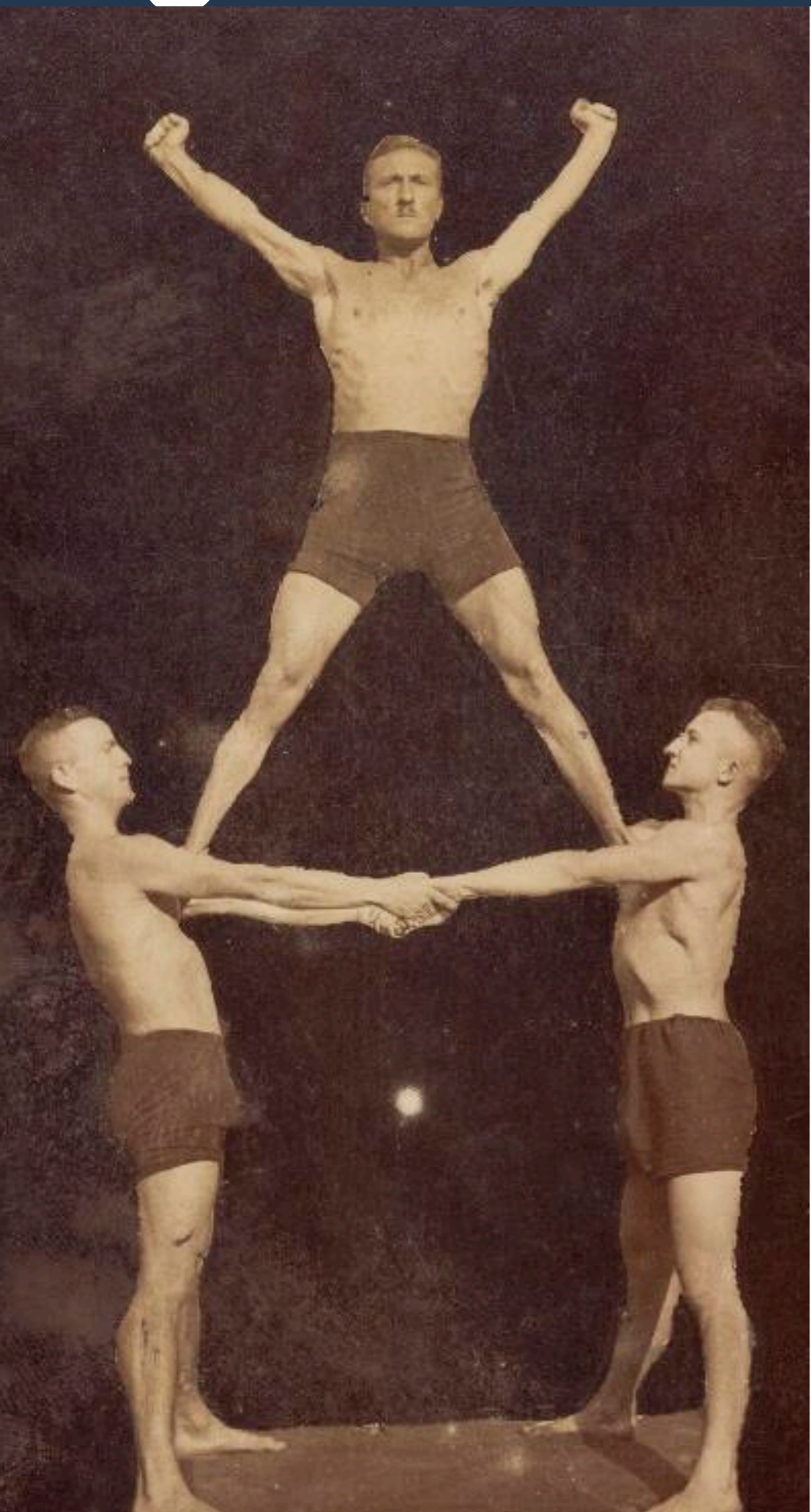


Structure of Organizations & Groups



Organizational structure



What do we mean by “structure”?

- ∴ Groups consist of a collection of individuals situated in *relation* to one another.
- ∴ Relations can be *formal* (military hierarchy, team membership) or *informal* (social ties, shared interests)
- ∴ Taken together, the set of relations can be understood to define the structure of a group

Leadership structure

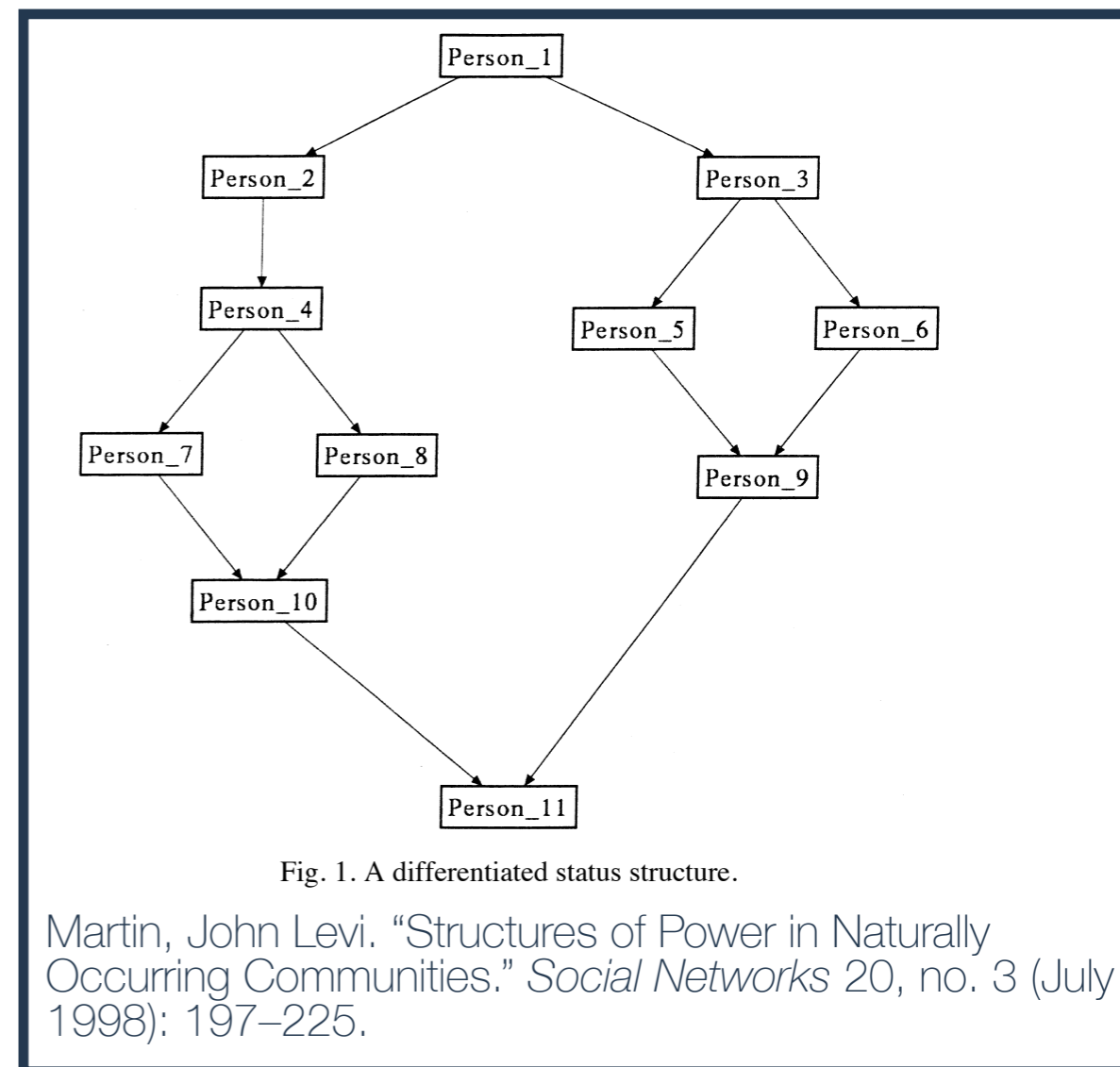
- ∴ Groups very frequently have leaders (formal or informal)
- ∴ Different modes of relation of leader to rest of the group
- ∴ Compare, e.g., the top-down leadership of Mormon church to distributed, horizontal structure of the Quakers

Organizational structure

Leadership structures in communes

(Martin, John Levi. "Power, Authority, and the Constraint of Belief Systems." *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 4 (January 1, 2002): 861–904.)

- Examined beliefs and relations of power among members of 60 different communes (naturally occurring intentional communities)
- Looking for relationship between beliefs held by members and the overall leadership structure of commune
- Found that groups with stronger and more explicitly articulated power relations were more likely to have aligned beliefs

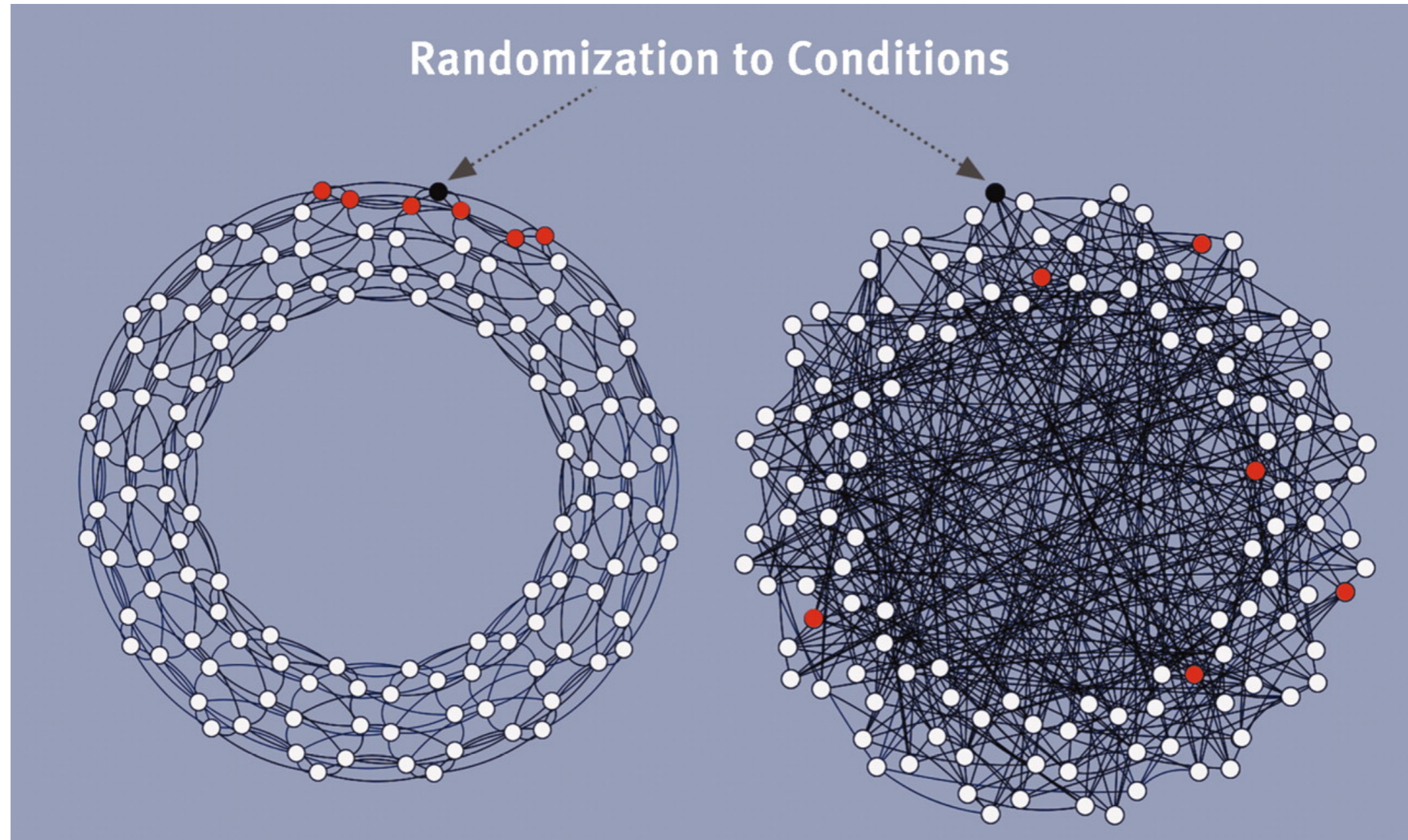


Organizational structure

Experiments in network structure

- Sociological experiments support the importance of these types of network structures
- Experiment in behavioral influence
Centola, Damon. "The Spread of Behavior in an Online Social Network Experiment." *Science* 329, no. 5996 (September 3, 2010): 1194–97.
- Online health-focussed community
- Users paired up with other users ("health buddies"), whose relevant behavior they could see
Specifically: registration on another forum website
- Experiment put each user in treatment or control group

Organizational structure



**Clustered lattice
(treatment group)**

**Random
(control group)**

Centola, Damon. "The Spread of Behavior in an Online Social Network Experiment." *Science* 329, no. 5996 (September 3, 2010): 1194–97.

Organizational structure

Reach versus reinforcement

- Participants in the control group had longer network “reach”
More likely to have a buddy who has a buddy who exhibits a particular behavior
Fewer degrees of separation
- Participants in the treatment group had greater network reinforcement
More likely to see multiple buddies exhibiting the same behavior
- Results: treatment group much more likely to see behaviors spread to the entire community

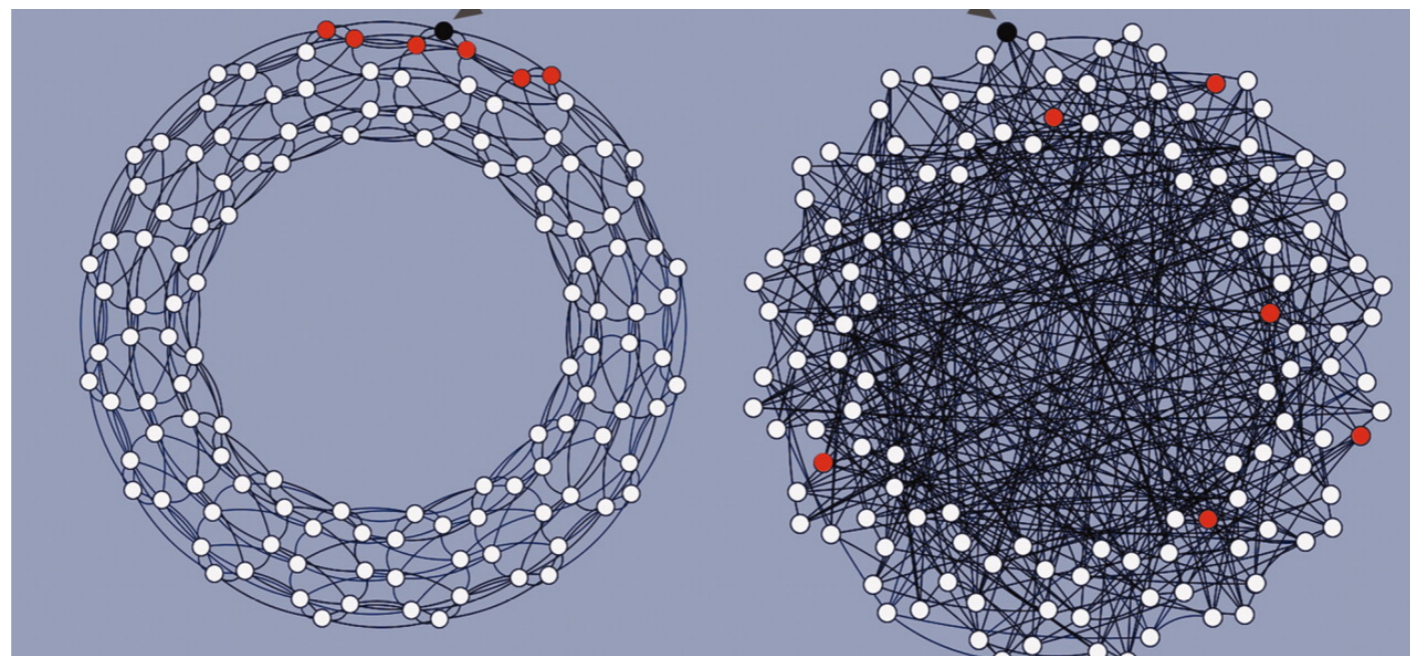


Image credit



Still from The Hollywood Squares via clickamericana.com

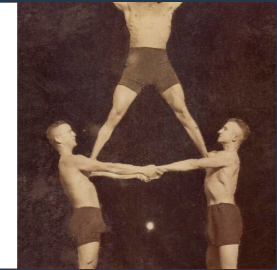


Photo: Wellcome Collection