**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Chapter 5**

* This chapter began with a look at the Penn State child sex abuse scandal through the conceptual lens of *groupthink.* an you think of a time when a group to which you belonged was making a decision you thought was wrong—ethically, legally, or otherwise—but you went along anyway? How do your experiences confirm or refute Janis’s characterization of groupthink and its effects?
* List the primary and secondary groups of which you are a member, then make another list of the primary and secondary groups to which you belonged 5 years ago. Which groups in these two periods were most important for shaping (a) your view of yourself, (b) your political beliefs, (c) your goals in life, and (d) your friendships?
* Think of a time when you chose to “go along to get along” with a group decision even when you were inclined to think or behave differently. Think of a time when you opted to dissent, choosing a path different from that pursued by your group or organization. How would you account for the different decisions? How might sociologists explain them?
* What did Stanley Milgram seek to test in his human experiments at Yale University? What did he find? Do you think that a similar study today would find the same results? Why or why not?
* Max Weber suggested that bureaucracy, while intended to maximize efficiency in tasks and organizations, could also be highly irrational. He coined the term *the iron cage* to talk about the web of rules and regulations he feared would ensnare modern societies and individuals. On one hand, societies create organizations that impose rules and regulations to maintain social order and foster the smooth working of institutions such as the state and the economy. On the other hand, members of society may often feel trapped and dehumanized by these organizations. Explain this paradox using an example of your own encounters with the “iron cage” of bureaucracy.