

Intro to sociology

Sociology



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11 May, Writing Assignment #5 The first scenario illustrates the concept of ingroups and outgroups. The fraternity is both an ingroup to those who ascribe to its membership, and an outgroup for those who are not included in the selection process. According to Maclonis (1997) “All ingroups and outgroups work on the principle that “we” have valued characteristics that “they” lack” (177), in this example the outgroups’ value is placed on ‘binge drinking’ and the young man rises to the challenge. The fact that he engages in a behavior he wouldn’t normally participate in, supports Tajfel’s (1982) research which finds “members of ingroups construct overly positive views of themselves” (Maclonis, 176) and illustrates why he could consume excessive amounts of alcohol despite the fact that he wasn’t a drinker. In the second example we have a sense of instability occurring within a “dyad,” or a social group limited to two members. Maclonis (1997) explains “marriage in our society is dyadic; ideally, we expect powerful emotional ties to unite husbands and wives” (176), showing how the affair, can be viewed as the instability that threatened the social bonds of the group and caused the members to seek outside help from a marriage counsellor. The marriage counsellor works for an income and so the scenario can also be read by applying the concept of “utilitarian organizations” (Maclonis, 180), showing how even though he aims to help the couple, he also aims to make a living off their problems.

By applying the concept of group leadership roles we can best read the scenario of a police officer who covers up his partner’s crime only because his superior told him to. This crisis situation is perhaps best characterized as typical of “Authoritarian leadership,” which as Maclonis (1997) explains “stresses instrumental concerns, taking personal charge of decision making

and demanding strict compliance from subordinates” (173).

The example of a criminal going to jail involuntarily is typical of “coercive organizations” (Maclonis, 181) where membership is always against the person’s choosing. Maclonis (1997) maintains “people are forced to join the organization as a form of punishment (prison) or treatment (psychiatric hospitals)” (181) and shows that in the process of the criminal becoming and ‘inmate’ he involuntarily joins the coercive organization that jail serves as.

In the final example, we have a young college graduate hoping to meet influential people at a party. The young college grad’s behavior can best be described as him using the people at the party, a group of people he does not yet belong to, as a “reference group” (Maclonis, 175) for him to study observe how they behave and dress, so that he might conform and gain acceptance.