Studying Groups

Chapter 2

Group Dynamics

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Studying Groups

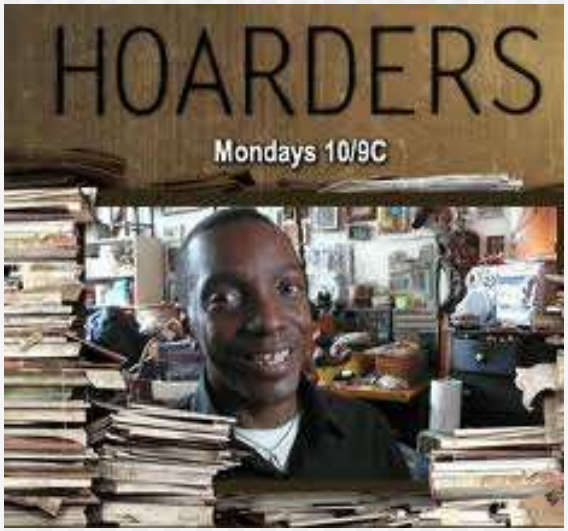
- Research Methods
- Data Collection in Group Dynamics
- Theoretical Perspective

Measurement in Group Dynamics

- Scientific assessment of group members' behaviors and psychological reactions

Testing Hypotheses

- Research Designs - explaining group behavior rather than describing
  - Case Studies –in-depth examinations of single real world groups

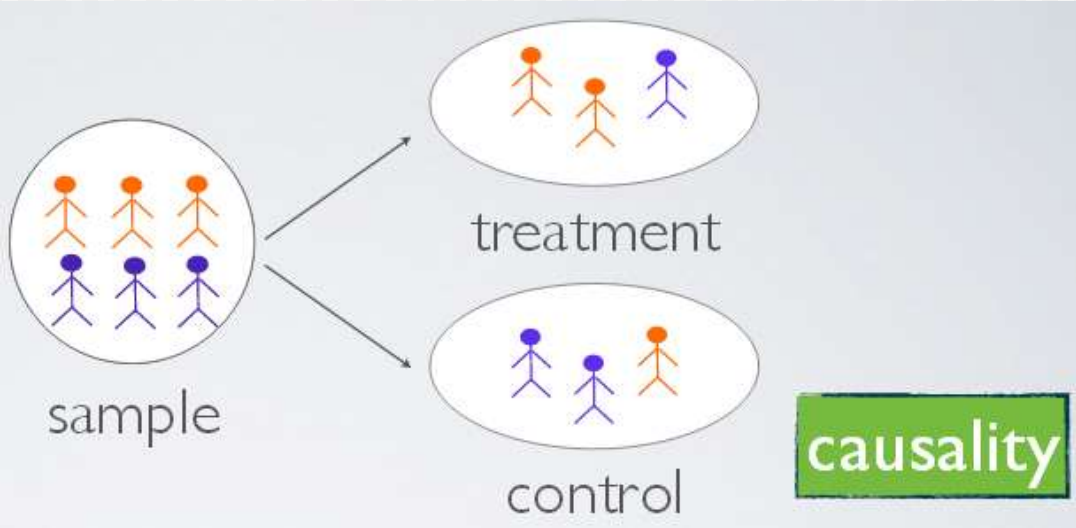


Experimental Designs

- Experimental Research – laboratory simulations that test cause and effect relationships
  - manipulating 1 or 2 variables to see their impact on another variable(s)
  - Independent variable – the factor(s) that is manipulated/altered by the researcher
  - Dependent variable – the variable(s) that is measured

Experimental Designs

- Experimental control – eliminating potential confounding variables
  - Random assignment – assigning participants at random to the conditions of the IV
    - Equalizes the groups and reduces potential bias



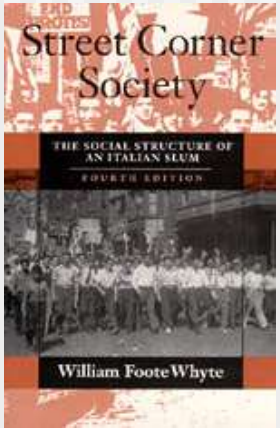
Nonexperimental Designs

Correlational Designs – examining the strength and direction of naturally occurring relationships

- Correlation coefficient ("r") shows positive, negative, or neutral relationships (– 1.0 to + 1.0)
- e.g. *golf courses and divorce*
  - Cannot infer causality from correlations

Data Collection: Observational Techniques

- Observational Measures - watching and recording the verbal and non-verbal actions of group members
- Participant Observation– observational research from within the social organization (*Qualitative*)
  - *Whyte's Street Gang Study (1943)*
  - Overt vs. Covert Observation – recording observations with or without the group's knowledge
    - Hawthorne Effect – tendency for individuals to alter their behaviors when they know they are being observed

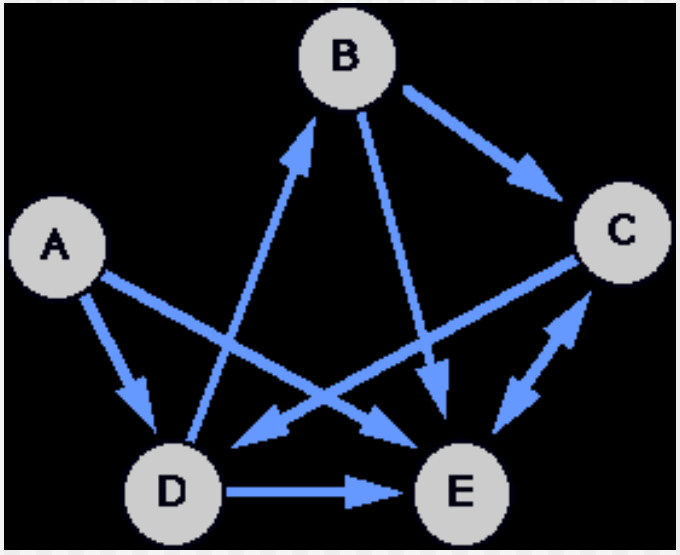


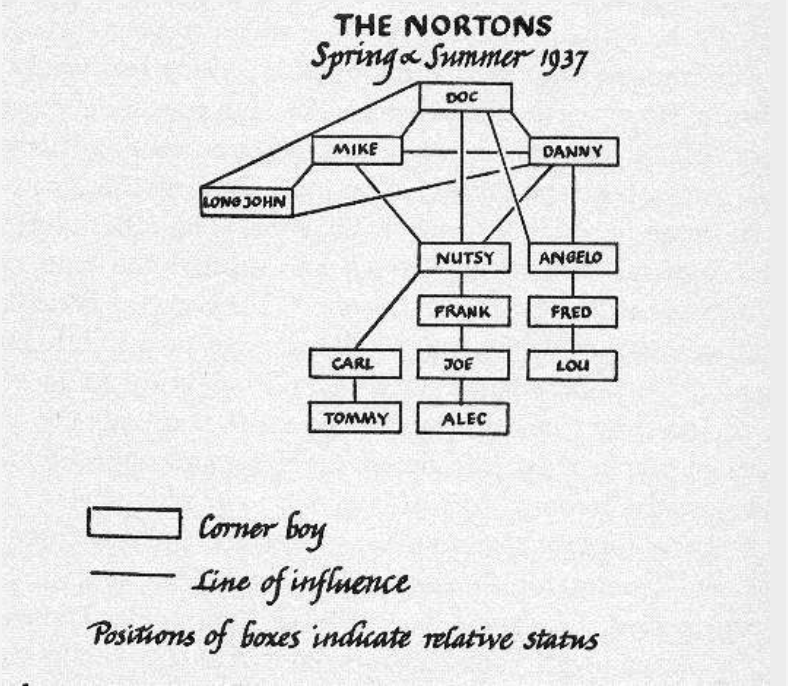
Data Collection: Observational Techniques (Non-Participant)

- Structured Observations – classify behaviors into pre-defined categories (*Quantitative*)
  - Structured Observations tend to be more valid and reliable than unstructured
  - Bales Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) – classifies behaviors into 6 task and 6 relationship categories
  - System of Multiple Level Observation of Groups (SYMLOG) – revised IPA based on 3 dimensions
    - Dominance/submission
    - Friendly/unfriendly
    - Instrumentally controlled/emotionally expressive

Data Collection: Self-Reports

- Self-Report Measures – asking respondents to expresses their feelings and attitudes via interviews, surveys, or tests
  - Sociometry –graphically depicting interpersonal relationships in groups



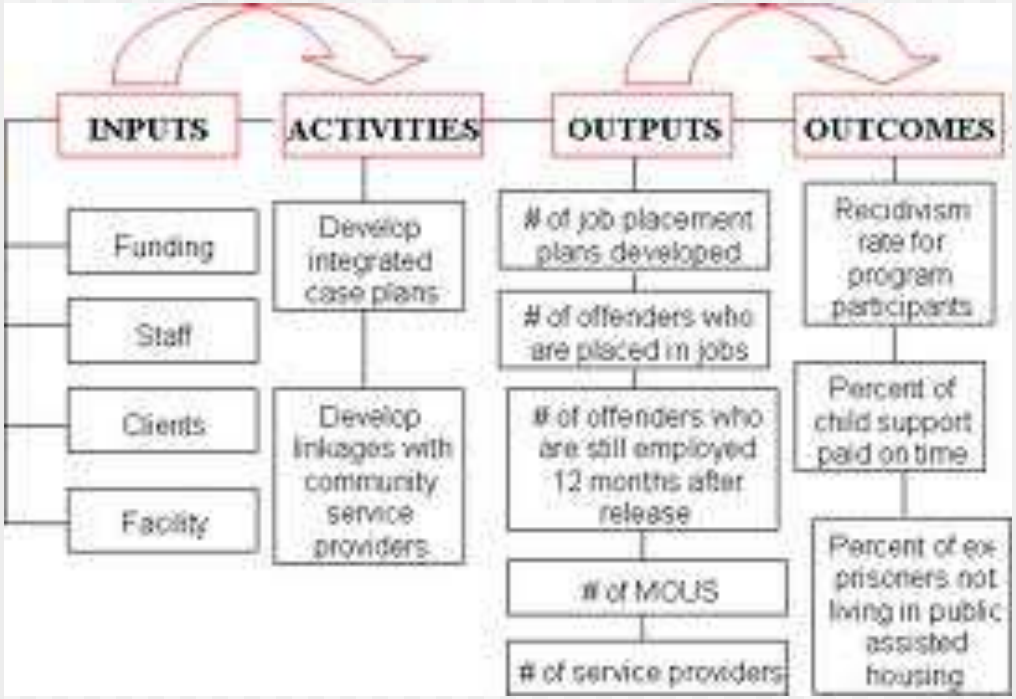


Theories in Group Dynamics

- Theories organize facts and give direction for future research
  - Motivational & Emotional Theories – how drives, habits, goals, and feelings move group members to action
    - e.g. emotional contagion or Maslow's Hierarchy
  - Behavioral Theories – behaviors are learned through conditioning and reinforcement
    - e.g. Social Exchange Theory

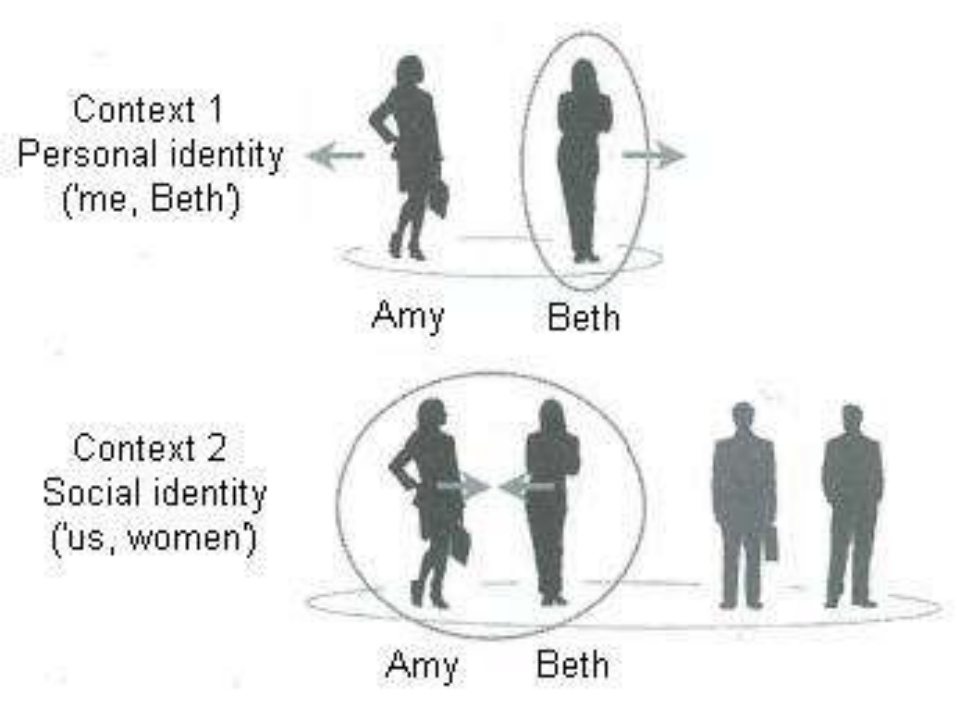
Theories in Group Dynamics

- Systems Theories – groups are complex systems of interacting individuals
  - e.g. Input-Output-Process Model (IPO)



Theories in Group Dynamics

- Cognitive Theories – examine the mental thought processes of group members
  - e.g. Self-categorization Theory



Theories in Group Dynamics

- Biological Theories – group behaviors are determined by biological or genetic factors
  - e.g. Evolutionary Theory (sociobiology)
- Theoretical Perspectives affect how one designs their plan of research