Study Questions, Week 7

(1) What is the sociological definition of a group? Using this definition, identify a few groups you have belonged to in your life.

(2) What is a social fact? How does the concept of a social fact help us understand the nature of groups and organizations?

(3) Provide a definition for the following types of groups:

- Primary groups
- Secondary groups
- In-groups and out-groups
- Focus groups
- Reference groups
- Dyads
- Coalitions
- Formal organizations

(4) What is the purpose of a secondary group, and how does this differ from the purpose of a primary group? Provide examples of secondary groups and explain the structure of each.

(5) What is meant by a small group? Why do sociologists study small groups? What have sociologists learned about group behavior from studying dyads and triads?

(6) Provide examples of formal organizations. What characteristics distinguish formal organizations from other types of groups? What functions do formal organizations fulfill in American society?

(7) Weber described a particular type of formal organization, the bureaucracy. What, according to Weber, are the unique characteristics of bureaucratic organizations? What is positive about bureaucracies? What is negative about bureaucracies?

(8) The term organizational culture is sometimes used to describe bureaucratic workplaces. What does organizational culture refer to? Think of an organization you belong to; how would you describe its organizational culture?