

# CHAPTER 6



**GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND SOCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS**

# Key Topics



- 6-1 Social Groups
- 6-2 Formal Organizations
- 6-3 Sociological Perspectives on Social Groups and Organizations
- 6-4 Social Institutions

# Social Groups



A **social group** consists of two or more people who interact with one another and who share a common identity.

- Examples: family, friends, athletic team

# Social Groups



A **primary group** is a relatively small group of people who engage in intimate face-to-face interaction over an extended period of time.

- Examples: families and close friends



# Social Groups



A **secondary group** is usually large, formal, impersonal, and a temporary collection of people that pursues a specific goal or activity.

- Examples: classes, work groups, volunteer organizations



# Social Groups



TABLE 6.1

## Characteristics of Primary and Secondary Groups

	CHARACTERISTICS OF A PRIMARY GROUP	CHARACTERISTICS OF A SECONDARY GROUP
<b>Interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Face to face</li><li>• The group is usually small</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Face to face or indirect</li><li>• The group is usually large</li></ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication is emotional, personal, and satisfying</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication is emotionally neutral and impersonal</li></ul>
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intimate, warm, and informal</li><li>• Usually long-term</li><li>• Valued for their own sake (expressive)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typically remote, cool, and formal</li><li>• Usually short-term</li><li>• Goal-oriented (instrumental)</li></ul>
<b>Individual Conformity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individuals are relatively free to stray from norms and rules</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individuals are expected to adhere to rules and regulations</li></ul>
<b>Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members are not easily replaced</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members are easily replaced</li></ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family, close friends, girlfriends and boyfriends, self-help groups, street gangs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• College classes, political parties, professional associations, religious organizations</li></ul>

# Social Groups—Application



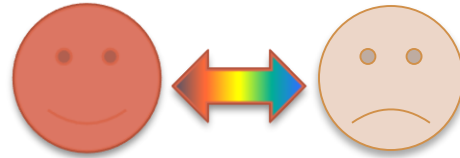
Identify each as a primary or secondary group.

- A single mom and her child
- Your sociology class
- A married couple
- The McDonald's Corporation

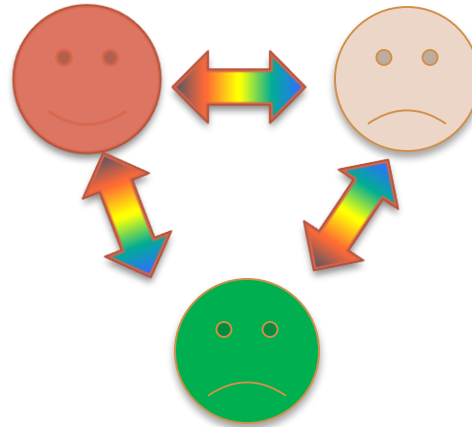
# Dyads, Triads and Social Networks

- A **social network** is a web of social ties that links an individual to others.
- Networks may be tightly knit and have clear boundaries or large and impersonal with fluid boundaries.
- The Internet includes many interlocking social networks such as Facebook.

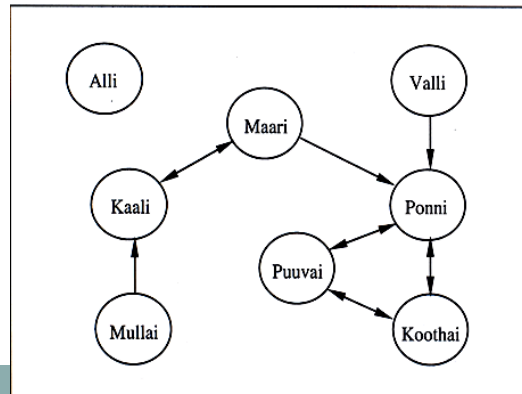
Dyads



Triads

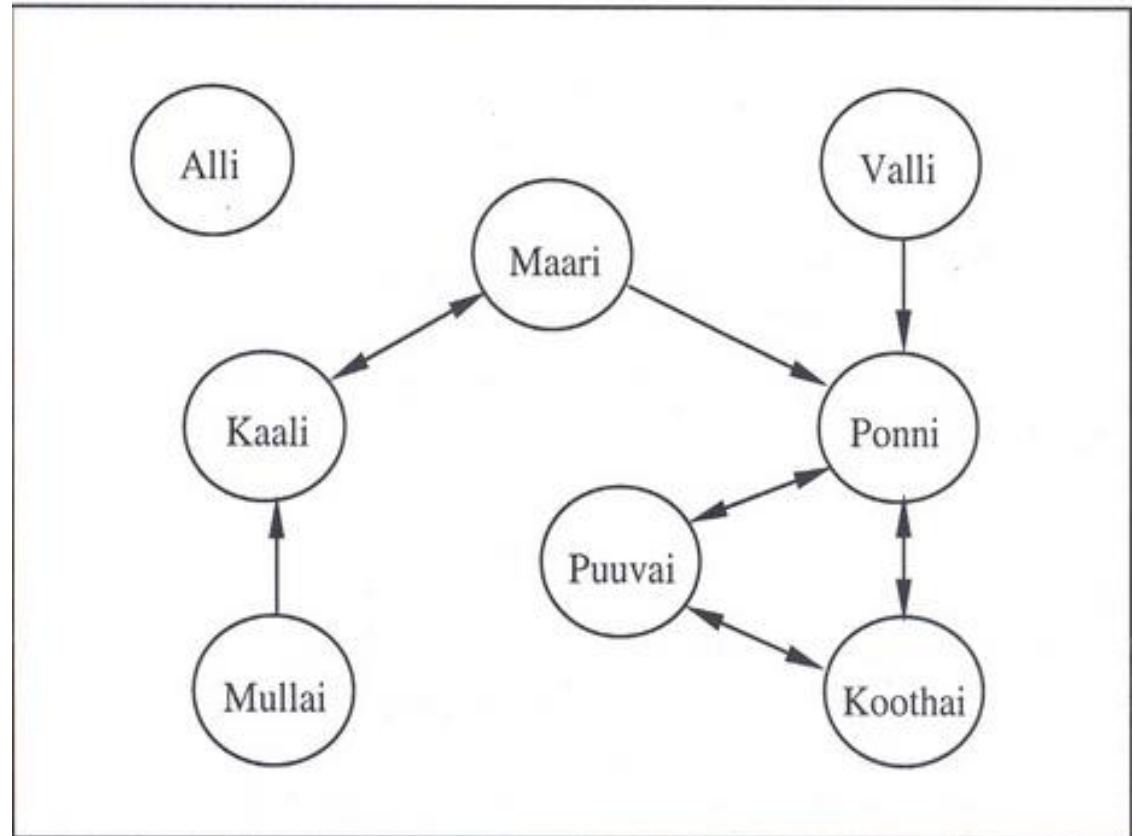


Networks



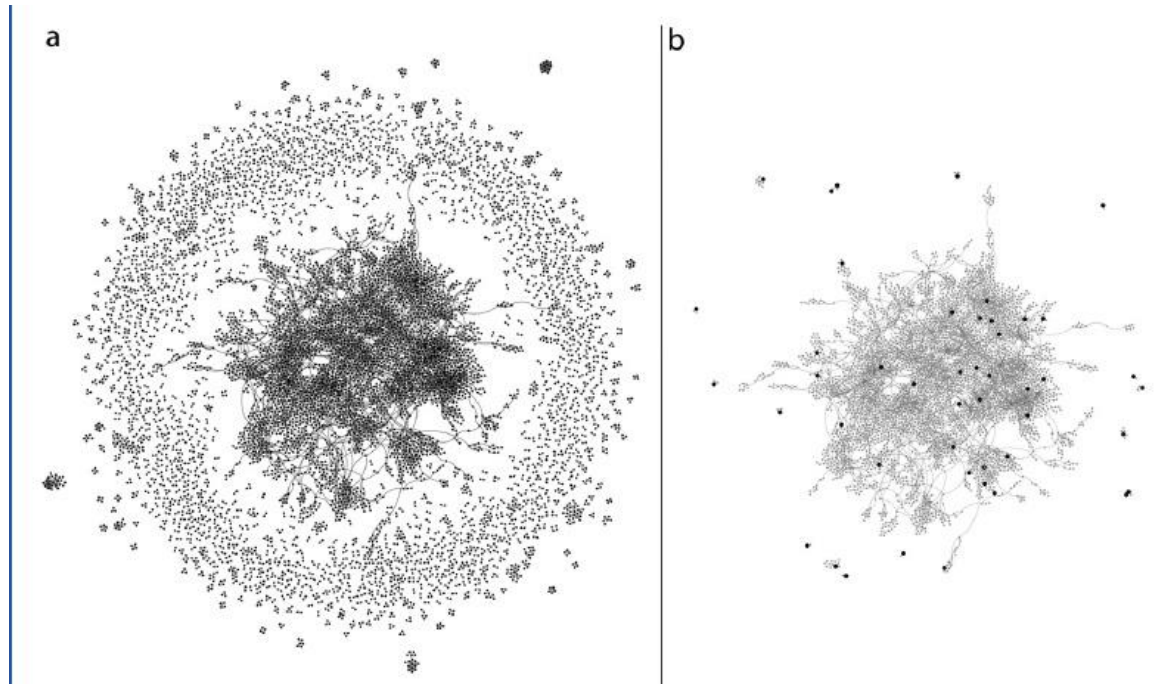
# Sociogram: Identify your two closest friends

Star  
Isolate  
Dyad  
Triad  
Un-chosen



# Network Exposure and Homicide Victimization in an African American Community

Andrew V. Papachristos and Christopher Wildeman Department of Sociology, Yale University



## Conclusions

Risk of homicide in urban areas is even more highly concentrated than previously thought. We found that most of the risk of gun violence was concentrated in networks of identifiable individuals. (American Journal of Public Health November 14, 2013)

# Sociograms: Organizational Change

## Results of an Evaluation of the Peer Support Program at Nova Institution for Women

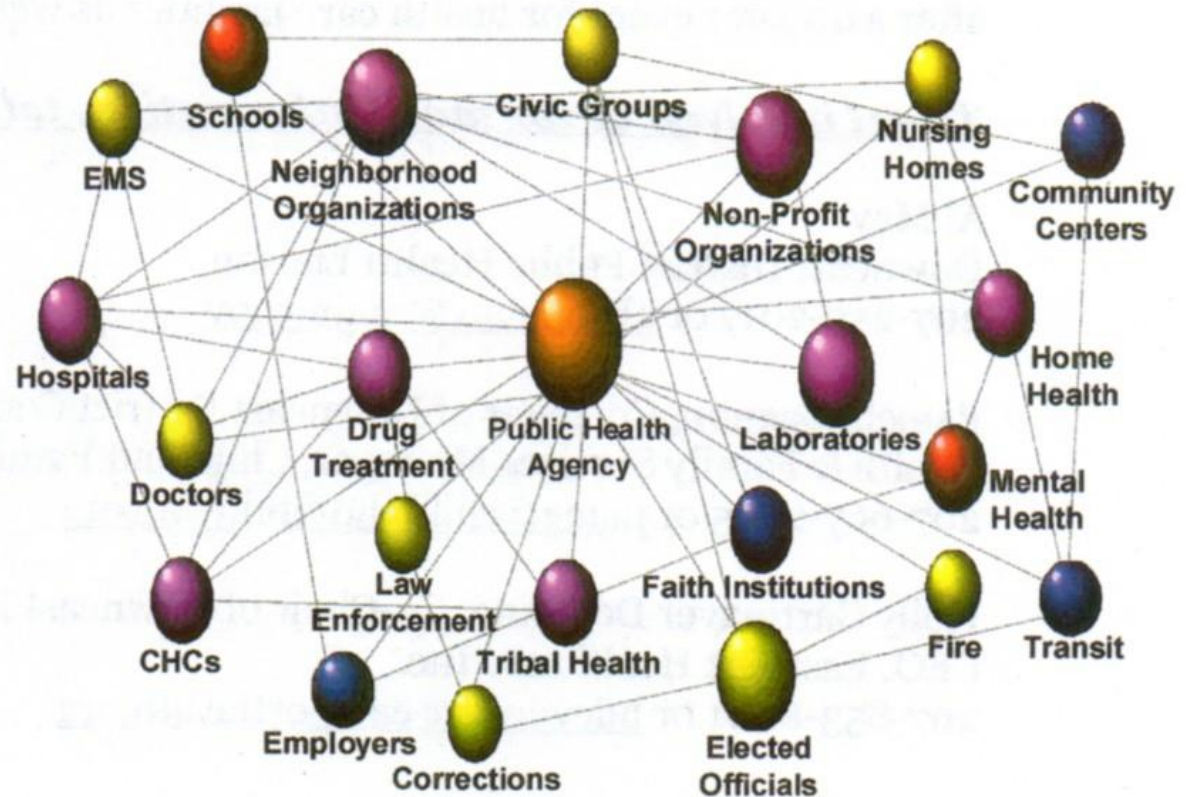




## How is public health system defined?

The public health system are the links in a jurisdiction (town, county, district, state) that

- Monitor health status and investigate health problems;
- Inform, educate and empower people;
- Mobilize communities to address health problems;
- Develop policies and plans to improve health;
- Enforce laws and regulations;
- Connect people to the right health services;
- Assure a competent work force;
- Evaluate health system services;
- Develop innovative ways of keeping people healthy.



# Social Groups



- Members of an **in-group** share a sense of identity that excludes outsiders.
- **Out-groups** are people who are viewed and treated negatively because they are seen as having values, beliefs, or other characteristics different from one's own.

# Social Groups



- A **reference group** is a group of people that shape our behavior, values, and attitudes.

We do not have to be members of our reference groups.

# Social Groups



- All of the different categories of groups are **ideal types**
  - General traits that describe a social phenomenon.
  - Ideal types are composite pictures.
  - Specific descriptions of reality can vary.
- Construction Man, Soccer Mom



# Social Groups



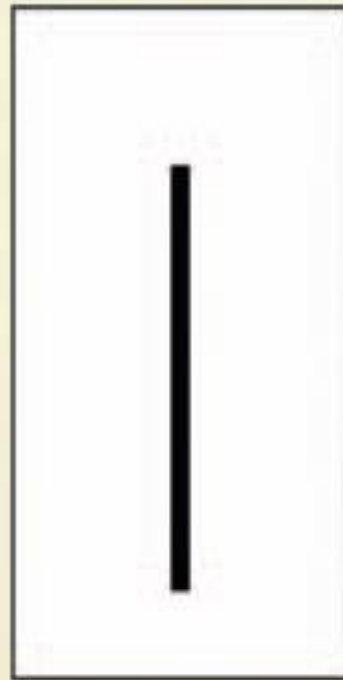
Most people are influenced to conform by group pressure.

- Asch's research: People will agree with obviously false judgments.
- Zimbardo's prison research: People will perform assigned roles in a group.
- Milgram's research: People will cause pain to others if ordered to do so.

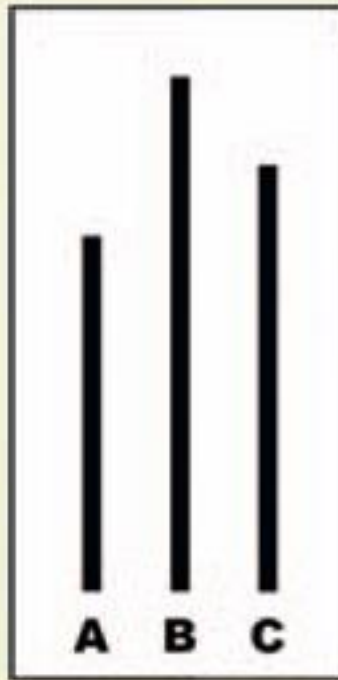
# Asch's Experiment

FIGURE 6.1

## Cards in Asch's Experiment



Card



Card

# Social Groups



- Janis's research focused on why people in groups may make disastrous and irrational decisions.
- **Groupthink** refers to a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgments that results from in-group pressures.

# Formal Organizations



**Formal organizations:** complex and structured secondary groups deliberately created to achieve specific goals

- Include voluntary associations and bureaucracies
- Statuses and roles are organized around shared expectations and goals.
- Norms specify rights, duties, and sanctions.
- A formal hierarchy indicates who is in charge.

# Formal Organizations



A **voluntary association** is created by people who share a common set of interests and who are not paid for their participation.

- Examples: book clubs, charity organizations
- Vary in organizational structure
- Usually not as formal as other organizations

# Formal Organizations



A **bureaucracy** is a formal organization that is designed to accomplish goals and tasks by large numbers of people in the most efficient and rational way possible.

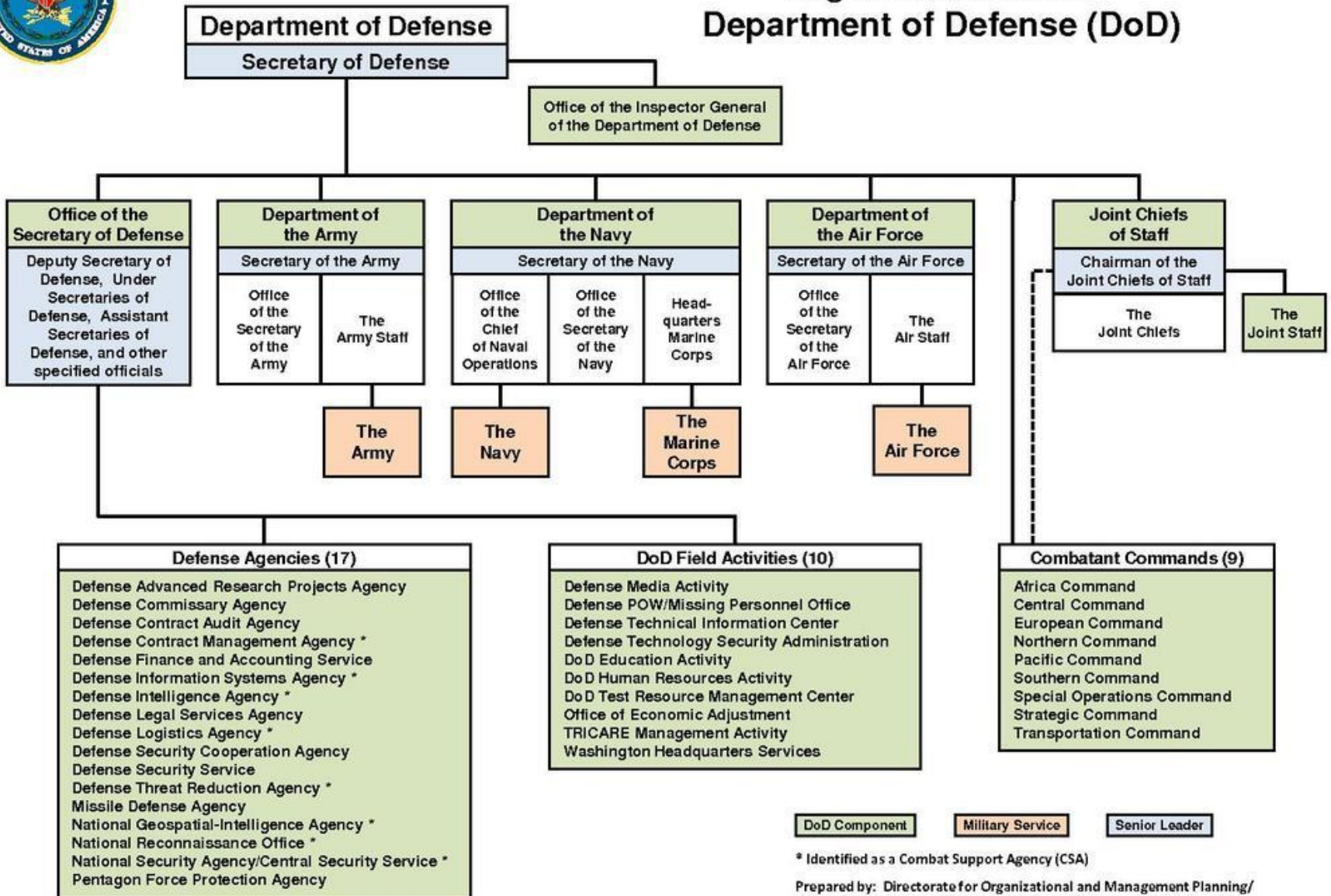
## Characteristics

- Division of labor and specialization
- Hierarchy of authority
- Rules and regulations
- Impersonality
- Qualification-based employment
- Separation of work and employment

# DOD



## Organization of the Department of Defense (DoD)



\* Identified as a Combat Support Agency (CSA)

Prepared by: Directorate for Organizational and Management Planning/  
 Office of the Director of Administration and Management/Office of the  
 Secretary of Defense – March 2012



# Formal Organizations



## Shortcomings of Bureaucracies

- **Weak reward systems**
- **Rigid rules**
- **Goal displacement:** a preoccupation with rules and regulations rather than achieving objectives
- **Alienation:** isolation, meaninglessness, powerlessness

# Formal Organizations

## Shortcomings of Bureaucracies



- **Communication problems**
- **Parkinson's Law:**
  - work expands to fit the time available
- **Peter Principle:**
  - promotion to one's level of incompetence
- **Iron Law of Oligarchy:**
  - domination by a small group of individuals
- **Dehumanization**



# Etzioni's Organization of Organizations



**Table 6.1 Table of Formal Organizations** This table shows Etzioni's three types of formal organizations. (Table courtesy of Etzioni 1975)

	<b>Normative or Voluntary</b>	<b>Coercive</b>	<b>Utilitarian</b>
Benefit of Membership	Intangible benefit	Corrective benefit	Tangible benefit
Type of Membership	Volunteer basis	Required	Contractual basis
Feeling of Connectedness	Shared affinity	No affinity	Some affinity

# Formal Organizations



- Bureaucracies also have an **informal structure**.
- Personal ties and connections often override formal rules and structures.
- Informal norms about snitching, work speed, and work amount emerge.
- Modern work teams are more likely to incorporate informal norms.
- Self-managing groups are a dominant model.

# Perspectives



For **functionalists**, groups and formal organizations are composed of interrelated, mutually dependent parts.

## **Manifest Function**

- Bureaucratic regulations allow goal achievement, presumably benefitting all employees.

## **Latent Function**

- Organizations accomplish social goals – eg United Way

## **Dysfunction**

- Organizations are manipulated

# Perspectives



**Conflict theorists** contend that organizations are based on differences in power and control.

- Place in an organization is often based on race, ethnicity, gender, or social class.
- Owners and managers exploit workers.

# Perspectives



- **Feminist scholars** emphasize the different positions of men and women in organizations.
- Women often hit the **glass ceiling**: attitudes or organizational biases in the workplace that prevent them from advancing to leadership positions

# Perspectives



- **Symbolic interactionists** emphasize that how people define a situation shapes group dynamics and organizations.
- If macro-sociology explains groups as a function of larger social forces, how does micro-sociology explain groups?

# Perspectives—Application



Which theoretical perspective is most helpful in understanding this situation?

- Denise tries to make work fun for her employees by hosting birthday parties.
- On average women who work full-time earn less than men who work full-time.
- Corporation Z brought in recent Somali immigrants to work in the factory when the predominantly Mexican workers went on strike.

# Social Institutions

- A **social institution** refers to an organized and established social system that meets one or more of a society's basic needs.
- An institution includes norms, values, statues, and roles.

# Social Institutions



- The five major institutions worldwide are the
  - family,
  - the economy,
  - politics,
  - education, and
  - religion.
- Other institutions include sports, healthcare, law, and the military.

# Social Institutions—Application



What needs of a society are met by each of these institutions?

- The family
- Sports
- Education
- Science

# Social Institutions



- Institutions govern individuals, groups, and organizations that ensure a society's survival.
- The institutions of a society are interconnected in both functional and dysfunctional ways.

# Chapter Review



1. What is a social group?
2. What are the different types of social groups?
3. Discuss the importance of group conformity?
4. What is a formal organization?
5. What is the McDonaldization of society?
6. How do the different perspectives on groups and organizations differ?
7. What are the social institutions?

# Formal Organizations



- **McDonaldization of Society:** the organizational principles that underlie McDonald's dominate more and more sectors of society.
- Components of McDonaldization are efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control.

# Formal Organizations



## McDonaldization

- *Calculability*: quantifying the experience
  - On a scale of 1-10 how satisfied are you?
- *Control*: exerting influence
  - Preformed hamburger patties, roped areas for lines
- *Efficiency*: choosing the most effective means to an end
  - Division of labor, ordering by number
- *Predictability*: knowing what to expect
  - Restaurants, motels, stores are similar in different cities.

# Formal Organizations—Application



Identify the principle of McDonaldization

- Pharmacy consumers are encouraged to shop while their prescription is filled.
- A customer's number is called when their order is ready.
- Courses have similar numbers throughout a state's community college system.

# Social Groups



- A **social network** is a web of social ties that links an individual to others.
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