

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Soc 1101: Summer 2023

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Social Networks

Lecture 20

TODAY'S LECTURE OUTLINE

- **What is a social group?**
 - **Reference group, group conformity and size**
- **What is a social network?**
 - **Networks as pipes and pressures**
- **Next lecture: Globalization**

INDIVIDUALS



GROUPS/NETWORKS



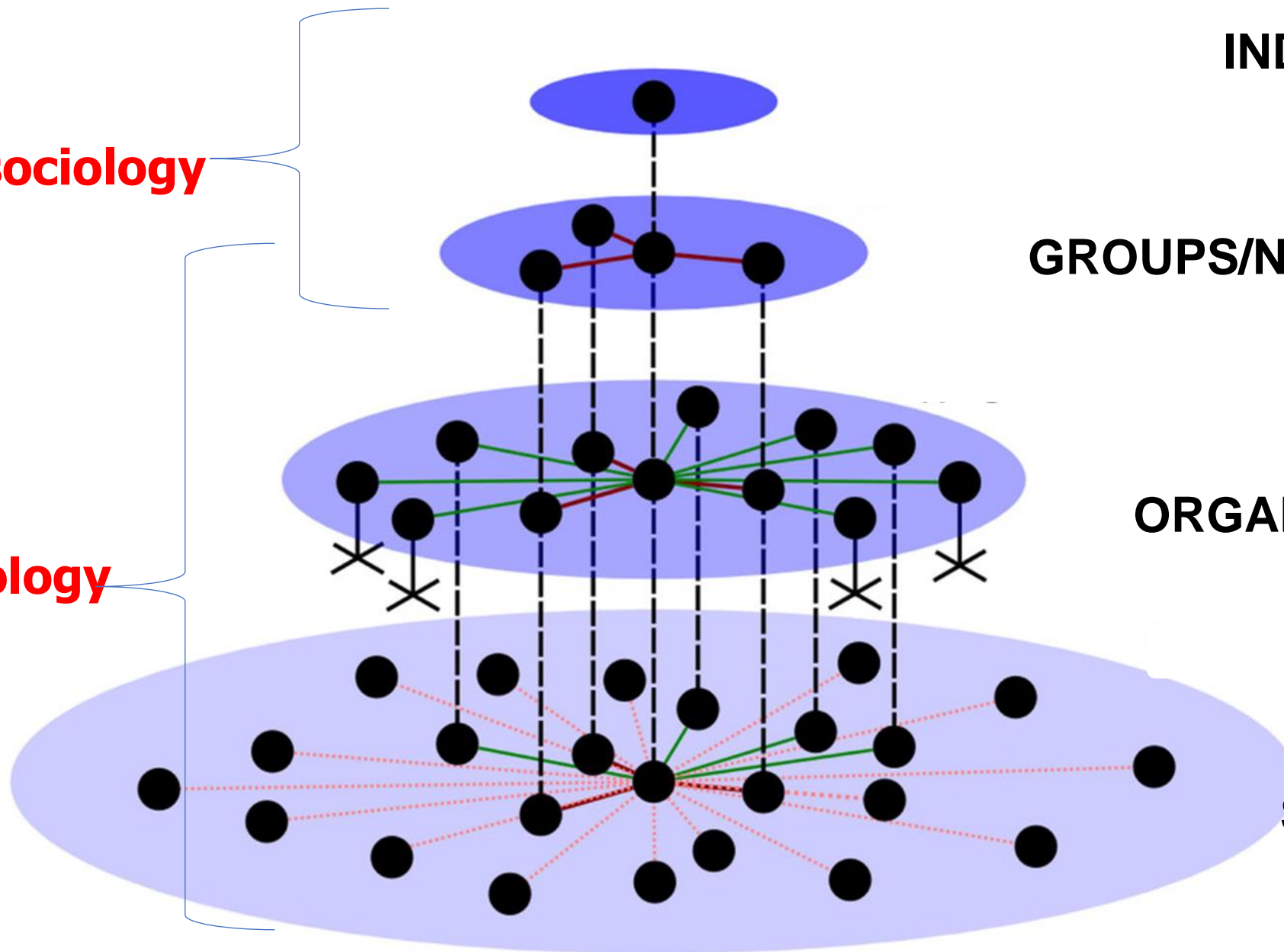
ORGANIZATIONS



SOCIETIES

Microsociology

Macrosociology



SOCIAL GROUPS

- **Building blocks of society and most social interaction**
 - **Primary groups**: Small, intimate, and with strong sense of commitment
 - **Secondary groups**: Large, impersonal, and instrumental

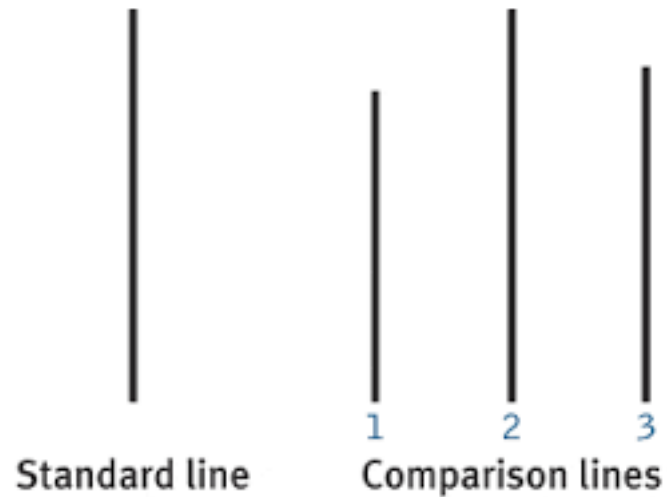


GROUP CONFORMITY

Groups have strong influence over individual behavior



Social psychologist
Solomon Asch (1907-
1996)



GROUP CONFORMITY

Asch experiments

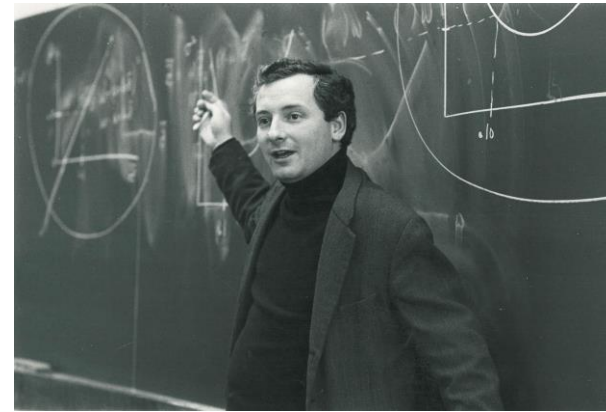
- Confederates gave the wrong answer on purpose
- Majority of subjects gave the right answer
- But....a third gave the incorrect answer at least half the time



➔ **POWER OF GROUP NORMS**

REFERENCE GROUP

A group that provides a standard for judging our attitudes and behaviors



Happiness in China:

1. Rural-to-urban migrants
2. those who stayed in the countryside
3. urban local residents

Sociologist
Robert K.
Merton
(1910-2003)

GROUP SIZE

determines behavior of individuals

DYAD

- group of two individuals
- members mutually dependent on one another
- intense and unstable



Sociologist Georg
Simmel (1858-1918)

GROUP SIZE

TRIAD

- group of three individuals
- more stable than dyads
- power politics among group members



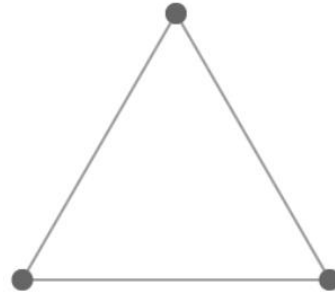
GROUP SIZE

As groups grow in size

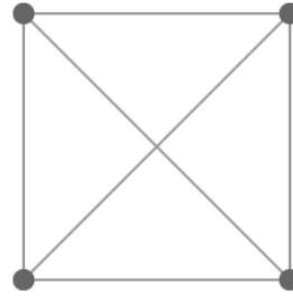
- their intensity decreases
- their stability increases



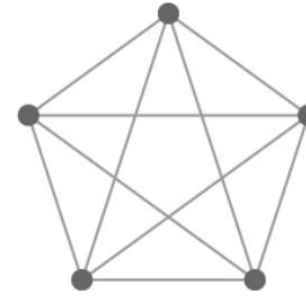
In a dyad, there is only one possible relationship



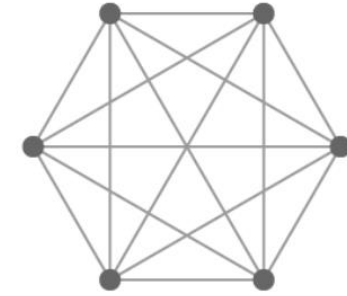
3 people, 3 lines



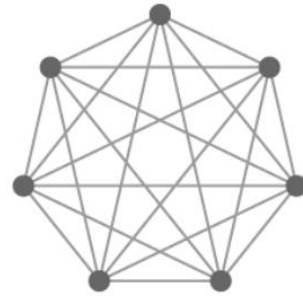
4 people, 6 lines



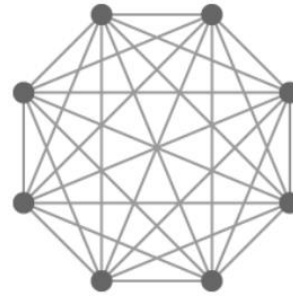
5 people, 10 lines



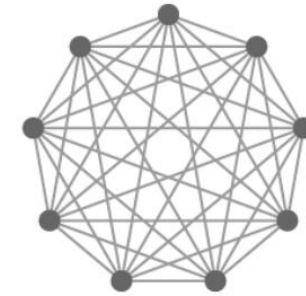
6 people, 15 lines



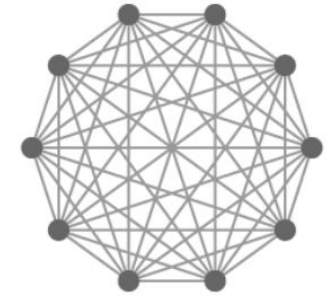
7 people, 21 lines



8 people, 28 lines



9 people, 36 lines



10 people, 45 lines

Possible relationships = $\binom{n}{2}$

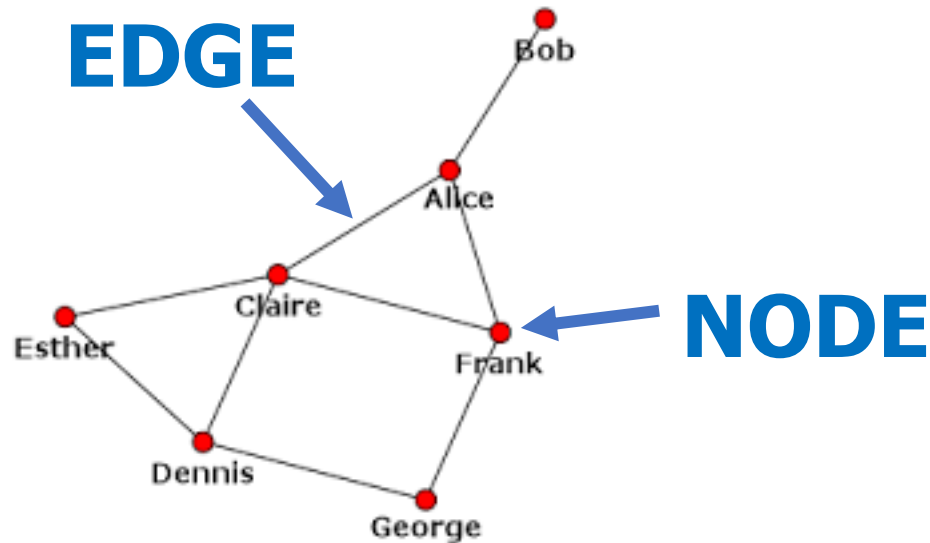
The larger the number of people, the greater the possible number of relationships

SOCIAL NETWORKS

- **A social network is a specific set of connections between people in a (social) group**
- **The ties between these people allow them to do things that a disconnected group of individuals cannot**

SOCIAL NETWORKS

A social network consists of a set of relationships, often defined as a set of **individuals** (“**nodes**”) and the **ties** (“**edges**”) between them



SOCIAL NETWORKS

Sociologists study the structure of networks and individuals' positions in networks to understand:

- **how connections are made**
- **how groups accomplish complex tasks**
- **how information flows**
- **how norms spread**
- **how networks shape life outcomes**

HOW WE SHAPE OUR NETWORKS

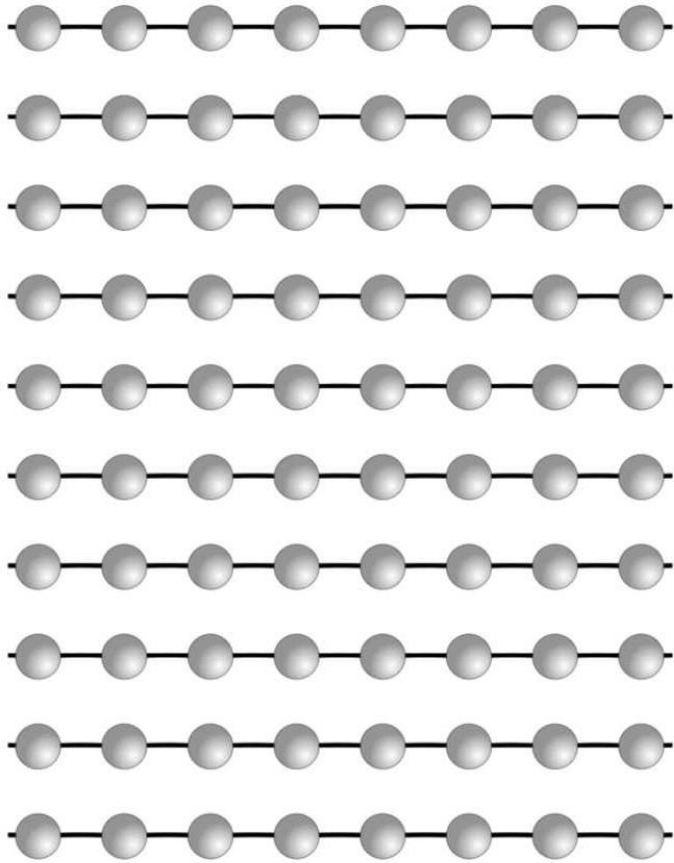
- **Homophily**: We tend to associate with those who share similar characteristics (e.g., age, gender, SES, religion, race, interests)
- **Triad closure**: The tendency for us to become friends with our friends' friends.

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BUCKET BRIGADE



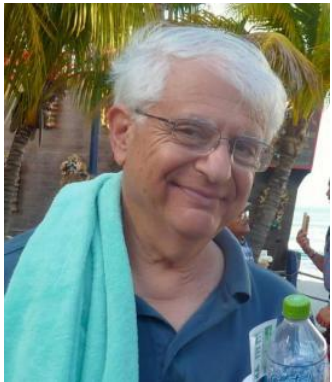
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SOCIAL NETWORKS AS PIPES

As channels for information and resources
("pipes")



Stanford
sociologist,
Mark
Granovetter

The Strength of Weak Ties

Mark S. Granovetter

American Journal of Sociology, Volume 78, Issue 6 (May, 1973),

GRANOVETTER'S FINDINGS (1973)

- Majority of people got their jobs through personal contacts
 - Of people using personal contacts,

16.7%

Close
Personal
Connection

55.6%

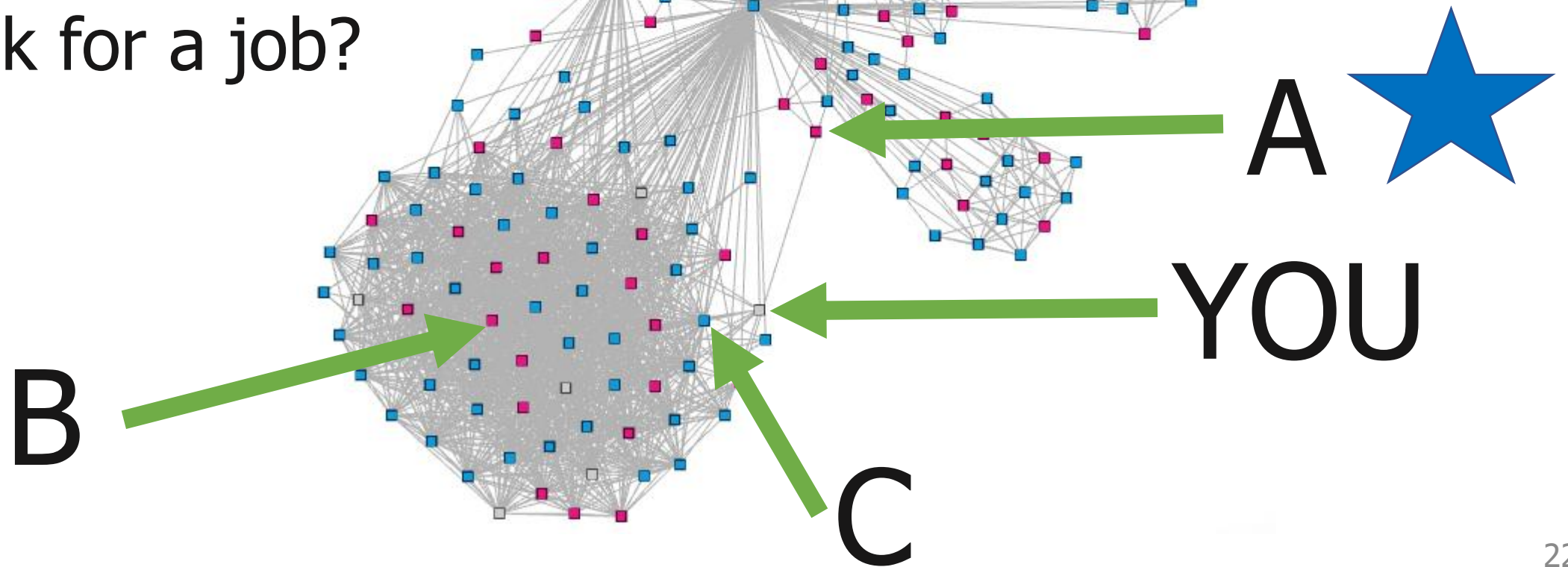
Occasional
Personal
Connection

27.8%

Rare
Personal
Connection

Networks as Pipes

Who should
you
(potentially)
ask for a job?



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SOCIAL NETWORKS AS PRESSURES

As conduits for social influence and norm enforcement (“pressures”)

E.g., the spread of STDs through networks

- Imitation
- Shared settings
- **Changing norms**



Yale sociologist,
Nicholas Christakis

Norms spreading through networks:

Examples: Obesity, smoking, exercise, drinking

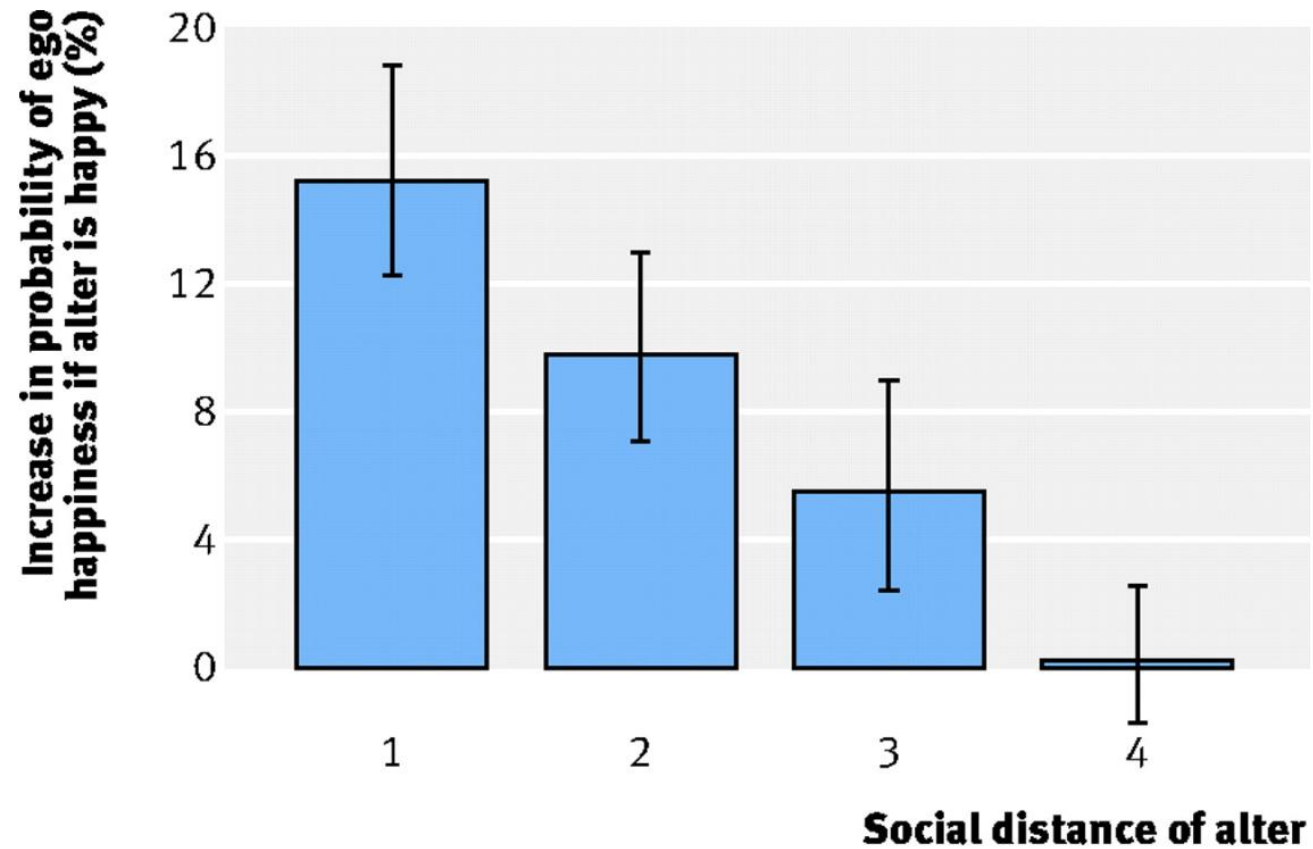
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THREE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE:

Our friend's friend's friend affects us





SMALL WORLD NETWORK



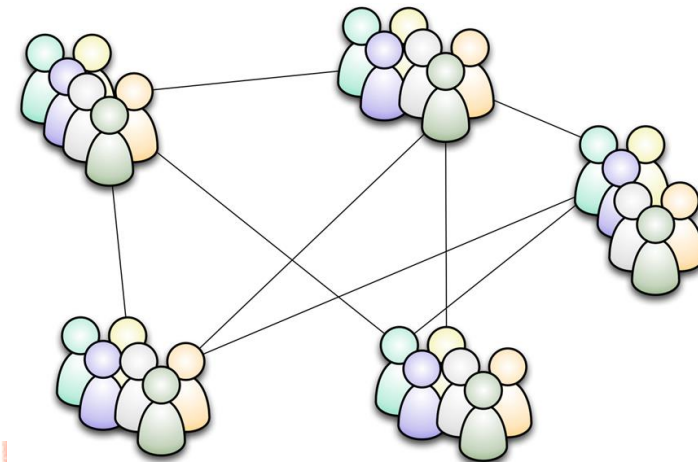
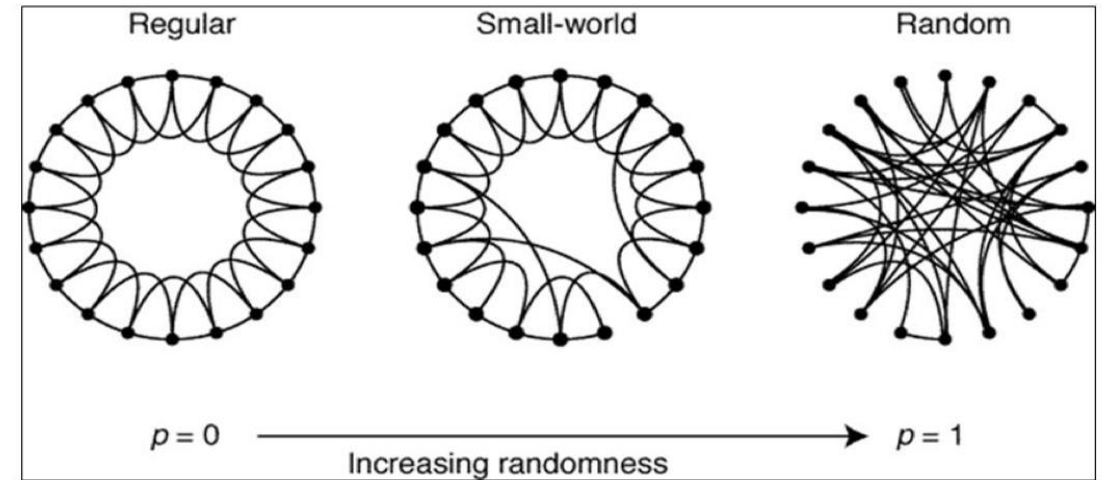
If you pick any two Facebook users, it's been calculated there's an average of 3.57 "degrees of separation" between them.

[How Facebook updated 'six degrees of separation' - BBC News](#)

WHAT MAKES THE WORLD "SMALL"?

A social network characterized by:
**high local clustering &
short global separation**
(short average path length)

Ideas can hop from cluster to cluster without traveling a long path



NEXT CLASS

- **Globalization**
- **Reading**
 - **Hochschild 2014**
 - **“Global Care Chain and Emotional Surplus Value”**
 - **An earlier (2000) version of the article online:**
[The Nanny Chain - The American Prospect](#)