

SOCI 360

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND COMMUNITY CHANGE

PROFESSOR
KURT REYMERS, PH.D.

SOCIOLGY.MORRISVILLE.EDU



The Network Society



1. How connected are we?

Network Theory defined the '**Six Degrees of Separation**'

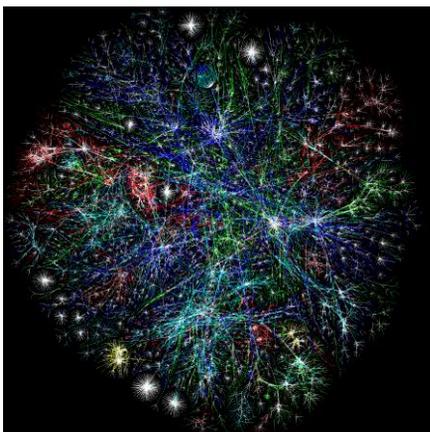
Through a chain of just five or six people, *anyone in the world* can be linked to *anyone else*.

Social Network Analysis (SNA) or "Social Network Theory" more generally, is an area of sociological study emerging in the 1970s (long before **Facebook**, **LinkedIn** and **MySpace** existed). [cf. Wellman, Castells, Haythornwaite]

What is the value of social network analysis?

- **careers** might emerge as a result of social networking;
- **neighborhood watch** groups are an example of networking;
 - **terrorist movements** can be tracked and better understood through **SNA**.
- **The Internet** is both a technical network *and* a social network.

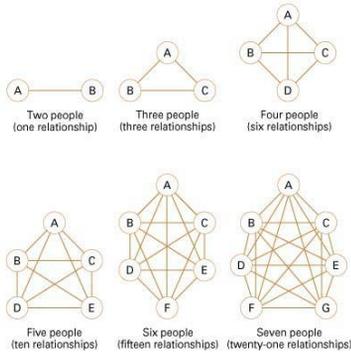




A Network Map of the Internet

(Castells 2001, *The Internet Galaxy*)

Metcalf's Law: As you add members to a network one by one, it's value to each member grows exponentially.



The Network Society

2. Social Movement Networks (Della Porta, Chp 5)

- a. Social networks are both created by and a cause of collective action. (p115)
- b. Social networks are responsible for 60–90% of recruitment for religious, political, and environmental activism. (p117)
- c. Radical activism requires more numerous and more durable personal connections. (p117)

The Network Society

2. S.M. Networks (Della Porta, Chp 5)

- d. Problems with network focus:
 - i. takes away from important cultural messaging; (p121)
 - ii. networks are not a total explanation for mobilization (p122)
 - iii. Costs/risks of deviant behavior can be a stronger predictor of participation than network ties (p125)

The Network Society

2. S.M. Networks (Della Porta, Chp 5)

e. Movement Subcultures:

i. The Political and Private Intersect

- Adherence to a movement may go beyond (and even conflict) with traditional political motivations; the movement becomes a "lifestyle choice" rather than a temporary statement.

ii. Virtual Networks

- Virtual networks have been proven to have a variable impact on movement organization and success.



The Construction of Identity

3. Castells: The Power of Identity

a. "Our lives are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity." (p1)

b. Movements are part of this trend:

i. *Proactive* movements (e.g. feminism and environmentalism)

ii. *Reactive* movements (e.g. religious and nationalist or culturalist movements) (p2)



The Construction of Identity

3. Castells: The Power of Identity

c. Social movements defined:

"purposive collective actions whose outcome, in victory as in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of society." (p3)

d. "Identity is people's source of meaning and experience." (p6) Castells's focus is on *collective identity*.

Identity ≠ *Role*

(personal meaning) vs. (social position)



The Construction of Identity

3. Castells: The Power of Identity

e. Hypothesis 1:

"Who constructs collective identity and for what [purposes] largely determines the symbolic content [i.e. meaning] for those identifying with it or placing themselves outside of it." (p7)

So, who constructs collective identity? It used to be the nation (government), but today is becoming both more individualized and more global (this is a property of the *network society*).



The Construction of Identity

3. Castells: The Power of Identity

f. Types of Identity: (p8)

i. Legitimizing Identity

Conveys the "normal"; institutionalized and rationalized by the dominant forces of society;

ii. Resistance Identity

Conveys the "deviant"; non-institutionalized forms of identity that seek to expose and open cracks in the façade of normal society;

iii. Project Identity

Conveys the "personal"; the building of a new identity that redefines their position vis-a-vis society; creates "subjects" (who we see ourselves as in the context of society).



The Construction of Identity

g. Hypothesis 2:

"Subjects [i.e. the collective social actor], if and when constructed, are not built any longer on the basis of civil societies that are in the process of disintegration, but as *prolongation of communal resistance*." (p11)

h. This mirrors what McLuhan has called the "electric retribalization" of the world, where traditional national identities are surpassed and collective identity comes more from belonging to resistance groups than regions, states, or nations, communicating through new media, e.g. the Internet.



The Construction of Identity

i. Definitions of Identity: (Della Porta, Chp 4, p105)

i. Identity construction implies creating uniqueness *and* being recognized for it.

ii. Movement identity can be challenged from the outside through processes of: (p107)

1. Dismissiveness
2. Co-optation
3. Stigmatization



The Construction of Identity

j. Movement Identity is reinforced by: (p108)

i. **physical identifiers** (ex. tattoos and shaved heads of the white supremacist)

ii. **characters (icons) who play an important role** (ex. MLK or Che Guevara)

iii. **artifacts, like books or videos, that help to focus the mission** (ex. Rachel Carson's book Silent Spring for the environmental movement)

iv. **events and/or places of particular symbolic importance** (ex. May 1, Tiannenman Square, or Zucotti Park)

v. **Religion and ritual offer many opportunities for identity building** (ex. ISIS, People's Temple)



The Construction of Identity

4. Della Porta, Chp 4: Collective Action and Identity

4a. What is Identity?

i. "the process by which social actors recognize themselves – and are recognized by other actors – as part of broader groupings, and develop emotional attachments to them." (p91)

ii. "the process through which individual and /or collective actors, in interaction with other social actors, attribute a specific meaning to their traits, their life occurrences, and the systems of social relations in which they are embedded." (p92)



The Construction of Identity

iii. Two Identity Paradoxes:

1. Identity is both fixed and fluid; it can create meaningful allegiances over time, but is also constantly being redefined for the individual and reevaluated by the group.

2. Identity is both individual and social; it brings clarity to the notion of self, but also can be loosely defined and have "squishy" lines of solidarity and opposition.



The Construction of Identity

4b. How does identity work?:

i. Identity is both fixed and fluid; it can create meaningful allegiances over time, but is also constantly being redefined for the individual and reevaluated by the group.

ii. Identity is both individual and social; it brings clarity to the notion of self, but also can be loosely defined and have "squishy" lines of solidarity and opposition.



The Construction of Identity

4b. How does identity work?: (p94)

iii. Definition of boundaries: boundaries originate from the "interaction between structural tensions and the emergence of a collective actor that defines itself... based on certain values/interests."

iv. Collective identity makes it easier to face the risks of collective action.

v. Collective identity creates a space for assigning common meaning to experience (even if isolated in space and time, during a movement's "visible" and "latent" phases). (p 95)



The Construction of Identity

4c. Multiple Identities: (p98)

i. "Identifying with a movement **does not always presuppose a strong "collective we".**"

ii. "Identities have a **polycentric rather than a hierarchical structure.**"

iii. "Even the **identity** of a single group can therefore be seen as **a meeting point for histories, personal needs, and heterogenous representations.**" (p99)

