

essentials of



Third Edition

ANTHONY GIDDENS ● MITCHELL DUNEIER ● RICHARD APPELBAUM ● DEBORA CARR

Slides created by Shannon Anderson, Roanoke College

Chapter 5: Groups, Networks, and Organizations

Why group-life matters

- Life in social groups of various shapes and sizes is a fundamentally sociological topic.
- Human life is lived largely in group contexts.
- Human behavior cannot be properly analyzed in purely individual terms.

Unit cohesion

- Example of West Point:
 - Giving up of self in favor of the group
 - Bonds of discipline, loyalty, and conformity
 - Strong sense of “unit cohesion”
- That cohesion seems rare in a highly individualistic culture like the United States.

Social groups

- Social groups are:
 - People who interact with each other and share a sense of identity
 - People who have a shared set of expectations (a set of social norms)
- Typically, there is some awareness of social boundaries.

Types of groups

- In-groups and out-groups: “us” and “them”
- **Primary and secondary groups**
 - *Primary*: the closest, most basic, intimate forms of association
 - *Secondary*: large, impersonal, impermanent forms of association
- Reference groups: provide social standards

Group size

- Sociologists interested in group size look at varying qualities of interaction based on size.
- **Georg Simmel** introduced analytical categories for thinking about groups.
- As group size increases . . .
 - Intensity decreases
 - Formal organization increases
 - Stability and exclusivity increase

Leadership

- All groups have leaders.
- There are **transformational** leaders and **transactional** leaders.
- Transformational leaders are inspirational and change the purpose and meaning of the group.
- Transactional leaders are pragmatic and interested in accomplishing tasks.

Conformity: The research

- People largely conform to group norms.
- Three important studies to know:
 - **Solomon Asch:** Group pressure
 - **Stanley Milgram:** Obedience to authority
 - **Irving L. Janis:** Groupthink

Social networks

- **Social networks** are comprised of direct and indirect associations that link people and groups.
- Networks offer connections beyond the immediate, and thereby can extend opportunities.
- Different groups have access to more or less helpful networks. This exacerbates inequalities that are already in place.

Online social networking

- Online social networking offers many of the same benefits as conventional networks, without some of the constraints.
- The Internet was originally used for military and academic purposes, but now is available (and used) as a network for hundreds of millions of users.
- Even so, there remains unequal access.

Organizations

- **Organizations** are groups that associate for the purpose of achieving some goal or action.
- Organizations have **identifiable membership**.
- The study of organizations is a core topic in sociology, as they are one of the dominant forms of social relations.

Formal organizations

- Many organizations take on a highly rational form, with a clear chain of command and standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- Formality is often for the purposes of legality and legitimacy.
- Formal organizations have become increasingly important in modernity.

Organizational theory

- There are many approaches to studying organizations sociologically:
 - Bureaucracy theories
 - Informal networks
 - Dysfunction theory
 - Oligarchy
 - Feminist organizational theory

Bureaucracy

- A **bureaucracy** is a formal organization best known for its style of hierarchical authority.
- Pros: effectiveness, careful operations
Cons: dehumanizing, red tape
- **Max Weber** is the sociologist most closely associated with bureaucracy theory.

Weber on bureaucracy

- Weber saw bureaucracies as the future of organizations in the modern world.
- They were highly efficient compared to earlier, less rational forms of organization (see his **ideal type**).
- Weber recognized the plusses and minuses. He saw bureaucracy as inevitable due to its effectiveness, but worried over its dullness and lack of humanity.

Informal relations

- An early challenge to bureaucracy theory came from those who identified informal networks and relations inside formal organizations.
- Fruitful, informal social-business networks exist between organizations.
- Informal relations and chains of command function within organizations.

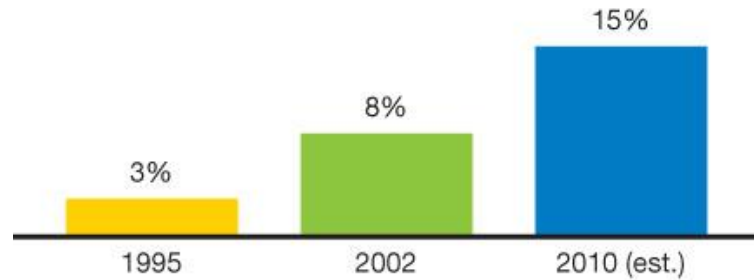
Harmful effects of bureaucracy

- **Robert Merton** identified what he saw as the **dysfunctions of bureaucracy**.
- Bureaucracy stifles creativity with its sea of rules and SOPs.
- It is also overly pragmatic and lacks a visionary element.
- Occasionally rules dominate goals.

Other organizational theories

- The **iron law of oligarchy**: the rule of the few over the many
- **Feminist approaches** to organizational studies
 - Organizations are structured in a gendered way, which reinforces gender inequality in society.
 - Gender inequality in organizations persists.

Proportion of all posts of executive vice president or higher held by women at the 500 largest companies



Proportion of the population earning more than \$100,000 a year by gender and marital status

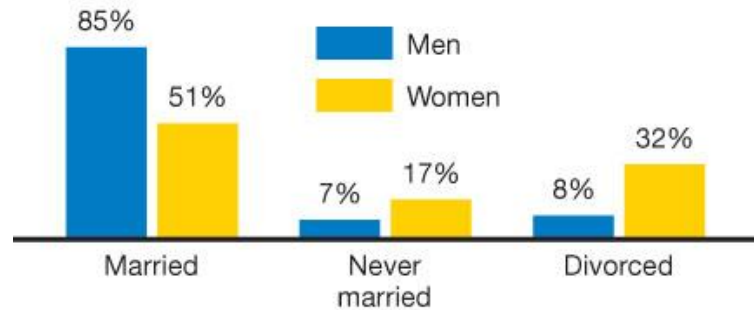


Figure 5.3 Balancing Act?

Does bureaucracy theory hold up?

- There have been both theoretical and applied challenges to bureaucracy as the only model of formal organization in the modern world.
 - Horizontal models of formal organization
 - Decentralization of organizations
 - McDonaldization

Social capital

- **Social capital** is what we gain in knowledge, networks, and status through participation and membership in groups and organizations.
- Social capital contributes to feelings of well-being and belonging, in addition to economic success.
- There is a great deal of inequality in social capital among individuals, organizations, and even countries.

This concludes the Lecture PowerPoint Presentation for

The screenshot shows the StudySpace website for 'Essentials of Sociology, Third Edition'. The header includes the title 'ESSENTIALS OF SOCIOLOGY' with authors GIDDENS | DUNEIER, APPELBAUM | CARR, and 'THIRD EDITION'. A navigation bar features 'CHAPTERS' (1-16), 'EVERYDAYSOCIOLOGYBLOG.COM', and 'SOCIOLOGY NEWS'. A 'Preview Site' banner is in the top right. The main content area features the 'StudySpace' logo and tagline 'Your Place for a Better Grade'. Three numbered points describe the service: 1. 'StudySpace tells you what you know', 2. 'shows you what you still need to review', and 3. 'Gives you an organized study plan to master the material'. Below this is a purchase link for 'Hardcover | Ebook' and a social media share button. A yellow banner states: 'This site will launch in November, 2010. Please visit the demo chapter, [Chapter 2: Culture and Society](#).' A welcome message at the bottom reads: 'Welcome to the Student Studyspace for *Essentials of Sociology, Third Edition*. Effective and well-designed online resources help you succeed in your courses--**StudySpace** is unmatched in providing a one-stop solution that's closely aligned with your textbook. This **free** and easy-to-navigate website offers students an impressive range of exercises,'

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Clicker Questions

1. The term for the social knowledge and connections that enable people to accomplish their goals and extend their influence is
 - a. cultural capital.
 - b. political capital.
 - c. social capital.
 - d. economic capital.

Clicker Questions

2. What is an example of how gender is embedded in the very structure of modern organizations?
 - a. The benefits that female workers receive are different from those of male workers.
 - b. Facilities within modern organizations (bathrooms and break rooms) are segregated by sex.
 - c. The ideas of a bureaucratic career are based on the male career, with women cast in supporting roles.
 - d. It is acceptable for women to take more frequent bathroom breaks than men.

Clicker Questions

3. Which kind of group provides standards by which we judge ourselves?

- a. an in-group
- b. a primary group
- c. an out-group
- d. a reference group

Clicker Questions

4. Which of the following would be the best example of a formal organization?
- a. all of the people of the United States who self-identify as “working class”
 - b. the group of people gathered at the corner of First Avenue and Elm, waiting for the 2:36 P.M. #4 bus
 - c. the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the “Mormons”)
 - d. the collection of siblings and older cousins that provides one with a standard for judging one’s own attitudes or behavior

Clicker Questions

5. Which of the following is one of Weber's characteristics of bureaucracy?
- a. There is a clear-cut hierarchy of authority.
 - b. Officials are part time and paid by the hour.
 - c. Members of the organization own the material resources with which they operate.
 - d. There is no clear-cut separation between the tasks of an official within the organization and his life outside.

Clicker Questions

6. Which of the following is a characteristic of a primary group?
- a. Members interact face-to-face.
 - b. It is impersonal.
 - c. Members interact to achieve a specific goal.
 - d. There is a weak sense of bonding and commitment.

Clicker Questions

7. What is the “iron law of oligarchy”?

- a. Weber’s theory of red tape
- b. Michels’s theory that there is an inherent tendency for power to concentrate at the top of large organizations
- c. Weber’s theory that power concentrates in the hands of permanent officials at the expense of an organization’s elected officials or appointed directors
- d. the feminist theory that power always concentrates in the hands of men

Art Presentation Slides

Chapter 5

Groups, Networks, and Organizations

Anthony Giddens

Mitchell Duneier

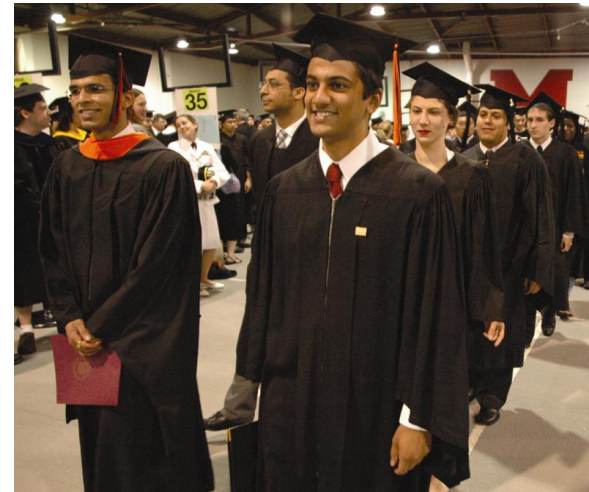
Richard P. Appelbaum

Deborah Carr



Chapter Opener

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What makes the people on the left a social aggregate and the people on the right a social group?



Advertising creates a set of imaginary reference groups meant to influence consumers' buying habits by presenting unlikely—often impossible—ideals to which consumers aspire.

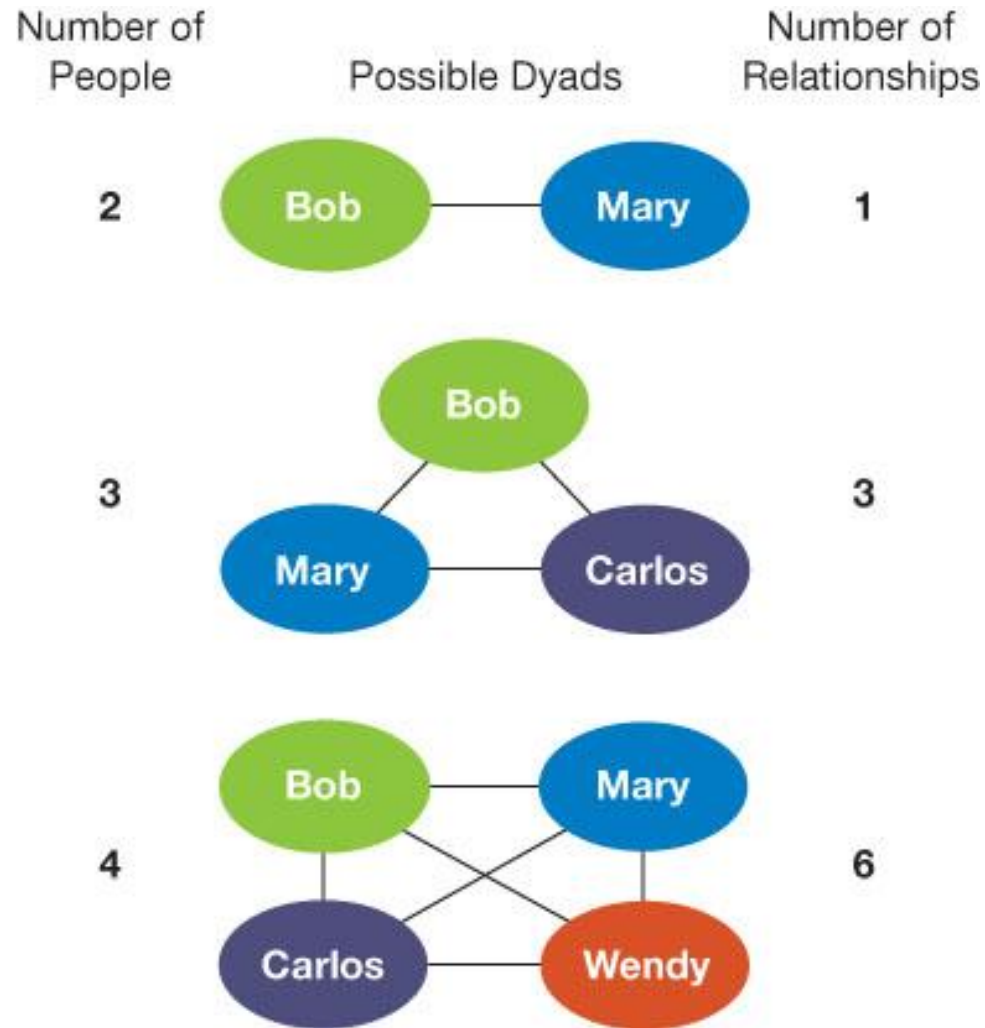


Figure 5.1 Dyads



Would you define Nelson Mandela as a transformational leader? Why?

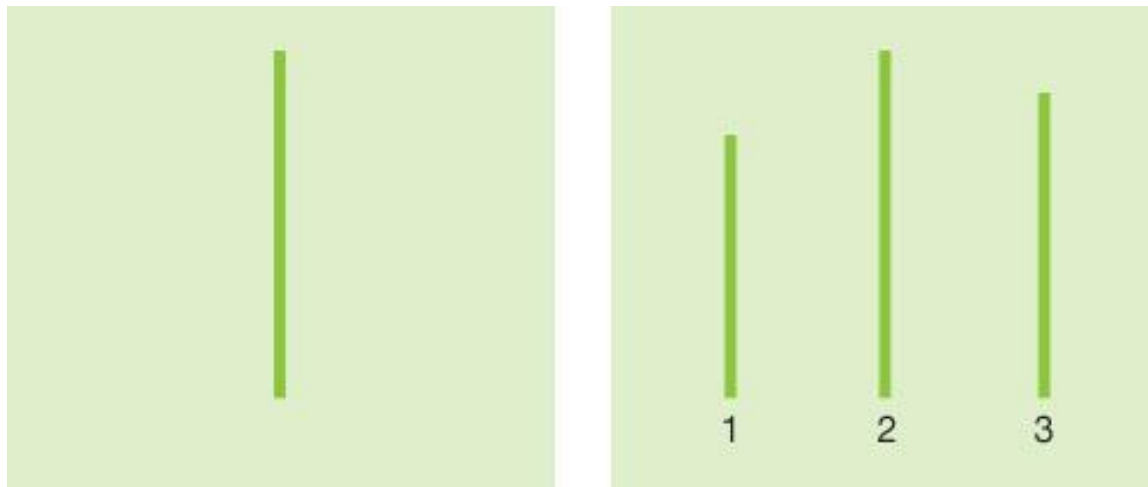


Figure 5.2 The Asch Task



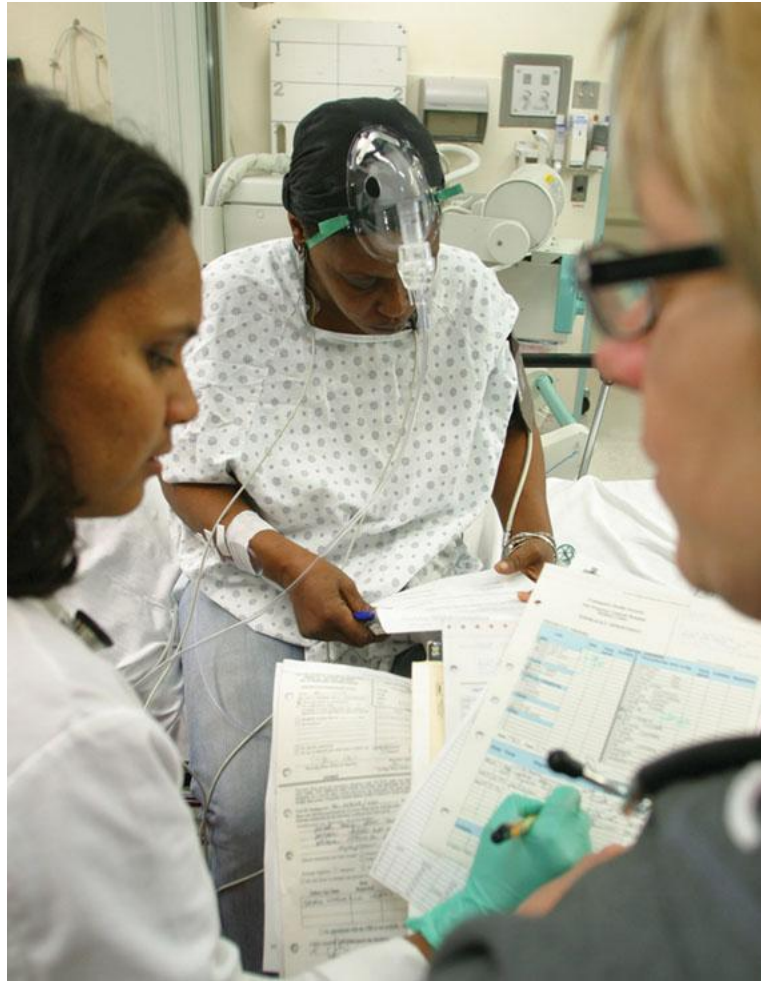
The Milgram experiment required participants to “shock” the confederate learner (seated). The research participant helped apply the electrodes that would be used to shock the learner



An obedient participant shocks the learner in the “touch” condition. Fewer than one third obeyed the experimenter in this condition.



After the experiment, all of the participants were introduced to the confederate learner so they could see he was not actually harmed.

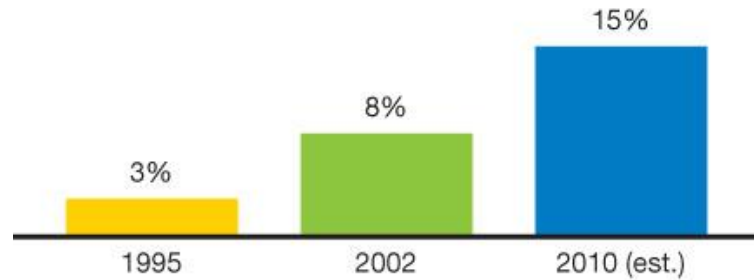


A woman suffering from severe asthma fills out paperwork in an emergency room at San Francisco General Hospital.



Brenda Barnes, CEO of Sara Lee, at the company's headquarters in Chicago.

Proportion of all posts of executive vice president or higher held by women at the 500 largest companies



Proportion of the population earning more than \$100,000 a year by gender and marital status

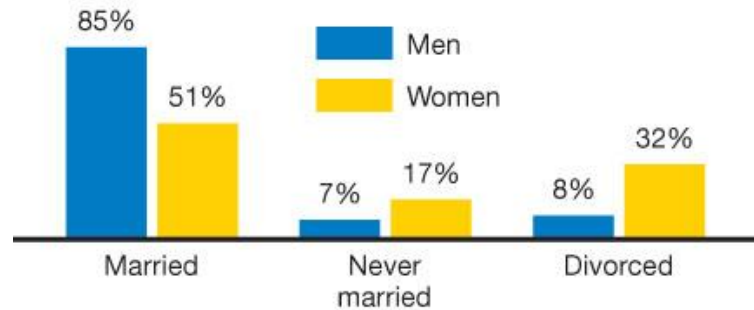


Figure 5.3 Balancing Act?

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Barbara Magnoni telecommutes from her Manhattan apartment.



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This concludes the Art Presentation Slides
Slide Set for Chapter 5

Essentials Of Sociology

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by
Anthony Giddens
Mitchell Duneier
Richard P. Appelbaum
Deborah Carr