Today’s lecture: organizations

1. overview of the formal organization and its sociological study
2. Marx and alienation
3. Max Weber and bureaucracy
4. shortcomings of rationalization

big, overarching theme for today

• Recall: perhaps the most important social development of the 19th century was rise of the
• Some argue that the most important social development of the 20th century is the rise of the
• These developments have allowed an astonishing increase in the productivity of societies, but to what extent do these

the roots of the modern formal organization can be found in
What do I mean by “formal organizations”?

- Formal organizations are different from groups in that formal organizations have:
  1. A
  2. A system

- Formal organizations have an existence (meaning that the organization can be thought of as an )

- Indeed, theories of “” typically work better for formal organizations than for individuals

What kinds of questions do sociologists who study organizations study?

1. How do organizations 
2. How and why do organizations 
3. What do organizations have 

organization of work

- division of : different people do 
- specialization: each job focuses on a 
- specialization increases the 
- How to resolve tradeoff between specialization and  

de-

- de- of a job: reduction in the

Two methods of de-
1. t
2. the development of standardized

principles of scientific ( )
1. D a complex work task into its
2. Figure out
3. Get everyone doing the job to

How do organizations recruit members to do its work?
1. u organizations – members do the work because of
2. c organizations – members do the work because the organization
3. v organizations – members do the work because they
To Marx, was paying workers more the answer?

alienation: feelings of

Marx: how wage labor alienates workers
1. Workers alienated from their
2. Workers alienated from the
3. Workers alienated from
4. Workers alienated from their
Max Weber

- worked mainly during rise of (1900-1920)
- saw in the rise of the large organization a process of by which ideals of were displacing ideals of

bureaucracy: an organizational model

features of the ideal bureaucracy

1. High by organization members
2. H
3. Expert
4. Rational
5. Extensive, formal
shortcomings of bureaucracies for pursuing organizational goals

• bureaucratic : when following the rules and procedures of an organization becomes

• bureaucratic : tendency for bureaucracies to

• Conditions more likely to arise in the absence of – features of an organization’s environment that force it to be

shortcomings of bureaucracies for the larger society

Michel’s “iron law of oligarchy” proposes that the rise of organizations and true democracy are

shortcomings of rationalization for individuals’ experiences

Ritzer argues that the “McDonaldization” of society has increased the