



İSTANBUL
GELİŞİM
ÜNİVERSİTESİ

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

WEEK 5

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INDIVIDUAL and SOCIETY

- Sociology is often criticized by not focusing enough on the individual. However, because interaction is one of the key elements in society the groups formed by the interactions of the individuals are always key to the sociological research.
- Macionis describes **social groups** as “A social group is two or more people who identify with and interact with one another.”
- Human beings come together in various forms (neighborhood, friend circles, families, workmates...)
- They keep their individuality but they also consider themselves as members of social groups, a close circle of “we”.



INDIVIDUAL and SOCIETY

- Not every gathering of individuals form a group.
- QUESTION: What can be the features of a group?



INDIVIDUAL and SOCIETY

- When the shared contents and/or interaction are limited the gathering is not called as a social group.
- People having the same status such as women, soldiers, millionaires, college graduates are not a group but a *category*.
- People who are at the same place with limited interaction such as concert audiences are *crowd* rather than social group.
- However, Macionis warns us that: “the right circumstances can quickly turn a crowd into a group. Unexpected events, from power failures to terrorist attacks, can make people bond quickly with strangers.” (p.”162)



INDIVIDUAL and SOCIETY

- Not everything about groups are composed of friendly relations in solidarity.
- Groups are also based on a hierarchy, they include a leader.
- Not all groups resemble each other.
- There are groups including more intimate relations.
- There are groups which are formed based on more formal relations.

Question:

- Can you give examples for different group structures?
- What are their difference?



PRIMARY and SECONDARY GROUPS

- **Primary Group:** is a small social group whose members share personal and lasting relationships. They spend time together and feel that they know one another pretty well. In short, they show real concern for one another. The family is every society's most important primary group.
- Primary groups have an important role for socialization.
- They think they are unique and united; that they belong to each other.



- **Secondary Group:** is a large and impersonal social group whose members pursue a specific goal or activity. In most Secondary relationships involve weak emotional ties and little personal knowledge of one another. Many secondary groups exist for only a short time, beginning and ending without particular significance. Colleagues often form secondary groups.
- Primary group members define each other according to **who** they are in terms of family ties or personal qualities.
- People in secondary groups evaluate each other with **what** they are.



- **Question:** we see in television that many crime organizations refer themselves as family however they are business organizations. Can they form a primary group?



Group Leadership

- One important element of group dynamics is leadership. Small circles may have not have a leader at all but most large secondary groups involve leaders in their formal relations.
- **Two Leadership Roles:** Instrumental leadership and expressive leadership.
- **Instrumental Leadership (Araçsal Liderlik):** refers to group leadership that focuses on the completion of tasks. Members look to instrumental leaders to plan and organize.
- **Expressive leadership (Dışavurumcu Liderlik):** focuses on the group's well-being. Expressive leaders aim to raise group morale and minimizing conflict between members.



Leadership Types

- **Authoritarian leadership:** focuses on instrumental concerns, takes personal charge of decision making, and demands that group members obey orders. Although this leadership style may win little affection from the group, a fast-acting authoritarian leader is appreciated in a crisis.
- **Democratic leadership:** is more expressive and makes a point of including everyone in the decision-making process. Although less successful in a crisis situation, democratic leaders generally draw on the ideas of all members to develop creative solutions to problems.
- **Laissez-faire leadership:** allows the group to function more or less on its own (laissez-faire in French means “leave it alone”). This style is typically the least effective in promoting group goals.

(Macionis: p.164).



GROUP CONFORMITY (GROUP HARMONY)

- **Group Conformity:** Groups support or control/shape their members' actions for common goals. Investigations on the group dynamics claim that people when effected by group leaders or team members tend to act accordingly even if they think the action is wrong.
- Think about the rituals of passage in being a freshman in collage.



MILGRAM'S RESEARCH

- The Milgram experiment on obedience to authority figures was a series of social psychology experiments conducted by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram.
- The experiments began in July 1961 three months after the start of the trial of German Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. Milgram devised his psychological study to answer the popular contemporary question:

"Could it be that Eichmann and his million accomplices in the Holocaust were just following orders? Could we call them all accomplices?"



MILGRAM'S RESEARCH

- Participants –called as “teachers” in the experiment- were led to believe that they were assisting an unrelated experiment, in which they had to administer electric shocks to a "learner." These fake electric shocks gradually increased to levels that would have been fatal had they been real.
- The experiment found, unexpectedly, that a very high proportion of men would fully obey the instructions, albeit reluctantly.



- In this way, Milgram showed that people are likely to follow the lead of not only legitimate authority figures but also groups of ordinary individuals, even when it means harming another person.



REFERENCE GROUPS

- To adopt our own attitudes and behavior we often use a reference group, a social group that serves as a point of reference in making evaluations and decisions.
- **A reference group** is: social group that serves as a point of reference in making evaluations and decisions.
- A young man who imagines his family's response to a woman he is dating is using his family as a reference group.
- Being well prepared for a job interview means showing up dressed the way people in that company dress for work is using them a reference group



In-Groups and Out-Groups

- An **in-group** is a social group toward which a member feels respect and loyalty.
- An in-group exists in relation to an out-group, a social group toward which a person feels a sense of competition or opposition. In-groups and **out-groups** are based on the idea that “we” have valued traits that “they” lack.
- Tensions between groups sharpen the groups’ boundaries and give people a clearer social identity. However, members of in-groups generally hold overly positive views of themselves and unfairly negative views of various out-groups.