Social dilemmas

- Social dilemma: potential for a society’s long-term ruin because of individuals’ tendency to pursue their own short-term interests (p. 288)
- Tragedy of the commons: situation in which people acting individually and in their own self-interest use up commonly available (but limited) resources, creating disaster for the entire community (p. 289)
- Free-rider problem: tendency for people to refrain from contributing to the common good when a resource is available without requiring any personal cost or contribution (p. 243)

Critique

- People do not always pursue their own short-term interests
- Instead, people connect their identities to those of their families, networks, ethnic groups, religions, nations, etc.

Bureaucracy

- Max Weber argued that bureaucracies were becoming the organizational model of the 19th Century
  - Bureaucracy: large hierarchical organization governed by formal rules and regulations and having clearly specified work tasks (p. 250)
- Weber saw bureaucracy as leading example of rationalization, the most important social development of modernity; decisions should be based on efficiency, not tradition
- Elements of bureaucracy
  - Impersonality: Decision-making criteria that ignore personal characteristics not related organizational goals
  - Division of labor: Subdivision of different people or groups in different tasks, characteristics of most bureaucracies (p. 282)
  - Hierarchy of authority: Ranking of people or tasks in a bureaucracy from those at the top, where there is a great deal of power and authority, to those at the bottom, where there is little power and authority (p. 292)

A non-bureaucratic organization

- What does a non-bureaucratic organization look like?
- Gypsum plant described by Alvin Gouldner (1950)
  - Half of workers related to other workers
  - Little paperwork; things handled on case-to-case basis
  - Workers could try different jobs until they found one they liked; rhythm determined by workers
  - Workers used plant materials and services
  - Workers were happy, but customers and company managers were not