

# MAN202T: Sociology of Design

## Session 5



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,  
DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING,  
KANCHEEPURAM

- Dr. Sudhir Varadarajan

# SESSION OUTLINE

- Lessons from “Twelve Angry Men” and “New Engineer” / “Design in IIITDM”
- Practicing Interactionism: Presence, Gesture-Response, Improvisation



# Distinguishing the three sociological theories

## Key differences:

- How people react to conflict?
- What kind of solutions are proposed?

A functionalist seeks better clarity and alignment of purpose, functions and structure (institutions) ... talk is to communicate and convince the other (deviant or dissatisfied members) or keep them out... mostly focused on means

Macro order shapes individuals and micro interactions (macro is stable and important)

A conflict view sees conflict as an essential tool to expose and resolve power imbalances (talk is to bring out instances of injustice and seek reservation or better roles for the underprivileged)

An interactionist view explores the differences to see if something new can emerge ... could be a different purpose, structure or functions... both ends and means are open for debate...

Micro interactions shape the macro order (micro is unstable and open to change)

# Lessons from “12 angry men”

- Includes Functionalist, Conflict/Power and Interactionist perspectives
- Very similar to the dynamics in some teams in product design?
- More such scenarios in everyday life and in the industry

## View about interaction or group work

- It is only for formalizing a “open and shut case” (already concluded)
- It is a waste of time ... “talk and talk about nothing”
- We need to finish it fast, more important things to do
- Roles, Experience, Facts, Logic (pre-conditions are sacrosanct) are used to close dialogue... outliers/deviants are exceptions
- All attempts to close the dialogue and sustain status quo about some perceived macro order... “Yes, I am one among them”
- Most often people either talk from their past experience or think about what to say next... *we hardly listen to what is emerging at present*

# Lessons from “12 angry men”

## Elements of an Interactionist Perspective

- Focused on expanding dialogue, within a certain time limit
- Making explicit the intent (“reasonable doubt”) & building trust
- Risk taking (secret vote)
- Amplifying the subtle shifts in momentum, not everyone is aligned (there are differences)
- Bringing new information through research (knife), listening (“ran”), presence (eye glasses)
- Observation – “old man with a torn jacket, wants to feel important”, “lady had nose marks”
- Use of objects/artefacts/demonstration (door locked, knife, layout) to expand dialogue (not close)
- Involving people: senior citizen, taking cough drops, proximity (dagger)
- Confronting prejudices and past experiences

# What does the movie teach about sociology of product design?

- The power of status quo ... but the feeling of instability between “I and We”
- The willingness to explore this instability ... within a time frame
- Taking risks ... finding partners ... Researching & bringing new information that challenges status quo ... use of prototypes
- Winning over a few more partners ... and extending the conversation so that others bring in additional information
- Confronting the status quo, but also including it... keeping out personal prejudice / agenda

**Leadership & teams emerge from the quality of interaction**

**There are different types of talk beyond Q&A/louder voice:**

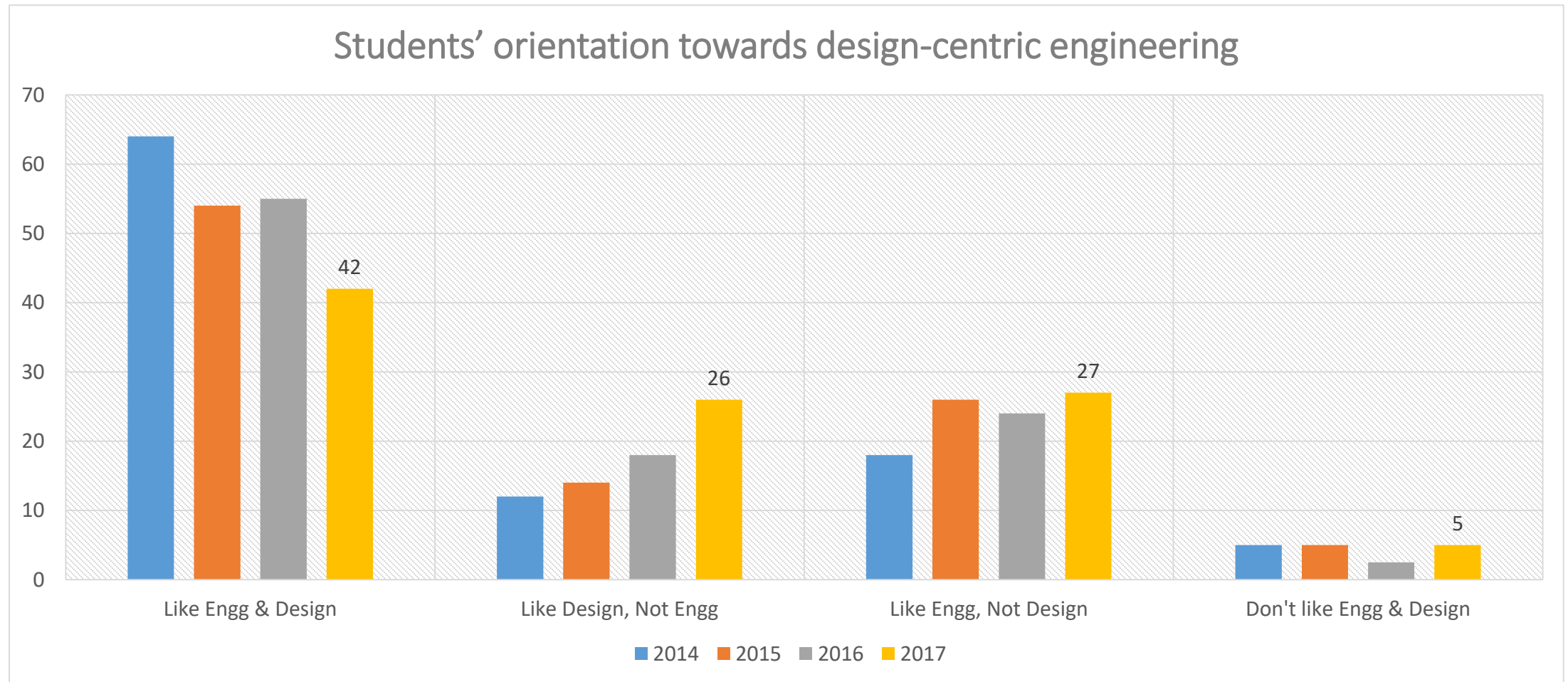
- Clarifying, Rephrasing, Persuading...

**Rhetoric-Responsive ways aimed at surfacing new information / relationships**

# How should one deal with the challenge of change discussed in the “new engineer”?

- Are the new trends unquestionable?
- Can such logic disrupt the dominant model?
- How do we handle the political process (beyond curriculum)?
- How do we get all the stakeholders to align?
- How can one change culture... student engagement, NLQ, language and story, theory & action?
- What is happening in practice, here and now?

# Students perceptions about design-centric engineering – how are they being shaped?





# Can students be active participants in change?

## Some inspiration for taking the road less travelled



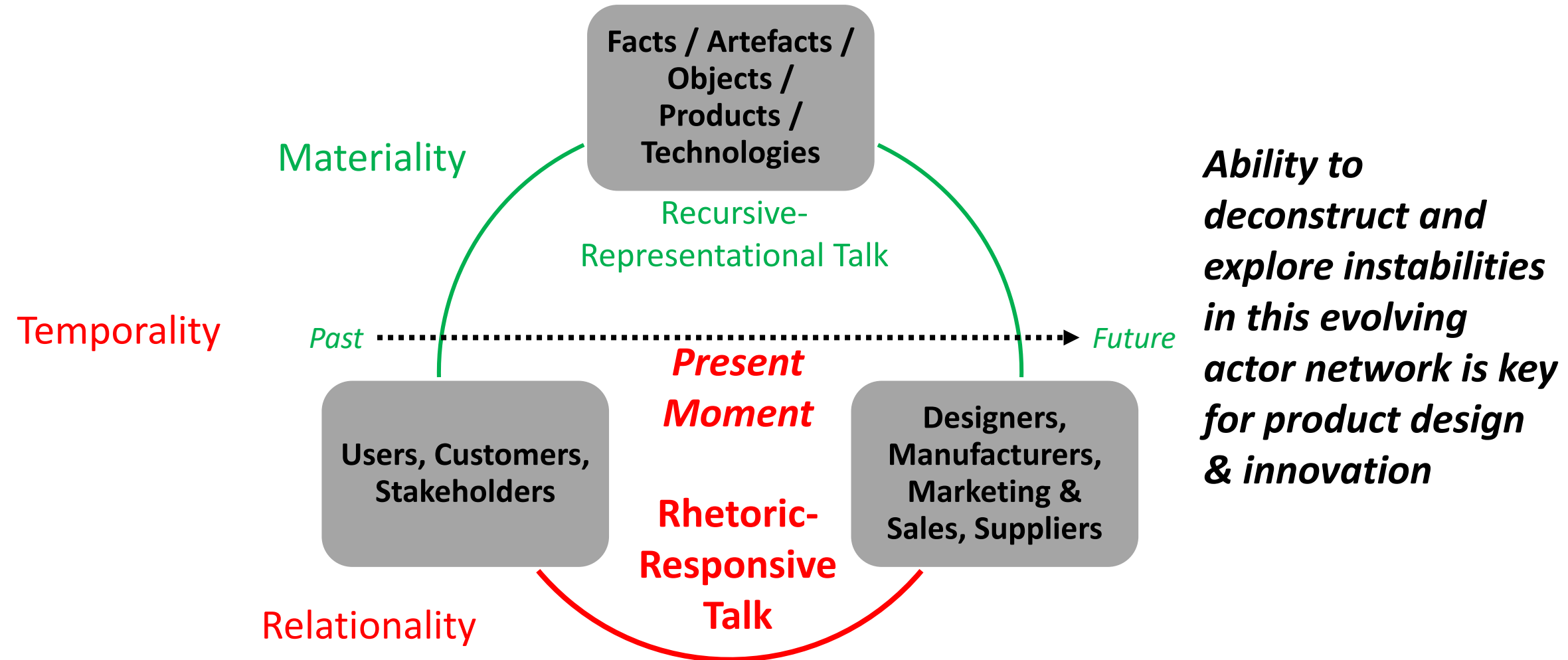
*Movie is a small fragment of reality...*

*Forces seeking status quo can be extremely powerful, **but also vulnerable at certain times***

***Focus on the present... observe and enjoy everyday activities... Watch Groundhog's Day***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YytkxlgsBNk>

# Importance of the **Present** and **Rhetoric-Responsive** Talk for Design and Innovation



# SESSION OUTLINE

- Lessons from “Twelve Angry Men” & Discussion on “New Engineer”
- Practicing Interactionism: Presence, Gesture-response, Improvisation

# How do we develop these skills?

- Rhetoric-Responsive... from within the relationship
- Games in improvisation and spontaneity can help
- Let us try some

# Game 5a: Mimed Tug O' War (2-3 min)

- Rules of the Game:
  - Form a pair
  - Imagine both of you are pulling a rope in a mimed Tug O' War
  - More people can join each side and increase the length of the chain
  - We can have multiple contests
- Debrief:
  - What happened? Which groups lasted long? What does it tell? Struggling to Fail?
- David vs the Class

# Game 5b: Giving Presents (5 min)

- Rules of the Game:
  - Organize yourselves in pairs
  - Person 1 may think of a present he/she would like to give to Person 2 and through a gesture (without saying a word) give it to Person 2
  - Person 2 may receive it and explain the present and why it is the best present for him/her
  - Now exchange roles (person 2 gives to person 1) and continue
- Debrief:
  - Was the work good – i.e., did your partner enjoy working with you?
- Defining a present you receive ... Secret of being a good listener

## Game 5c: One word sentence + “Yes And”

- Rules of the Game:
  - Form a pair
  - After greeting each other, you are say stuck - what next?
  - Mime and use one word to communicate with your partner
  - Partner responds with a mime and one word
  - Continue...
- Debrief:
  - Using non-verbal clues, helping you see emotions ... Being there (presence)

# So, what happened in the last 45 min?

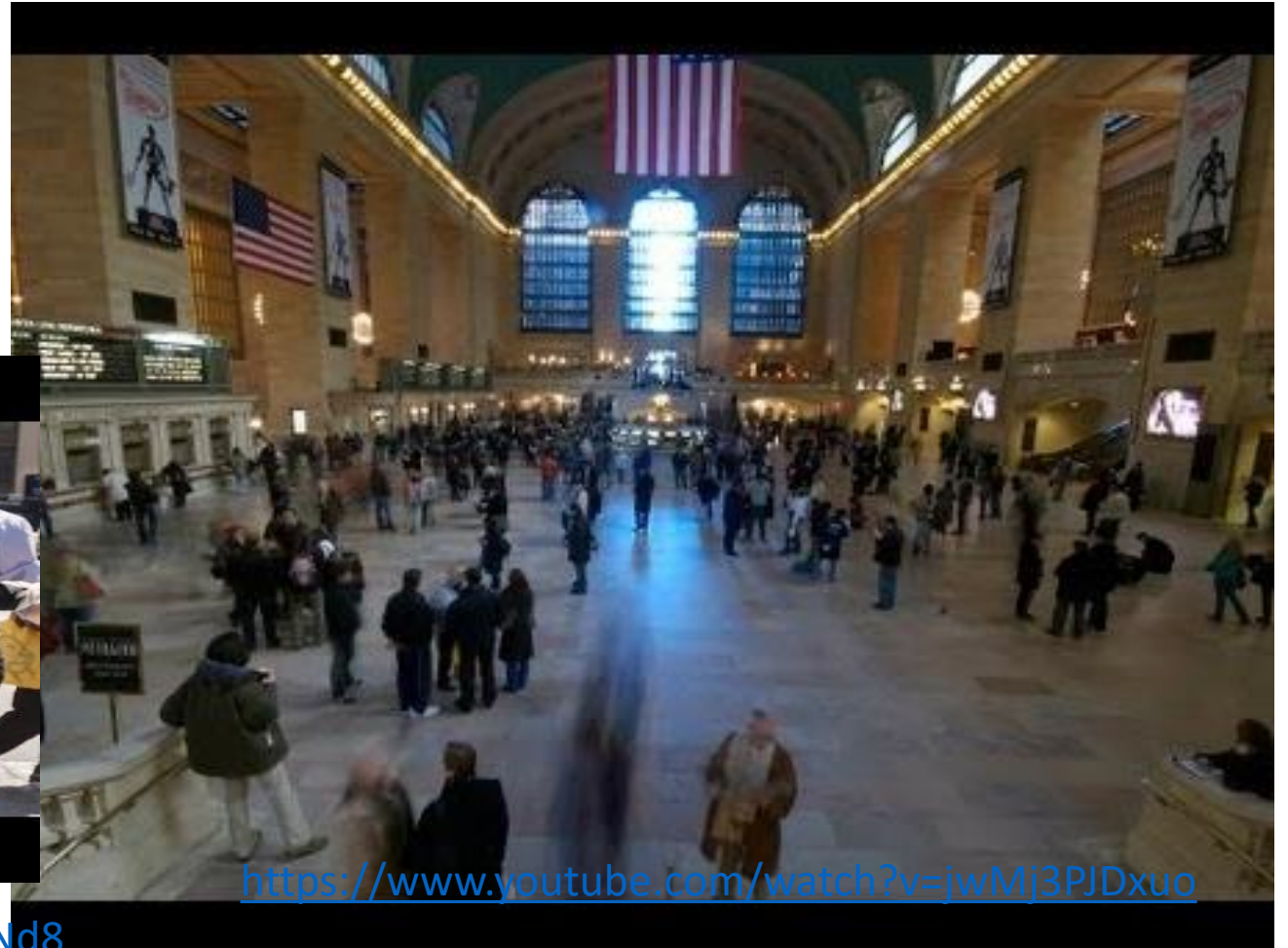
- Summarize your experience in 3-4 sentences
- How do you feel? Did you see a change in your emotional energy?
- Why?



# Practice Improv Everywhere



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7uFHzFhNd8>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwMj3PjDxuo>

