



Psicologia dei Gruppi e delle Relazioni Sociali

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Theoretical Lessons (Part 1):

- 1- An introduction to the group dynamics (1)***
- 2- An introduction to the group dynamics (2)***
- 3- Studying Groups***
- 4- Inclusion and Identity***
- 5- Formation***
- 6- Cohesion and Development***
- 7- Structure***
- 8- Influence***
- 9- Power***
- 10- Leadership***
- 11- Performance***
- 12- Decision Making***
- 13- Teams***
- 14- Conflict***
- 15- Intergroup Relations***
- 16- Groups in Context***
- 17- Groups and Change***

Experimental activity (Part 2):

- 18- From cognition to social simulation***
- 19- Research in group dynamics***
- 20- Community detection***
- 21- Epidemic Modeling***
- 22- The virtual settings***
- 23- Reputation dynamics***
- 24- Collective Intelligence***
- 25- Group reasoning***
- 26- Crowd dynamics***
- 27- Social influence: new perspectives***
- 28- Personality, Self and Identity (I)***
- 29- Personality, Self and Identity (II)***
- 30- Constructing the Self in a Digital World***
- 31- Self Disclosure, Privacy and the Internet***
- 32- Understanding the On-line behaviour***



Lesson: 7 - (1/4)

Title: **Structure**

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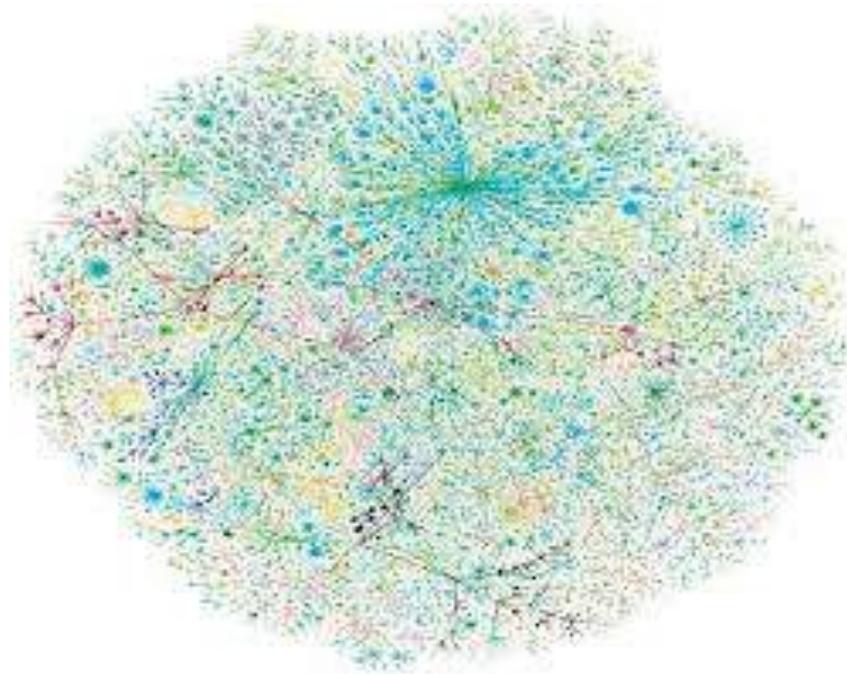
Lesson 7 Outline

- **Norms**
 - *The Development of Norms*
 - *The Transmission of Norms*

- **Roles**
 - *Role Differentiation*
 - *Group Socialization*
 - *Role Stress*

- **Intermember Relations**
 - *Social Network Analysis*
 - *Status Networks*
 - *Attraction Networks*
 - *Communication Networks*
 - *Social Structures and Interactions:*
 - *SYMLOG*

Group processes are shaped by unobservable, but influential, group structures. All but the most ephemeral groups develop written and unwritten norms that dictate conduct in the group, expectations about members' roles, and networks of connections among the members.



Structure of the Groups

Any group, whether stranded in the desert, sitting at a conference table, or working to manufacture some product, can be better understood by examining its structure. Such an analysis assumes that despite widespread differences among groups, all share a common structural core.

In a sense, examining group structures is like studying an individual's personality. An acquaintance's personality cannot be observed directly, but people assume that his or her behavior is the external manifestation of basic traits and dispositions. Similarly, a structural analysis assumes that interaction among members follows a predictable, organized pattern because it is regulated by influential interpersonal structures.

we will examine three of the most commonly noted aspects of a group's "personality": norms, roles, and intermember relations (see Biddle, 2001; Hechter & Op, 2001 for reviews).

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Structure of the Groups

Norms

N SOCIAL R M S

Four features of the norms

Norms are the emergent, consensual standards that regulate groupmembers' behaviors.

They are emergent, in that they develop gradually during the course of interaction among members—in some cases through deliberation and choice but often only gradually as members' actions align.

They are also consensual because norms are shared rules of action; norms are social standards that are accepted by a substantial proportion of the group.

A group's norms regulate the group's activities by identifying what is normal and what is not.



N SOCIAL NORMS

Structure of the Groups Norms

Prescriptive Norm:

A consensual standard that identifies preferable, positively sanctioned behaviors.

Proscriptive Norm

A consensual standard that identifies prohibited, negatively sanctioned behaviors.

Descriptive Norm

A consensual standard that describes how people typically act, feel, and think in a given situation.

Injunctive Norm

An evaluative consensual standard that describes how people should act, feel, and think in a given situation rather than how people do act, feel, and think in that situation.



N SOCIAL R M S

Structure of the Groups

Norms: Transmission

Norms do not just maintain order in the group; they also maintain the group itself (Younggreen & Moore, 2008)

TABLE 6.1 Characteristics and Varieties of Norms

Common Features	Description
Descriptive	Describe how most members act, feel, and think
Consensual	Shared among group members, rather than personal, individual-level beliefs
Injunctive	Define which behaviors are considered "bad" or wrong and which are "good" or acceptable
Prescriptive	Set the standards for expected behavior; what should be done
Proscriptive	Identify behaviors that should not be performed
Informal	Describe the unwritten rules of conduct in the group
Implicit	Often so taken for granted that members follow them automatically
Self-generating	Emerge as members reach a consensus through reciprocal influence
Stable	Once they develop, resistant to change and passed from current members to new members



N SOCIAL R M S

Structure of the Groups

Norms

Some norms are specific to a given group, but others are accepted across groups. Some social norms, in contrast, are so widely adopted within a given context and culture that they structure behavior across groups.

Norms are a fundamental element of a group's structure, for they provide direction and motivation, organize social interactions, and make other people's responses predictable and meaningful.

Simple behaviors such *as choice of clothing* (“Wear shoes in public”), *manners* (“Do not interrupt others”), and *conventions of address* (“Call the professor ‘Dr.’”) *reflect norms*, but so do *general societal principles of fairness* (“Help others when they are in need”), *morality* (“Do not lie to members of the group”), and *values* (“Work hard for the group”).

Each group member is restrained to a degree by norms, but each member also benefits from the order that norms provide.

N SOCIAL R M S

Structure of the Groups

Norms: Development

Groups sometimes discuss and formally adopt norms as their group's rules, but more frequently norms are implicit standards rather than explicit ones. Because members gradually align their behaviors until they match certain standards, they are often not even aware that their behavior is dictated by the norms of the situation.

- People do not, for example, spend a great deal of time wondering, “Should I be quiet in the library?” “Should I nap during the group meeting?” or “Should I stop when the light turns red?” ***They take these norms for granted so fully that they comply with them automatically*** (Aarts, Dijksterhuis, & Custers, 2003).
- Muzafer Sherif, studied this norm emergence process by taking advantage of the ***autokinetic (self-motion) effect***.
 1. This visual illusion occurs when a person stares at a pinpoint of light in an otherwise dark room.
 2. Ordinarily the visual system compensates for naturally occurring motions of the eye, but when only a single light is visible with no frame of reference, the light appears to wander in unpredictable directions and at variable speeds.
 3. Sherif found ***that when individuals judged the dot's movement repeatedly, they usually established their own idiosyncratic average estimates***, which varied from 1 to 10 inches. ***But when people made their judgments in groups, their personal estimates blended with those of other group members.***



N SOCIAL R M S

Structure of the Groups

Norms: Transmission

Sherif confirmed that norms emerge, gradually, as group members' behaviors, judgments, and beliefs align over time. But Sherif also arranged for people to make their judgments alone after taking part in the group sessions where a norm emerged.

- Sherif discovered that, *even though the other group members were no longer present, the individuals retained the group norm* (Sherif, 1966). They had *internalized* the norm.

Researchers have studied this norm transmission experimentally using a generational paradigm: They create a group, and then add newcomers to it and retire old-timers until the entire membership of the group has turned over. Do these succeeding generations of members remain true to the group's original norms, even if these norms are arbitrary or cause the group to make errors and mistakes

- Researchers gave groups feedback that suggested that their norm about how decisions should be made was causing them to make errors, but this *negative feedback did not reduce the norm's longevity across generations* (Nielsen & Miller, 1997).
- Because *norms tend to resist revision*, some group's norms may seem pointless and arbitrary rather than reasonable and functional (Rimal & Real, 2005). *They are, however, aspects of the group's structure, and even odd or unusual norms organize interactions, increase predictability, and enhance solidarity* (Collins, 2004)

N SOCIAL R M S

Structure of the Groups Norms: Transmission

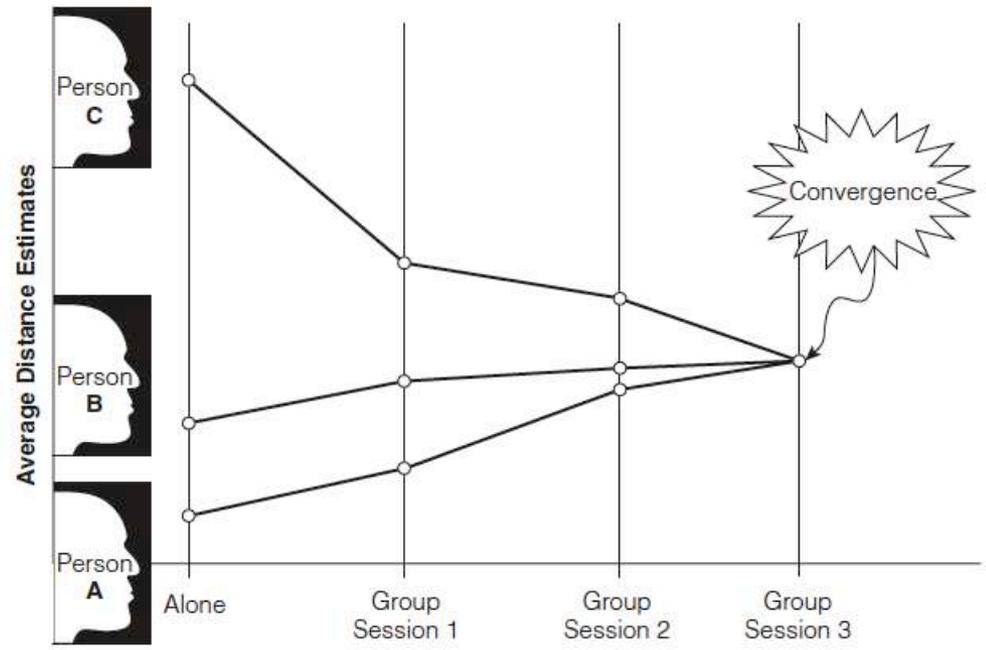


FIGURE 6.1 Sherif's experimental creation of group norms. Individuals' private, pre-group judgments differed markedly, but when they joined with others their judgments converged.

SOURCE: Data from M. Sherif, *The Psychology of Social Norms*, 1936, Harper & Row.



Lesson: 7 - (2/4)

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Structure of the Groups

Roles

Roles: coherent sets of behaviors expected of people in specific positions within a group or social setting.

Roles in a group are similar in some respects to roles in a play. ***A play's roles describe the characters that the actors portray before the audience.*** To become Juliet in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, for example, an actor must perform certain actions and recite her dialogue accordingly. Similarly, roles in groups structure behavior by dictating the part that members take as they interact.

Once cast in a role such as leader, outcast, or questioner, group members perform certain actions and interact with other group members in a particular way—but this consistency reflects the requirements of their role rather than their personal predilections or inclinations.



Structure of the Groups

Roles: Differentiation

As with norms, groups sometimes deliberately create roles to organize the group and thereby facilitate the attainment of the group's goals. A group may decide that its efficiency would be augmented if someone takes charge of the meetings and different tasks are assigned to subcommittees.

- ***The rapid proliferation of roles is typical of groups facing difficult problems or emergencies*** (Bales, 1958).
- In some cases, too, ***someone outside the group***, such as the group's supervisor, ***may mandate roles within the group*** (Stempfle, Hübner, & Badke-Schaub, 2001).
- ***As this role differentiation process unfolds***, the number of roles in the group increases, whereas ***the roles themselves gradually become more narrowly defined and specialized.***

Structure of the Groups

Roles: Differentiation

Role Differentiation

An increase in the number of roles in a group, accompanied by the gradual decrease in the scope of these roles as each one becomes more narrowly defined and specialized.

Task Role

Any position in a group occupied by a member who performs behaviors that promote completion of tasks and activities, such as initiating structure, providing task-related feedback, and setting goals.

Relationship Role

Any position in a group occupied by a member who performs behaviors that improve the nature and quality of interpersonal relations among members, such as showing concern for the feelings of others, reducing conflict, and enhancing feelings of satisfaction and trust in the group.



Structure of the Groups

Roles: Differentiation

The tendency for groups to develop both task roles and relationship roles is consistent with Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats's (1948) classic study conducted at the National Training Laboratories (NTL), an organization devoted to the improvement of groups. Benne and Sheats concluded that a group, to survive, must meet two basic demands: The group must accomplish its tasks, and the relationships among members must be maintained.

TABLE 6.2 Benne and Sheats' Typology of Roles in Groups

Category	Types
Task Roles	<p>Initiator/contributor: Recommends novel ideas about the problem at hand, new ways to approach the problem, or possible solutions not yet considered</p> <p>Information seeker: Emphasizes getting the facts by calling for background information from others</p> <p>Opinion seeker: Asks for more qualitative types of data, such as attitudes, values, and feelings</p> <p>Information giver: Provides data for forming decisions, including facts that derive from expertise</p> <p>Opinion giver: Provides opinions, values, and feelings</p> <p>Elaborator: Gives additional information, examples, rephrasings, implications about points made by others</p> <p>Coordinator: Shows the relevance of each idea and its relationship to the overall problem</p> <p>Orienter: Refocuses discussion on the topic whenever necessary</p> <p>Evaluator/critic: Appraises the quality of the group's methods, logic, and results</p> <p>Energizer: Stimulates the group to continue working when discussion flags</p> <p>Procedural technician: Cares for operational details, such as materials, machinery, and so on</p> <p>Recorder: Takes notes and maintains records</p>



Structure of the Groups

Roles: Differentiation

The tendency for groups to develop both task roles and relationship roles is consistent with Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats's (1948) classic study conducted at the National Training Laboratories (NTL), an organization devoted to the improvement of groups. Benne and Sheats concluded that a group, to survive, must meet two basic demands: The group must accomplish its tasks, and the relationships among members must be maintained.

Relationship Roles

Encourager: Rewards others through agreement, warmth, and praise

Harmonizer: Mediates conflicts among group members

Compromiser: Shifts his or her own position on an issue in order to reduce conflict in the group

Gatekeeper/expediter: Smooths communication by setting up procedures and ensuring equal participation from members

Standard setter: Expresses or calls for discussion of standards for evaluating the quality of the group process

Group observer/commentator: Points out the positive and negative aspects of the group's dynamics and calls for change if necessary

Follower: Accepts the ideas offered by others and serves as an audience for the group

Individual Roles

Aggressor: Expresses disapproval of acts, ideas, and feelings of others; attacks the group

Blocker: Negativistic; resists the group's influence; opposes the group unnecessarily

Dominator: Asserts authority or superiority; manipulative

Evader/self-confessor: Expresses personal interests, feelings, and opinions unrelated to group goals

Help seeker: Expresses insecurity, confusion, and self-deprecation

Recognition seeker: Calls attention to him- or herself; self-aggrandizing

Playboy/girl: Uninvolved in the group; cynical, nonchalant

Special-interest pleader: Remains apart from the group by acting as representative of another social group or category

SOURCE: Adapted from "Functional Roles of Group Members" by K. D. Benne and P. Sheats, *Journal of Social Issues*, 1948, 4(2), 41–49. Copyright 1948 by the Society for the Psychology of Social Issues. Reprinted by permission.

Structure of the Groups

Roles: Group Socialization

Group Socialization

*A pattern of change in the relationship between an individual and a group that begins when an individual first considers joining the group and ends when he or she leaves it.
(Moreland and Levine, 1982)*

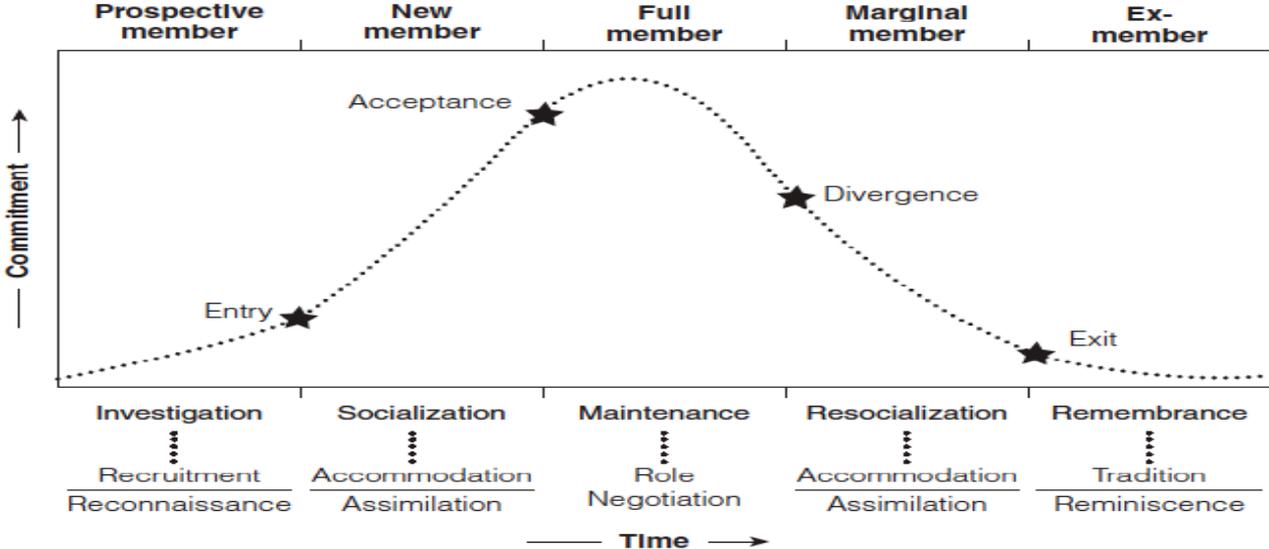


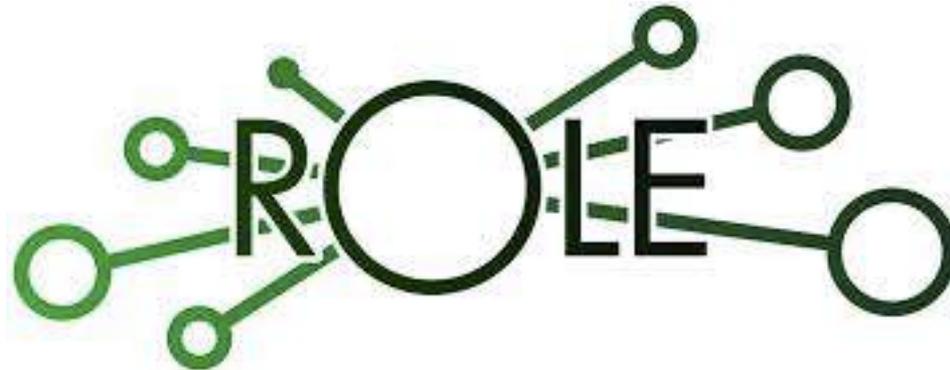
FIGURE 6.2 The Moreland and Levine theory of group socialization. The model identifies five types of roles (top of the figure), five stages and processes of socialization (bottom of the figure), and four transition points (identified as stars on the curve). The curved line represents the gradual increase (and eventual decrease) of a hypothetical member's commitment to the group. Commitment increases as the member moves from prospective member to new member to full member, but then declines as the member moves to the role of marginal member and finally to ex-member.

Structure of the Groups

Roles: Role Stress

Roles influence group members' happiness and wellbeing in significant ways.

- ***By taking on a role in a group, individuals secure their connection*** to their fellow members, building the interdependence that is essential for group cohesion and productivity.
- But ***roles also permit group members to express themselves***, for even though roles constrain individuals, they are not so rigid that they undermine the role occupants' sense of control and autonomy (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001).





Structure of the Groups

Roles: Role Stress

Role Ambiguity

Unclear expectations about the behaviors to be performed by an individual occupying a particular position within the group, caused by a lack of clarity in the role itself, a lack of consensus within the group regarding the behaviors associated with the role, or the individual role taker's uncertainty with regard to the types of behaviors expected by others (Kahn et al., 1964).

Role Conflict

A state of tension, distress, or uncertainty caused by inconsistent or discordant expectations associated with one's role in the group (Schuler, & Van Sell, 1981)

Interrole Conflict

A form of role conflict that occurs when individuals occupy multiple roles within a group and the expectations and behaviors associated with one of their roles are not consistent with the expectations and behaviors associated with another of their roles.

Intrarole Conflict

A form of role conflict that occurs when the behaviors that make up a single role are incongruous, often resulting from inconsistent expectations on the part of the person who occupies the role and other members of the group (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Structure of the Groups

Roles: Role & Well-Being

Role Fit

The degree of congruence between the demands of a specific role and the attitudes, values, skills, and other characteristics of the individual who occupies the role.



- Accountants and hospital *employees who reported experiencing role stress also displayed high levels of tension, decreased job satisfaction, and increased employee turnover* (Kemery et al., 1985).
- Athletes who complained of *role ambiguity felt less confident in their ability* to fill their roles adequately, and *they also played more poorly* (Beauchamp et al., 2002).
- Meta-analytic reviews suggest that *increases in role ambiguity are associated with increases in depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and tension, and decreases in organizational commitment and performance* (Örtqvist & Wincent, 2006; Tubre & Collins, 2000).
- *Role conflict is most strongly associated with decreased job satisfaction and increased tension* but is also linked to *organizational commitment and propensity to quit* (Gilboa et al., 2008; Örtqvist & Wincent, 2006).

Structure of the Groups

Roles: Role & Well-Being

What can groups and organizations do to help their employees cope with role stress?

- ***One solution involves making role requirements explicit:*** Managers should write job descriptions for each role within the organization and provide employees with feedback about the behaviors expected of them (Pritchard et al., 2008).
- Some companies, too, develop ***explicit guidelines regarding when one role should be sacrificed so that another can be enacted***, or they ***may prevent employees from occupying positions that can create role conflict*** (Sarbin & Allen, 1968).
- Managers and the leaders of groups should also be mindful of the characteristics of the members of their groups and be ***careful to maximize role fit when selecting members for particular tasks***.





Lesson: 7 - (3/4)

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Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Social Network Analysis

Connections among the members of a group provide the basis for the third component of group structure—the network of intermember relations.

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

A set of analysis procedures used to describe the structure through graphic representations and through mathematical procedures that quantify these structures.

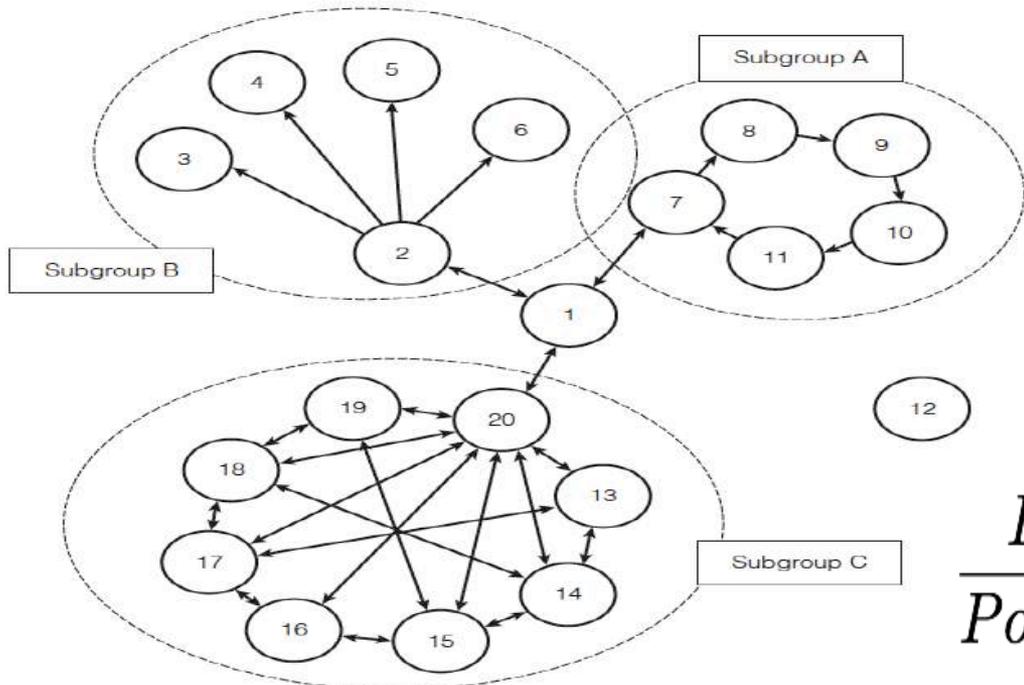
The study of relations among individuals in groups, organizations, and even larger collectives is termed social network analysis, or SNA. This approach dates back to some of the earliest work in sociology and psychology, for these fields' founders explored various ways to create “maps” of human relationships.

These efforts, which included **sociometric studies of attraction in groups** (e.g., Moreno, 1934) and **experimental studies of communication channels in groups** (e.g., Bavelas, 1948; Leavitt, 1951), culminated in the 1990s in a set of analysis procedures defined by:

- (a) a focus on the structures of social groups and on linkages among group members in particular;
- (b) the systematic measurement of these structures;
- (c) the use of graphics to represent these structures;
- (d) the application of statistical and mathematic procedures to quantify these structures (Freeman, 2004).

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Social Network Analysis



Network Connections

Nodes	2	3	4	5
Connections	1	3	6	10

$$C = \frac{N \times (N - 1)}{2}$$

$$\frac{\text{RealLinks}}{\text{PossibleLinks}} = \frac{47}{380} = 0.12$$

FIGURE 6.3 An example of a social network. Person 20 is highest in indegree centrality, outdegree centrality, and doseness, whereas Person 1 is the highest in betweenness. The density of the group itself is .12.

Density

The degree of connectedness of group's members, as indexed by the number of actual ties linking members divided by the number of possible ties.

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Individuals in Network

Individuals in Networks Individual-level, or egocentric, indexes yield information about each member's location in the network relative to the others. Unlike sociocentric indexes, which yield a single value for the entire network (or a portion of the network), egocentric indexes have a value for each actor.

Degree Centrality

The number of ties between group members; the group's degree centrality is the average of the direct connections among group members.

Outdegree

For nonsymmetric data, the number of ties initiated by the individual.

Indegree

For nonsymmetric data, the number of ties received by the individual.

Betweenness

The degree to which a group member's position in a network is located along a path between other pairs of individuals in the network.

Closeness

The distance, in terms of ties, of an individual from all others in the network.

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Status Networks

Rare is the group where all members enjoy equal amounts of authority. The stable variations in members' relative dominance and authority have such names as authority, power, status network, pecking orders, chain of command, or prestige ranking.

Status Differentiation

The gradual rise of some group members to positions of greater authority, accompanied by decreases in the authority exercised by other members.



Initially, group members may start off on an equal footing, but over time, status differentiation takes place: Certain individuals acquire authority by laying claim to a position of greater status and by having their claim accepted by the other members of the group.



Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Status Networks

Rare is the group where all members enjoy equal amounts of authority. The stable variations in members' relative dominance and authority have such names as authority, power, status network, pecking orders, chain of command, or prestige ranking.

Pecking Order

A stable, ordered pattern of individual variations in prestige, status, and authority among group members.

All social animals know how to communicate the message, "I am in charge."

- *Dominant chimpanzees chatter loudly at potential rivals*, the leader of the wolf pack growls and bares his teeth at low-ranking wolves, and the ranking lioness in the pride swats another with her paw.
- Members of these social groups compete for status, for the individual at the top of the hierarchy—the *so-called alpha male or female—enjoys greater access to the group's resources.*
- *These high-ranking members maintain their position by threatening or attacking low-ranking members*, who in turn manage to avoid these attacks by performing behaviors that signal deference and submissiveness.
- This system of dominance and submission is often called a pecking order because (at least in chickens) it determines who will do the pecking and who will be pecked. Biologists argue that *pecking orders limit conflict in groups and increase individual and group survival* (Bergman et al., 2003; Mazur, 2005).



Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Status Networks

All social animals know how to communicate the message, "I am in charge."

- ***Humans, too, compete for status in their groups. Humans*** rarely snarl at one another to signal their status, but they do ***use such nonverbal cues as a firm handshake, an unwavering gaze, a relaxed but poised posture, or an unsmiling countenance*** to let others know that they should be respected (Chaplin et al., 2000; Leffler, Gillespie, & Conaty, 1982).
- ***People also seek status by speaking clearly and loudly, whereas those who speak softly and pepper their comments with nervous giggles are afforded less authority*** (Lee & Ofshe, 1981; Patterson, 1991).
- ***Displays of emotion also signal differences in status. Group members who seem angry are thought to be more influential*** and accorded higher status, whereas ***those who seem sad are thought to be lower in status*** (Tiedens, 2001; Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000).
- Those ***seeking status*** often initiate conversations and ***shift the discussion to their own areas of competence*** (Godfrey, Jones, & Lord, 1986).



Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Status Networks

All social animals know how to communicate the message, "I am in charge."

- ***A person seeking high status would be more likely to:***
 - (1) tell other people what they should do,
 - (2) interpret other people's statements,
 - (3) confirm or dispute other people's viewpoints, and
 - (4) summarize or reflect on the discussion (Stiles et al., 1997).
- ***Status seekers use strong rather than weak influence tactics*** and are more likely to voice their opinions (Bonito & Hollingshead, 1997; Dovidio et al., 1988; Islam & Zyphur, 2005).
- ***Group members also assert their authority over the group by interrupting other speakers frequently*** (Schmid Mast, 2002).



Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Status Networks

Expectation-states theory

Joseph Berger and his colleagues, provides a detailed analysis of the impact of group members' expectations on the status-organizing process. (Berger, Ridgeway, & Zelditch, 2002; Ridgeway, 2001; Wagner & Berger, 2002).

Expectation-States Theory

An explanation of status differentiation in groups which assumes that group members allocate status to group members judged to be competent at the task at hand and to group members who have qualities that the members think are indicators of competence and potential.

Specific Status Characteristic

In status characteristics theory, task-specific behavioral and personal characteristics that people consider when estimating the relative competency, ability, and social value of themselves and others.

Diffuse Status Characteristic

In status characteristics theory, general personal qualities such as age, race, and ethnicity that people consider when estimating the relative competency, ability, and social value of themselves and others.

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Status Networks

Status Generalization

The tendency for individuals known to have achieved or been ascribed authority, respect, and prestige in one context to enjoy relatively higher status in other, unrelated, contexts (e.g., a celebrity who exercises influence in a group even though this diffuse status characteristic is not relevant in the current group context).

- **Groups do not always allocate status fairly** (Schneider & Cook, 1995).
- Group members **let general status (i.e., diffuse status) characteristics influence their expectations**, even though these characteristics may be irrelevant in the given situation (Molm, 1986; Ridgeway & Balkwell, 1997).
- **Women and racial minorities report more dissatisfaction about how status is allocated in groups** (Hembroff, 1982).
- **Women are less likely to be selected as leaders of their groups**, and they are more likely to be assigned to lower status roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007).
- etc ...

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Attraction Networks

Attraction Network (or social status, or sociometric structure)

Patterns of liking/disliking, acceptance/rejection, and inclusion/exclusion among members of a group.

Sociometric Differentiation (Moreno, 1934)

The development of stronger and more positive interpersonal ties between some members of the group, accompanied by decreases in the quality of relations between other members of the group.

Group members also often deliberately form and manipulate cliques within larger groups by systematically including some individuals and excluding others (Adler & Adler, 1995).



Lesson: 7 - (4/4)

Title: **Structure**

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Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Maintaining Structural Balance

Balance Theory

A conceptualization advanced by Fritz Heider which assumes **that interpersonal relationships can be either balanced** (integrated units with elements that fit together without stress) or **unbalanced** (inconsistent units with elements that conflict with one another). **Heider believed that unbalanced relationships create an unpleasant tension that must be relieved by changing some element of the system.**

Why do most groups tend toward reciprocity, transitivity, and clusters?

- Some patterns of relationships in groups are more structurally sound, or balanced, than others, and so **groups naturally tend to gravitate toward these rather than toward unbalanced states** (Cartwright & Harary, 1956, 1970; Heider, 1958; Newcomb, 1963).

In general, a group is balanced if:

- (1) **All the relationships are positive, or**
- (2) **An even number of negative relationships occurs in the group.**
- (3) **Conversely, groups are unbalanced if they contain an odd number of negative relations**

- Such a group pattern is considered so unstable that it has been given the ominous name “the forbidden triad” (Granovetter, 1973).

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Maintaining Structural Balance

Because unbalanced sociometric structure generate tension among group members, people are motivated to correct the imbalance and restore the group's equilibrium.

- Heider noted that this *restoration of balance can be achieved either through psychological changes in the individual members or through interpersonal changes in the group* (Gawronski, Walther, & Blank, 2005).
- Alternatively, *group members who are disliked by the other group members may be ostracized*, as in the case of Delgado (Taylor, 1970).
- *Because the occurrence of a single negative relationship within a group can cause the entire group to become unbalanced, large groups tend to include a number of smaller, better balanced cliques* (Newcomb, 1981).





Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Communication Network

Communication Network

Patterns of information transmission and exchange that describe who communicates most frequently and to what extent with whom.

Centrality Effects

Patterns of communication among group members, like other structural features of groups, are sometimes deliberately set in place when the group is organized. Many companies, for example, adopt a centralized, hierarchical communication network that prescribes how information is passed up to superiors, down to subordinates, and horizontally to one's equals.

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Communication Network

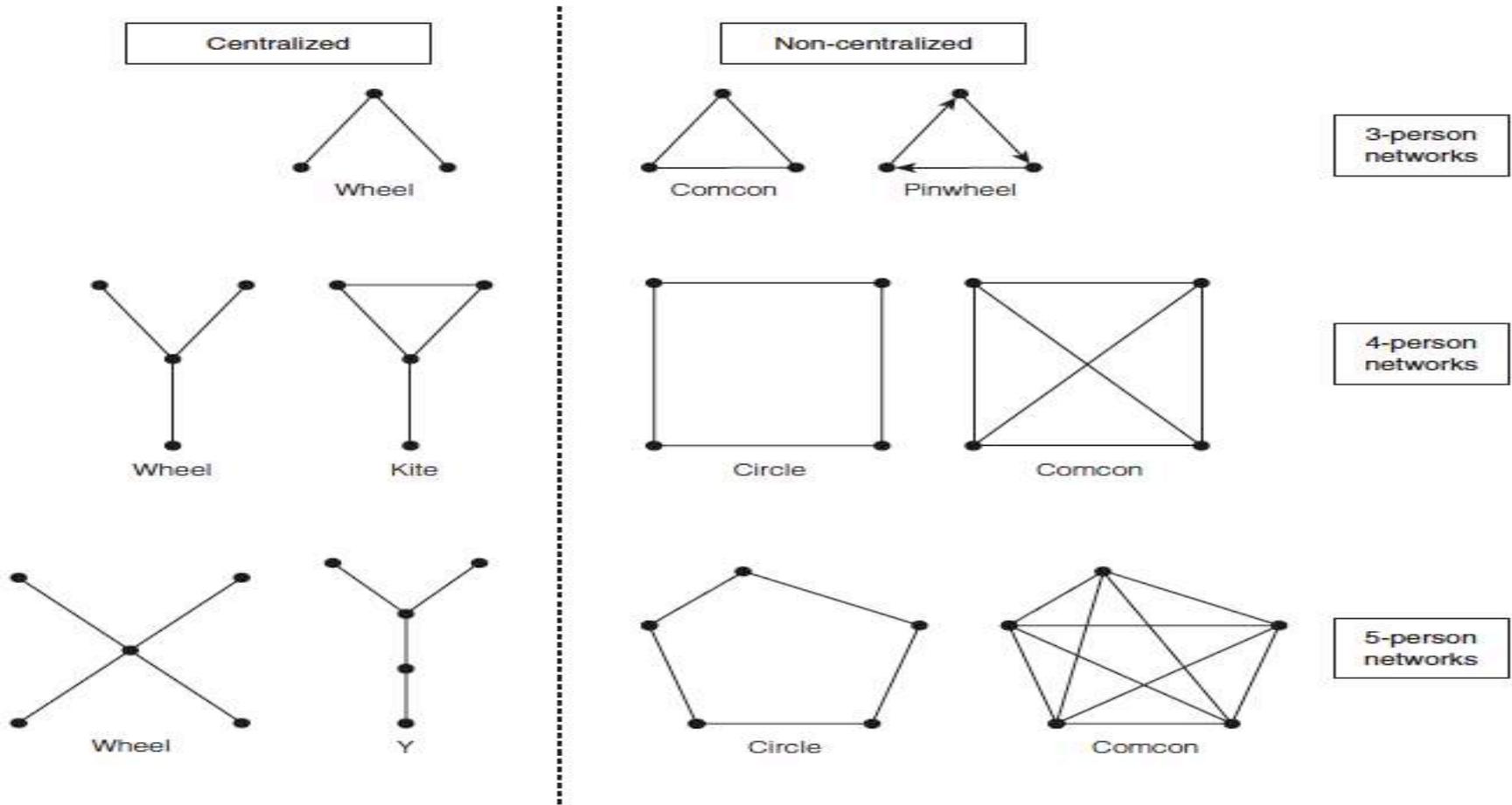


FIGURE 6.5 Examples of common communication networks in small groups. These networks are a sample of the various kinds of communication networks that can be created by opening and closing lines of communication among members. In most of these examples the lines are undirected ones, with information flowing back and forth between members. Only the pinwheel has directed, one-way communication links.

SOURCE: Adapted from "Communication Networks," by M.E. Shaw. In L. Berkowitz (ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 1). Copyright © 1964 by Academic Press. Reprinted by permission.



Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Communication Network

Centrality Effects

- **Even when no formal attempt is made to organize communication, an informal communication network will usually take shape** over time. Moreover, this network tends to parallel status and attraction patterns. (Shelley et al., 1999).
- Communication networks become more complex and varied as groups increase in size, but some of their basic forms remains relevant.
- ✓ In a wheel network, for example, most group members communicate with just one person.
- ✓ In a comcon, all members can and do communicate with all other members.
- ✓ In a chain, communication flows from one person to the next in a line.
- ✓ A circle is a closed chain, and
- ✓ A pinwheel is a circle where information flows in only one direction (Shaw, 1964).



Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Communication Network

Centrality Effects

- Early studies of communication networks suggested that **groups with centralized networks outperformed decentralized networks** (Bavelas, 1948, 1950; Bavelas & Barrett, 1951; Leavitt, 1951).
- A group with a **wheel structure**, for example, **took less time to solve problems**, sent fewer messages, detected and corrected more errors, and **improved more with practice** than a group with a decentralized structure, such as a circle or comcon (Shaw, 1964, 1978).
- **When the task is simple, centralized networks are more efficient** than decentralized networks; when the task is complex, decentralized networks are superior. (Brown & Miller, 2000).

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: Communication Network **Centralized VS Decentralized**

- **These different types of centrality also influence role allocations, overall commitment, and satisfaction with membership in the group** (Krackhardt & Porter, 1986; Lovaglia & Houser, 1996).
- **Individuals who occupy positions of high betweenness in centralized communication networks, such as a wheel or a Y are nearly always *thought to be the leader* of their group, even when they are randomly assigned to this position** (Leavitt, 1951).
- **Those who are more central in their network are less likely to quit than are employees at the periphery** of the company's communication network (Feeley, 2000).
- Because individuals in decentralized positions are connected to very few of the other members, **when one peripheral member leaves the group, the individuals located near that person in the network also tend to leave the group** (Krackhardt & Porter, 1986).
- **Centralized networks, by definition, have fewer centralized positions than decentralized positions.** In consequence, **the overall level of satisfaction in a centralized group is almost always lower than the level of satisfaction in a decentralized group** (Shaw, 1964).





Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: SYMLOG

Systematic Multiple Level Observation of Groups (SYMLOG)

Robert Bales's theory and observational system assume that group activities can be classified along three dimensions:

1. **dominance versus submissiveness,**
2. **friendliness versus unfriendliness,**
3. **acceptance versus nonacceptance of authority**

and that groups are more effective when these three aspects of the group align.

Up versus Down, or dominance/submissiveness: Is this member active, outgoing, and talkative, or passive, quiet, and introverted?!

Positive versus Negative, or friendliness/unfriendliness: Is this member warm, open, and positive or negative and irritable?

Forward versus Backward, or acceptance of the task-orientation of the established authority/ non-acceptance of authority: Is this member analytic and task-oriented or emotional, untraditional, and (in some cases) resentful?

Structure of the Groups

Intermembers Relations: SYMLOG

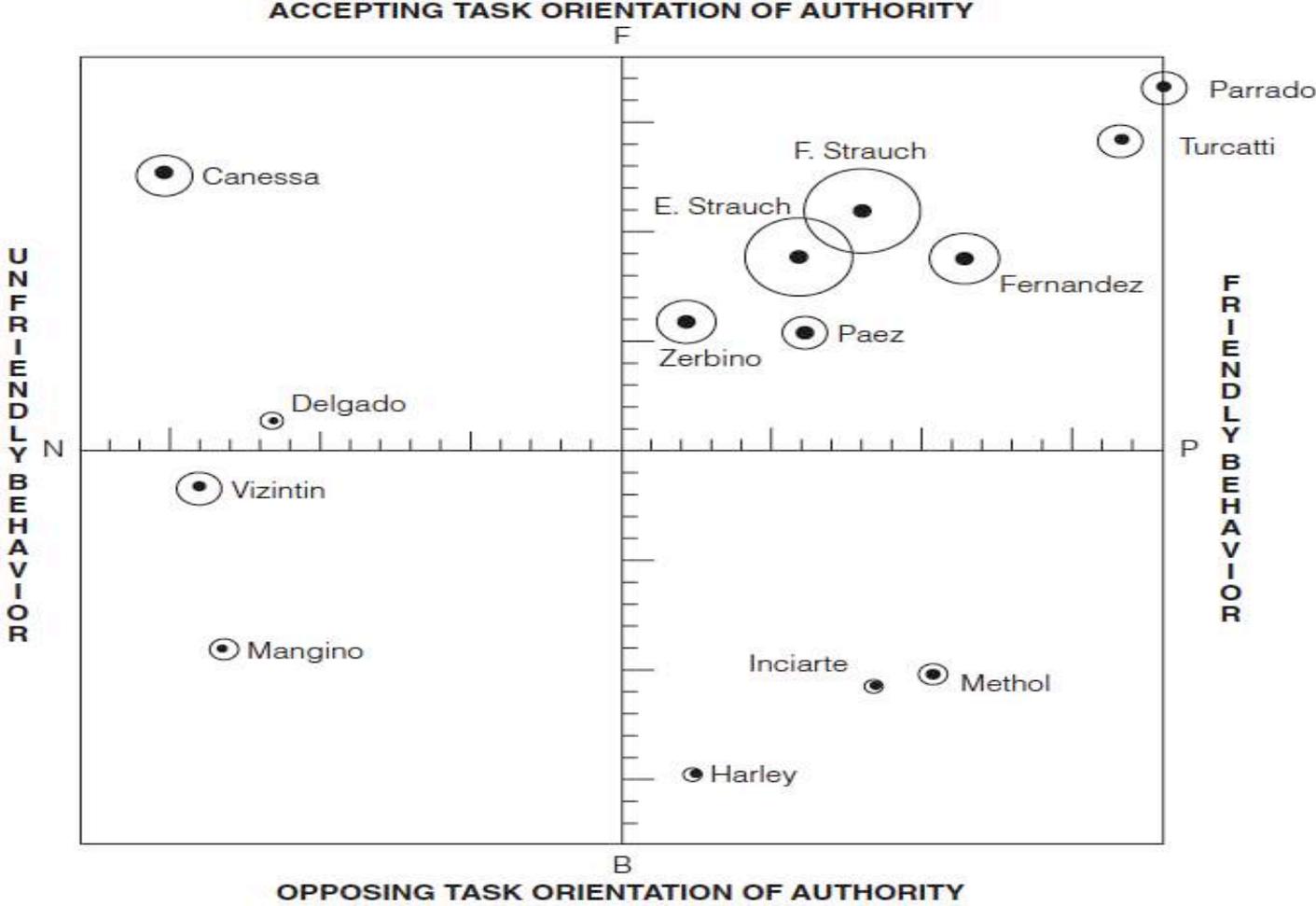


FIGURE 6.6 Possible locations of a subset of the Andes group members in the three-dimensional space described by the SYMLOG rating system.