratic organizations?
   a. They are highly flexible and adaptive.
   b. They tend to encourage creativity and innovation.
   c. They are efficient at doing well-structured tasks.
   d. They are unstable organizations.

8. In contrast with organizations based on the bureaucratic model, organizations based on the human relations model tend to
   a. place more stress on impartiality.
   b. have a more rigid and extensive hierarchy of authority.
   c. stress authoritative management.
   d. stress more participative management.

9. Which of the following perspectives would be most likely to view conflict as an unwanted element in an organization?
   a. The functionalist perspective.
   b. The conflict perspective.
   c. The interactionist perspective.
   d. The negotiated order perspective.

10. According to Robert Michels, bureaucracies display a tendency toward
    a. informality.
    b. oligarchy.
    c. cohesiveness.
    d. groupthink.
    e. social loafing.

True/False Questions

1. People in the United States see friendships as being more permanent than do people in Japan.

2. A corporate business office would be more likely to be a secondary group than would a college hockey team.

3. Sociologists would consider *all Japanese Americans* to constitute a social category.

4. A professor lecturing on U.S. history to a class of students would be performing an instrumental role rather than an expressive role.

5. Research has found that, on the whole, people in groups tend to make less risky and daring choices than they would if acting individually.

6. Bureaucracies first emerged in the industrial societies of the nineteenth century.

7. Parkinson's Law refers to the fact that groupthink tends to occur in cohesive groups.

8. The informal structure of organizations helps people protect themselves against what they perceive as unreasonable demands of the organization.

9. The collective orientation in China results in less social loafing than in the United States.

10. From the interactionist perspective, formal organizations can be considered a *negotiated order.*

Fill-In Questions

1. Groups that focus on task-oriented, impersonal, and specialized ties between people are called _____ groups.

2. Sociologists would call all of the people riding on the same subway train one morning _____ .

3. A store manager who throws a party for her employees so that they can relax and enjoy themselves is performing a(n) _____ role.

4. Leaders who are thoroughly directive, dictating all actions and techniques to be used in achieving group goals, are called _____ leaders.

5. _____ refers to a situation in which people have been trained so completely to follow bureaucratic rules that they are unable to act independently or innovatively.

6. The _____ states that, in a bureaucracy, people tend to rise to their level of incompetence.

7. In a(n) _____ , sociologists use their theories and methods to assess how well an organization operates and how its performance can be improved.

8. The _____ perspective argues that organizations are systems of interrelated parts designed to achieve goals efficiently and productively.

9. _____ refers to a tendency for people in groups to put out less effort to achieve goals than when working alone.

10. Robert Michels is quoted as saying, "Who says organization, says _____ ."

Matching Questions

_____ 1. group polarization
_____ 2. aggregate
_____ 3. task roles
_____ 4. Max Weber
_____ 5. *binging* and *scrounging*
_____ 6. group cohesion
_____ 7. Robert Michels
_____ 8. standard for evaluation
_____ 9. primary group
_____ 10. laissez-faire leader

A. bureaucracy
B. people riding in the same subway car
C. risky shift
D. oligarchy
E. behaviors that are part of the informal structure of organizations
F. reference group
G. "staying together" power
H. nondirective leader
I. instrumental roles
J. family

Essay Questions

1. This chapter discusses five different types of social groups. Define each one and describe what functions it performs. Give an example of each.

2. What are social collectivities and how do they differ from social groups? Define two types of social collectivities and give an example of each.

3. Describe the social meanings associated with friendship in the United States and Japan. How are they similar and how do they differ?

4. Describe the social structure of groups, including in your answer a discussion of status and role.

5. What is groupthink? When is it likely to occur? What are its consequences?

6. What are the characteristics of the bureaucratic model of organizations as described by Max Weber?

7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a bureaucratic form of organization?

8. Describe the human relations approach to formal organizations. How does it differ from the bureaucratic approach?

9. Briefly discuss the functionalist, conflict, and interactionist perspectives on organizations. Show how they differ from one another.

10. Will there be more bureaucracy in our lives in the future or less? Describe the trends that point in each direction.

Answers

Multiple-Choice

1. B; 2. D; 3. A; 4. A; 5. B; 6. C; 7. C; 8. D; 9. A; 10. B

True/False

1. F; 2. T; 3. T; 4. T; 5. F; 6. F; 7. F; 8. T; 9. T; 10. T

Fill-In

1. secondary
2. an aggregate
3. socioemotional, expressive, relationship-oriented
4. autocratic
5. trained incapacity
6. Peter Principle
7. organizational diagnosis
8. functionalist
9. social loafing
10. oligarchy

Matching

1. C; 2. B; 3. I; 4. A; 5. E; 6. G; 7. D; 8. F; 9. J; 10. H

For Further Reading

Berger, Peter, Berger, Brigitte, & Kellner, Hansfried. (1979). *The homeless mind: Modernization and consciousness.* New York: Vintage. This enjoyable little book describes how living in a bureaucratic society affects our consciousness and our way of thinking—often in ways we would not imagine.

Bernhard, Gary J., & Glantz, Kalman. (1992). *Staying human in the organization: Our biological heritage and the workplace.* Westport, CT: Praeger. This is a stimulating and entertaining book that argues that humans by nature work better in small groups than in large organizations. The authors propose some ways workers in organizations can adapt.

Goffman, Erving. (1961). *Asylums.* Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday. Although three decades old, this book remains one of the seminal investigations of the impact of formal organizations on behavior and identity. Goffman, now deceased, was probably one of the most sensitive sociological observers of the human scene.

Jankowski, Martin Sanchez. (1991). *Islands in the street: Gangs and American urban society.* Berkeley: University of California Press. This book is an interesting study of gangs, but it also involves an analysis of the organizational aspects of gang life.

Johnson, David W., & Johnson, Frank P. (1999). *Joining together* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. This book is a good summary of the theory and research on how groups work effectively. It is a good review of group structure and process.

Kane, Joe. (1996). *Savages.* New York: Knopf. This book provides a detailed account of what happened to one South American tribe when Western oil companies wanted to develop its land. A repeat of the Yanomamo experience as described in the beginning of this chapter.

Martin, Joanne. (1992). *Cultures in organizations: Three perspectives.* New York: Oxford University Press. This book recognizes that culture—in the form of values, norms, ritual, language, and the like—exists in organizations. The author shows how to do a cultural analysis of organizations and what some of the implications of such analysis are.

Rawlins, William K. (1992). *Friendship matters: Communication, dialectics, and the life course.* New York: Aldine de

Gruyter. This fascinating book summarizes research on how friendships—a key primary group in most people's lives—develop and change from childhood into old age. Gender differences are discussed throughout.

Ritzer, George. (1996). *The McDonaldization of society: An investigation into the changing character of contemporary social life*, rev. ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. This sociologist puts forth the intriguing proposition that formal organizations, and modern society as a whole, is increasingly organized in a fashion similar to fast-food restaurants. The implications of this are fascinating to consider.