

Groups, Organisations and Rise of Network Society



- Year 2000, UCLA, Robert Burgess (Hazing Incidence)
- Hazing: Rituals, Challenges and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating other people in the group
- Question that law-suit raises: Who is responsible when consequences of hazing include illegality, injury or even death? The host group or the individual who submits to hazing?
- Key takeaway: Relationship between individual and group is a complex one. We do things in groups, good or bad, that we might never do as individuals.

Groups – why to study them and what are they?

- Exploring group dynamics from a sociological perspective can help us understand, even eliminate problems like hazing and maximise benefits of group life.
- Ever thought how all of us move through life with a sense of belonging – the experience of group life.
- All of us have experienced how groups influence our values and behaviour.
- What is a group? Is every collection of people a group?
Sociologically, NO.

All social aggregates are not groups

- **Social Aggregate:** People temporarily in a same place at the same time.
 - Ex: crowds, sightseers at a tourist spot, people in a metro/bus
- **Social Group:** Collection of people who not only share some attribute but also identify with one another and have ongoing social relations
 - Ex: Family, caste, Ethnic groups, fan clubs, cricket team, transnational Corporations
- Whatever the form, groups encompass people with
 - Shared experience, some form of a common identity
 - Loyalties and interests
 - 'We' feeling

- Some aggregates over time may crystallize into a social group.
 - Ex: Some train passengers on the same daily route may become friends; very common in local trains in Mumbai
- Unlike an aggregate, a social group does not cease to exist when members are away from each other.
- In a social group – “insider” / “outsiders” are easier to identify. Boundaries of groups are protected/guarded.

Typology of Groups

- Typology given by C.H. Cooley
- A Basic Distinction – **Primary and Secondary Groups (Ideal Types)**

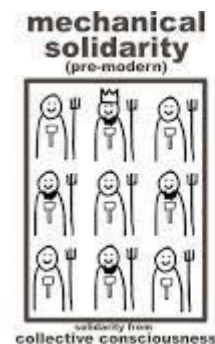
Characteristics	Primary Groups	Secondary Groups
Quality of Relationships	Personal Orientation, deep knowledge of others	Goal Orientation , limited knowledge of others
Duration of Relationships	Usually long term	Variable; often short term
Subjective Perception of Relationships	relations are ends in themselves	Relations are means to an end
Nature of Social Control	Informal	Formal Control
Typical Examples	Families, Friends Circle, Intimate relations	Classmates. Co-workers, Political Parties

- A long standing view that sociologists share is as the nature of social organization changes- from rural to urban/ industrial, the nature of relationships will change.
 - Ferdinand Tonnies - *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesselschaft*
 - Emile Durkhiem- Mechanical and Organic Solidarity
- True to a great extent but with some qualifications, as we will see.

Gemeinschaft and *Gesellschaft*

- German Sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies said change from rural society to urban society will lead to a change in the **nature of relationships** .
- He talks about a change from *Gemeinschaft* (community) to *Gesellschaft* (society) form of social organization- Changes brought about due to industrialization
- **Gemeinschaft** relationships are
 - intimate, cooperative and personal
 - Exchange of goods is based on reciprocity and barter
 - People look for well-being of the group ; less options for individuality
 - Ex: Neighbourhood relations in rural areas ; Patron-client relationships (jajmani system) in small towns.
- **Gesellschaft** relationships are
 - Impersonal and independent
 - People look for their own interest
 - Goods are bought and sold – everything is commodified
 - Formal contracts govern economic exchanges ; more options for individuals

Mechanical and Organic solidarity



Similar to Tonnie's, Durkheim believed that different forms of solidarity marks different societies

Mechanical Solidarity	Organic Solidarity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More a characteristic of pre-industrial societies , small scale societies 	More a characteristic of Modern Societies, complex and industrial societies
Mechanical Solidarity is the social integration that arises out of homogeneity	Organic Solidarity is the integration that arises due to differentiation and inter-dependence
Less Interdependence	More interdependence
Less division of Labour	More complex division of labour

- These categorizations are **largely true** but they are also ideal-typical categories - not neat transition.
- In modern societies too, we find some presence of gemeinschaft forms of social relations and also forms of mechanical solidarity



- Think of how in modern times, groups exist on the basis of sameness:
 - Neighbourhoods organised around ethnicities/ religion Ex: CR Park
 - Gay communities- strong in primary orientation , have local meeting bars/dedicated spaces to facilitate this Ex: Gay Clubs in Stockholm, Sweden
- Also think of how choice and agency may be constrained even in urban contexts- familial pressures , community pressures operate which make individuals conform
- But On the whole modern societies do reflect a growing rise of secondary groups and organizations. **Modern Societies - Marked by higher levels of RATIONALITY**

Rationality as a Principle of Organization of Modern Societies - Think of a McDonald's visit.



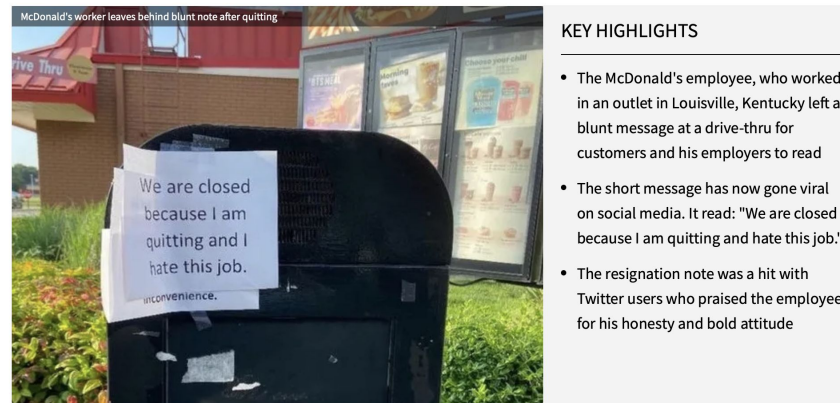
Rise of Organizations, Rationality in Modern Society

- McDonald's known for its Routine, Quantifiable, Predictable, Standardised Experience
- McDonald's is a metaphor for transformations in Industrial Societies- George Ritzer- coined the term '**McDonaldization**' of society
- Principles of fast food industry come to dominate American Society and World at large.
 - 4 principles :
 - **Efficiency** - choosing optimum means to an end
 - **Calculability** - focus on quantity rather than quality; tendency to reduce output to numbers
 - **Predictability** - preference to know beforehand- know what to expect; routinised script; everything turned into numbing routines
 - **Control** (through automation) - technology replaces human activity

- Modern Society is becoming more and more Rationalized. can be seen in all spheres: food, markets, education, health, shopping etc.
 - **so what's the problem - Isn't predictability, control, efficiency all helpful and valuable things?**
 - It turns out that Over-rationalization of a system can have unexpected and undesired consequences - can lead to Irrational outcomes
 - Ritzer called these 'Irrationality of Rationality'- damage to health , environment but more than that Mcdonaldization is 'dehumanising'. Think of outcomes from other domains- Modern education system/ Evaluation / (Virtual Labs example)
- Can you think of more examples for McDonaldization and their consequences?

- Public face of McDonalds different from what employees experience. They may be more aware of internal problems and external pressures on this Multinational Capitalist Organization.

A user quipped, "Putting this sign on the front door of my office tomorrow morning."



Kitchen staff at fast food joints and franchisees are required to work under a lot of pressure, as they not only have to handle customers but also handle the affairs of the restaurant.

Things can become even more challenging and demanding if an outlet is located in a busy marketplace or a public centre.

- Understanding Organizations demands investigating their internal arrangements and management process- their role in wider society.
- Study of Organizations- Leading work- Max Weber (Bureaucracy)

Bureaucracy – Skeletal structure of Every Formal Organisation

- Formal organizations have existed for a very long time (Think of rulers and emperors who had officials to control people and exert power).
- However, in the last few centuries this changed more formalised organisational structure – BUREAUCRACY Largely an outcome of Industrial revolution in Europe and North America.
- In today's world bureaucracies are everywhere!



- Definition: A formal, rationally organised social structure with clearly defined patterns of activity in which, ideally, every series of actions is functionally related to the purpose of the organisation.
- The key underlying principle in bureaucracy is **rationalization** in which rules and regulations are paramount and individual's unique personal qualities are unimportant.
- Modernity is associated with this excessive rationalization (Similar to Ritzer's thesis)

Weber's Key elements of an Ideal Typical Bureaucracy

1. Clear-cut **Hierarchy** of Offices and Authority; Specified Division of Labour/**Specialization**
– Defined sphere of competence
2. Written Rules and Regulations – **Predictability** is the Key; Weber Stressed that bureaucracies run on control of information and here writing becomes important!
3. Formal written communication / No scope for interpretation
4. Technical Competence – **Monitoring and Evaluation** and Matching Remuneration
5. Impersonality – Power lies in office, not person
6. Clear-cut distinction between public and private spheres



Deviations from the Ideal Type



- We know actual bureaucracies operate differently! No bureaucracy fully embodies all features of Weber's model.
- 1. Some Human beings creatively surpass/transcend rules.
- 2. Personality and Quality of Individuals affects offices – Favouritism works in all bureaucracies, They may not really be impartial.
- 3. Informal networks work strongly in all bureaucracies
- 4. Red-Tapism- Bureaucracies were designed to be most efficient yet delays are a characteristic of bureaucracies.

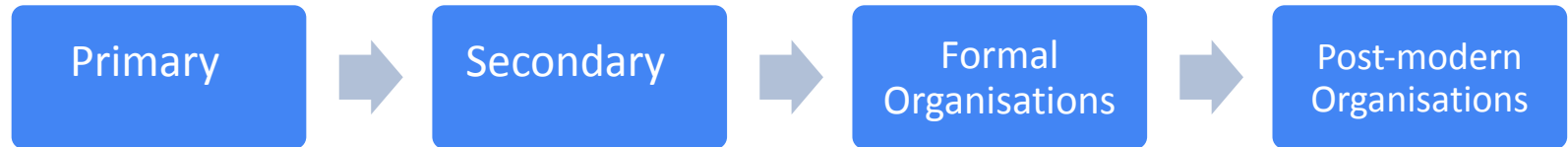
Weber Identified several Problems of Bureaucracy

- 1) Bureaucratic Alienation - Bureaucracy has the potential to dehumanise - People become 'cases' ; Formal Organization makes people cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism
- 2) Extreme preoccupation with rules and regulations to the point of thwarting organization's goal. (Robert Merton- Bureaucratic Ritualism) Stifles creativity and imagination
- 3) Bureaucratic Inertia – Bureaucratic organizations have a tendency to perpetuate themselves
- 5) Can also create tension between public and officials - Ex: We may feel officials aren't concerned about public's need



Rise of Network Society

- Groups, are an important concept but they keep changing with time.



- Sociologists too keep refining their categories- recent years focus shifted to NETWORKS and their role in Society.
- Old saying: It's not what you know but who you know' - signals value of connections/networks
- Network: A web of social ties that links people who identify with one another ; all direct and indirect connections that link people or groups to each other.
- Networks helps us in multiple ways: Making friends, getting jobs, finding information, mobilising money, finding love, mobilising support, getting power etc.
- Idea of social network goes beyond groups and organisations – presupposed some kind of boundary!
- Social network are quite 'fuzzy' – No sense of boundaries and belongings
- Can reach great distance, include a vast variety of people

- Networks envisage a **field of connections and relations**
- Composed of **nodes** (key points) and **ties** (links)

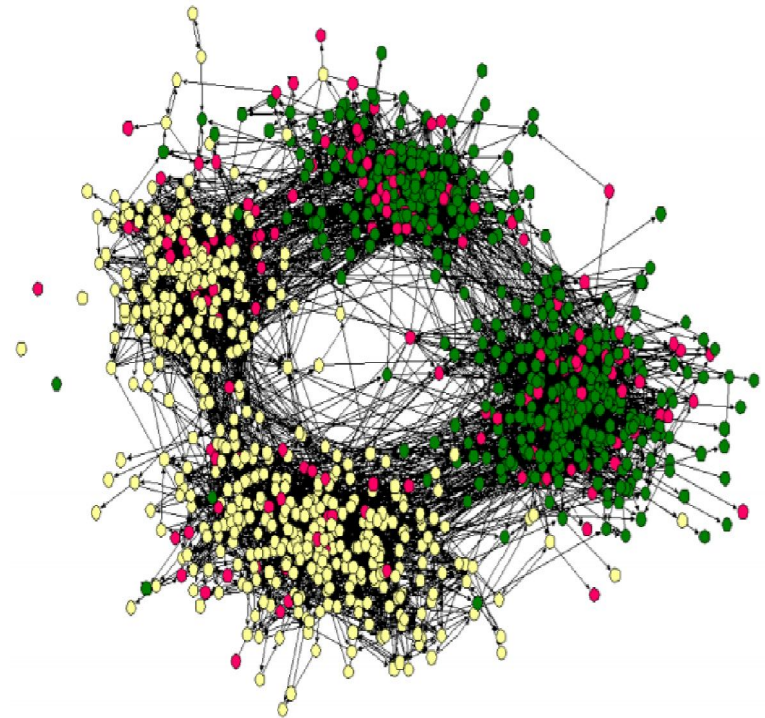
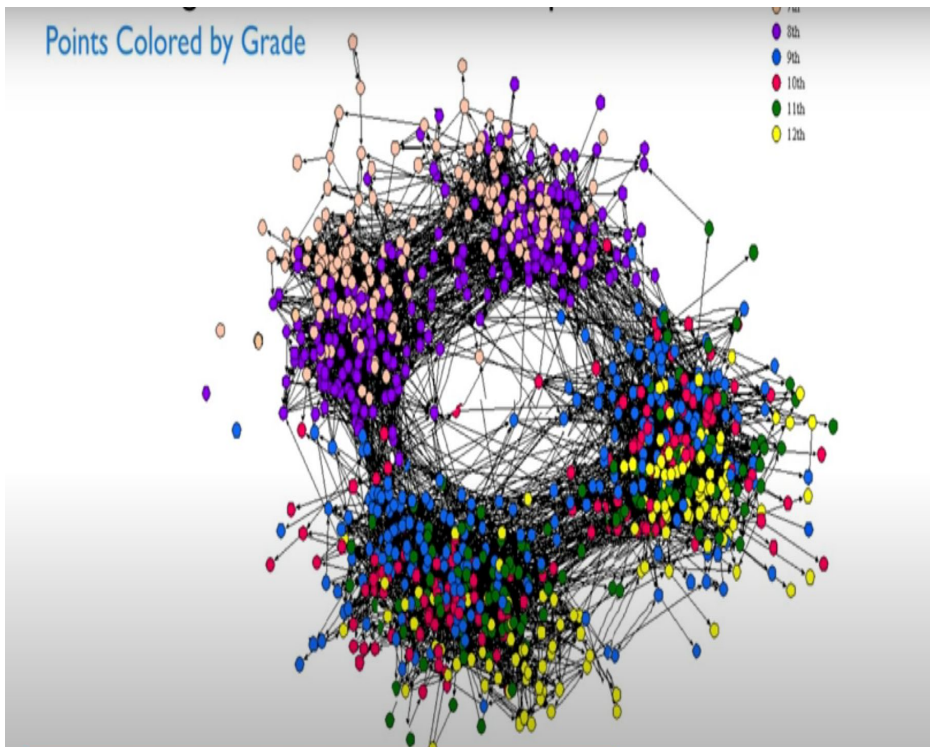


- Nodes can be anything – people, companies, groups, nations
- Way to study Networks: Social Network Analysis- helps us understand patterns and links that shape network – we can examine, number, diversity, intensity, content and quality of ties.
- SNA Can be done through statistical packages like R-Studio ; there are also simpler ways of doing SNA.

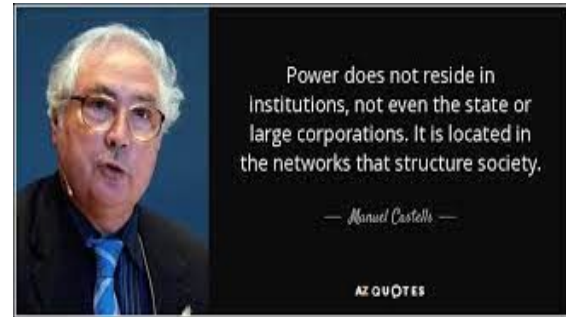
Another Example: How friendships in school are affected by Age (Grade) and Race? - Shows good intermixing of age, pretty diverse.

But in terms of race, it is kind of neatly separated - Racial homophily in a high school friendship network.

Nodes are connected if students are friends and colored by race with yellow and green nodes forming two distinguishable groups and even smaller minority students (red) in both main clusters (Moody, 2001).



From Networks to a Networked Society



- Manuel Castells - Wrote extensively about it.
- Networks is the new architecture of society and dominates mode of organising social relations.
- In transition from industrial to information age; capital not material goods, but information and knowledge.
- Central to this networked society and information age are micro-electronic based communication technologies- internet/mobile phones.
 - Entities do not have to be attached to specific geography-nation/state but into the space of ICT flows.
 - Networks decentralise communication; different from hierarchical bureaucratic structures
 - Social networks highly efficient- manage complexity; dynamic and innovative

Transformations that Network Society led to

1) Transformed Social Dynamics and Interpersonal Relationships

Ex: Think of How work/ Shopping/ Dating /Marriage/ doctor consultation / availing government services/ is organised in the networked society. The spaces/ intermediaries needed completely transform



2) How individuals relate to groups/ institution changes. Ex: More and more outsourced work mediated through technology. Technology creating a logic where workers are being called 'partners' - Gig workers / Gig partners (Question: Are they really partners? What are the T&C of this partnership?)



3) Access to networks no longer dominated by only powerful groups; less powerful may find it challenging to use new networks but they are more available than before.

Ex: LGBTQ+ platforms for intimacy and health; TikTok stars from marginal social locations against so called 'saave' content creators.

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

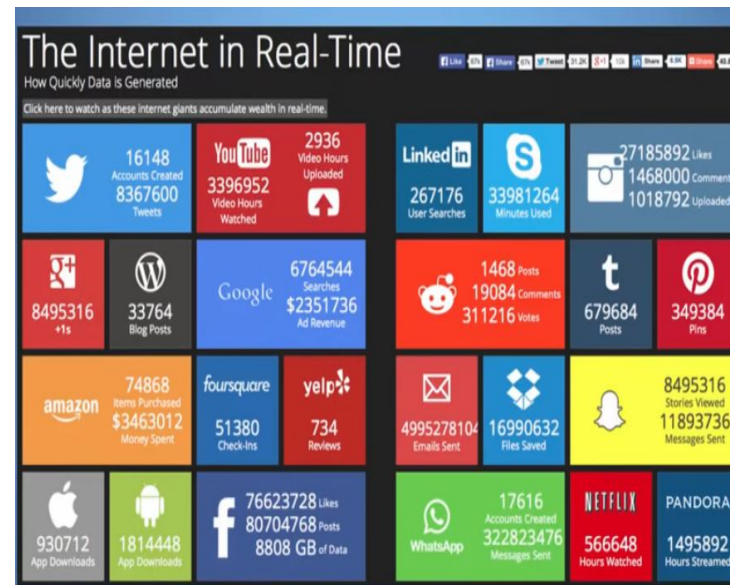


4) Marginalised groups can use network society to disrupt traditional power structures.

Ex: How social media was helped publicize police brutality and galvanizing public support for protesters' goals in George Floyd Case
#Blacklivesmatter ; Gay support communities online ; virtual protests.

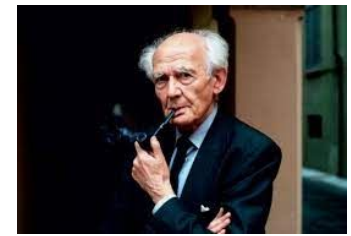
5) Networked Society changes notions of place and time. - new forms emerging of 'timeless time' and 'space of flows' - not bounded/fixed but in motion/flexible. Timeless time doesn't mean disappearance of time but declining linearity of it.

Ex: Data generated at an enormous pace; think of transnational skype calls ; listening to a podcast while browsing facebook.

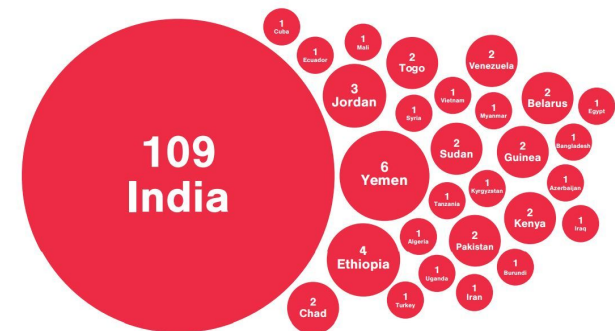
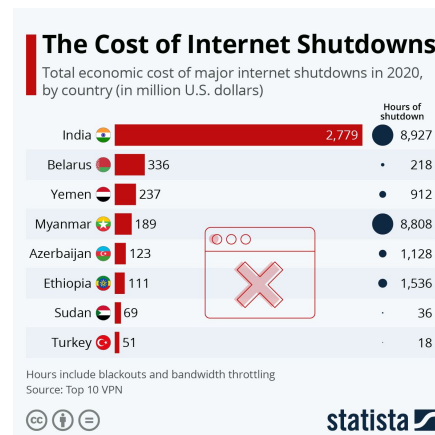


- Castell is largely positive about global network society
 - Optimistic future of a connected world
 - More productive world
 - More Accepting World

Criticisms to this Castell's Theory



- Many Criticisms to this approach:
- 1) Zygmunt Bauman - Theory is idealistic/ utopian. No consideration of social, political, economic ailments that affect societies.
 - Digital Divide/ Income Inequalities
 - Ex: Internet Shutdowns / Digital Clampdown
 - Banning Social Media Platforms - Ex: Great Firewall of China since 2009- Twitter Facebook Ban (Iran, North Korea) ; Wechat Allowed in China and Company mandated to share data with the state
 - State attempts to control Social Media Platform and suppress voices of dissent
- <https://scroll.in/article/999171/why-is-the-government-of-india-at-war-with-twitter>



2) **Frank Webster** criticises Castell's overt emphasis of technology on human relations and not on other way round.

- **Technological Determinism** (Technology determines Human Action) vs **Social Construction of Technology (SCOT)** - Technology bears an imprint of human diversity and action

3) Other Scholars refute Castell's claim of novelty in network society. **Nicholas Garnham**: Network Society just an extension of industrial capitalism. Dangerous to focus on novelty and overlooking continuities.

Shoshana Zuboff (HBS): Book: The Age of Surveillance Capitalism ; Digital Social Media gives Rise to a pattern of making profits through surveilling people.



- Information technologies have contributed to wider proliferation of networks-group relations are rapidly changing.
- Concerns of **Privacy, Safety, Security** rising in this networked society more than ever. Ex: Aadhaar, Pegasus ; Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission



The Social Dilemma (2020) - Netflix - To see how networked society influences individual behaviour.

