

Digital Media, Society, and Culture

Angus A.A. Mol

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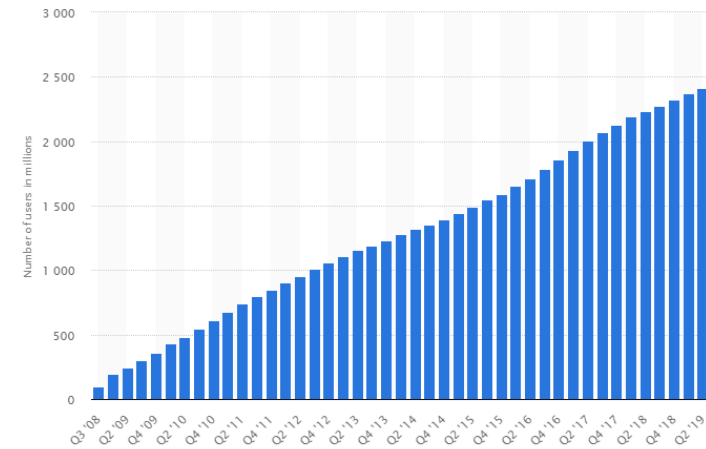
Neo-Tribes

“And within a couple weeks, a few thousand people had signed up.”

~ Mark Zuckerberg



Facebook in 2010

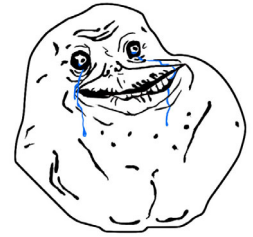


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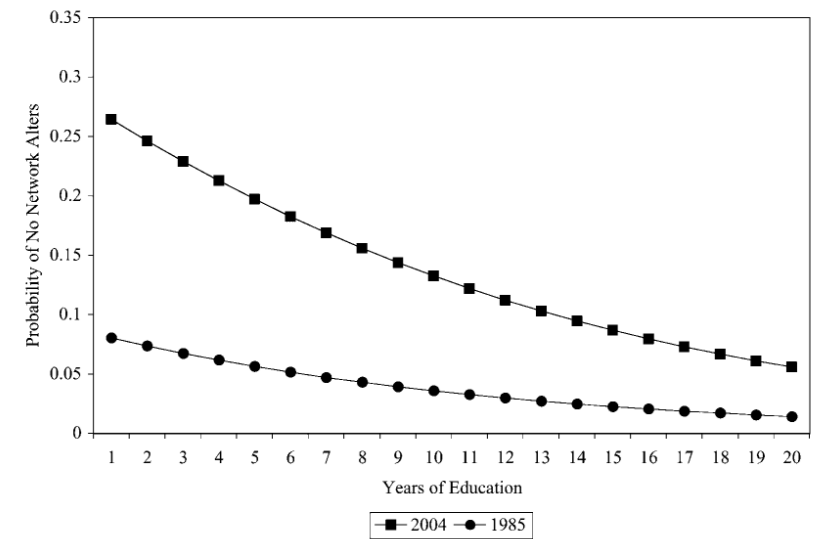
Facebook's mission:

“Founded in 2004, Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to build community and **bring the world closer together**. People use Facebook to stay **connected with friends and family**, to discover what’s going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.”

Society, Isolation and the Individual



- In our mass societies individuals are become more and more socially isolated, i.e. have few or no social contacts.



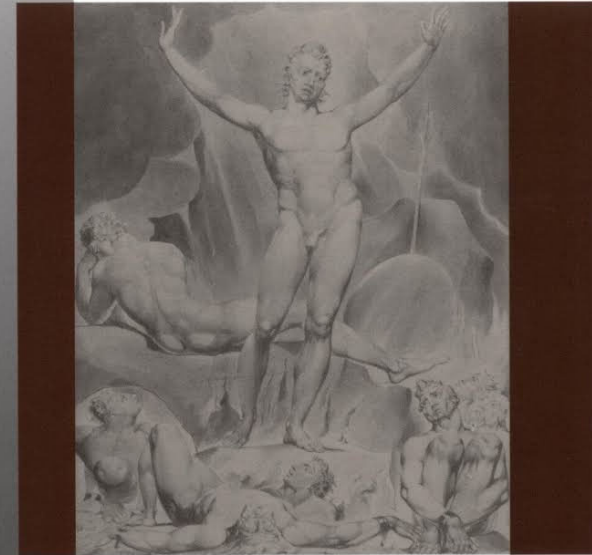
Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades
McPherson et al. 2006

Neo-tribalism

- Where modernity is failing, people retreat not into themselves, but into previous organization patterns and dynamics.
- Neo-tribes:
 - Territoriality (gangs, forums, games, etc.)
 - “Taste” (similarity as social cohesion and hierarchy)
 - “Cult of Youth” (Innovation)
 - “Ideal of Community”: “Bond of the Pact” rather than of “the Contract”

The Time of the Tribes

*The Decline of Individualism
in Mass Society*



Michel Maffesoli

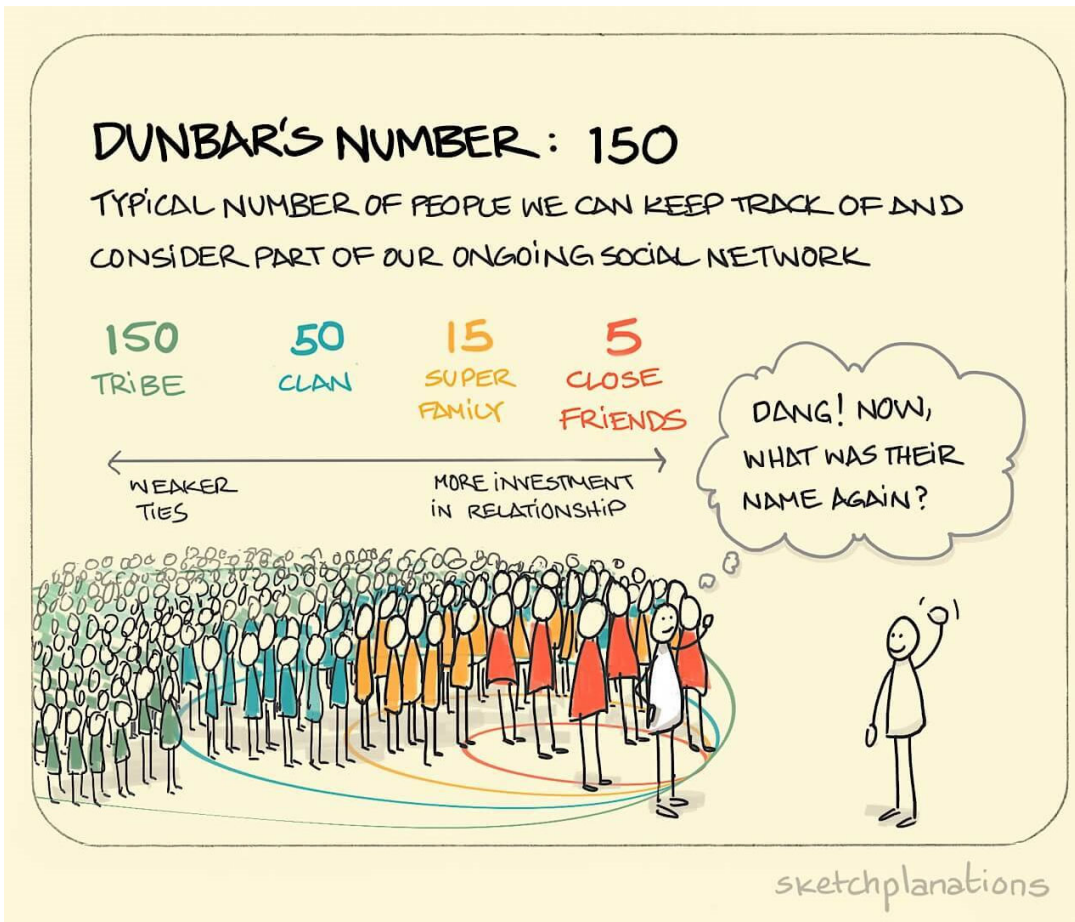
What is a tribal society even?

- An anthropological figment of the imagination or at best stereotype
- Neo-tribes is useful as a concept to understand scale and dynamics of human organization in post-modern or digital settings.

	BANDS	TRIBES	CHIEFDOMS	STATES
Population	25-50	100's to 1000's	1000's	100,000's
Settlements	mobile low population densities	semi-permanent	more than one permanent comm.	many permanent communities
Subsistence Strategy	food collecting	horticulture, pastoralism	non-mechanized agriculture	intensive agriculture, trade
Economy	generalized reciprocity	reciprocity, some redistribution	redistribution	market
Social Structure	egalitarian no institutionalized legal or political structure; situational leadership	incipient status differences, but not rigid or permanent	ranked lineages	clearly defined classes; highly stratified
Descent	cognatic	lineal	lineal	cognatic, lineal
Political System	non-centralized; decision by consensus; power by influence; informal and temporary leaders	non-centralized; some part-time officials such as big-men or age- grades; power by skills, knowledge; "achieved status"	centralized, but general authority; based on birth with divine legitimacy; "ascribed status"	centralized authority, with formal offices and multiple governing bodies; power based on law
Examples	Dobe Ju/hoansi (!Kung). Inuit (Eskimo)	Sambia; Melanesian big- man societies; Yanomamo of Venezuela and Brazil	Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea; Polynesia, including Hawaii	Most countries, including the United States ; and peasants

Service 1962: Primitive Social Organization

Dunbar number



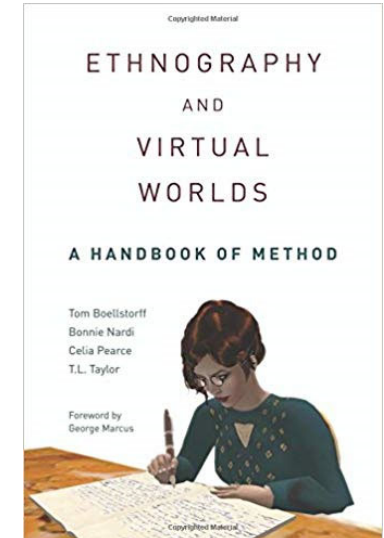
- Theory of social evolution
 - Primates are social creatures
 - Social relations are beneficial but costly
- Comparative research among hunter-gatherers suggests the 'cap' is around 150
- NB we will meet many more people during our lives
 - [One study](#) suggests we are able to recognize on average 5000 faces.

Virtual Ethnography

- Ethnography = the study of everyday life as practiced by groups of people
- Virtual ethnography = “...” connected through digital technologies
- Online Communities: Online Games, Second Life, YouTube, Twitter, et cetera.
- Human social, cultural, and biological dynamics in spaces and at scales never seen before.
 - Interaction
 - Place
 - History
 - Identity
 - Body
 - Ownership
 - Language
 - Community

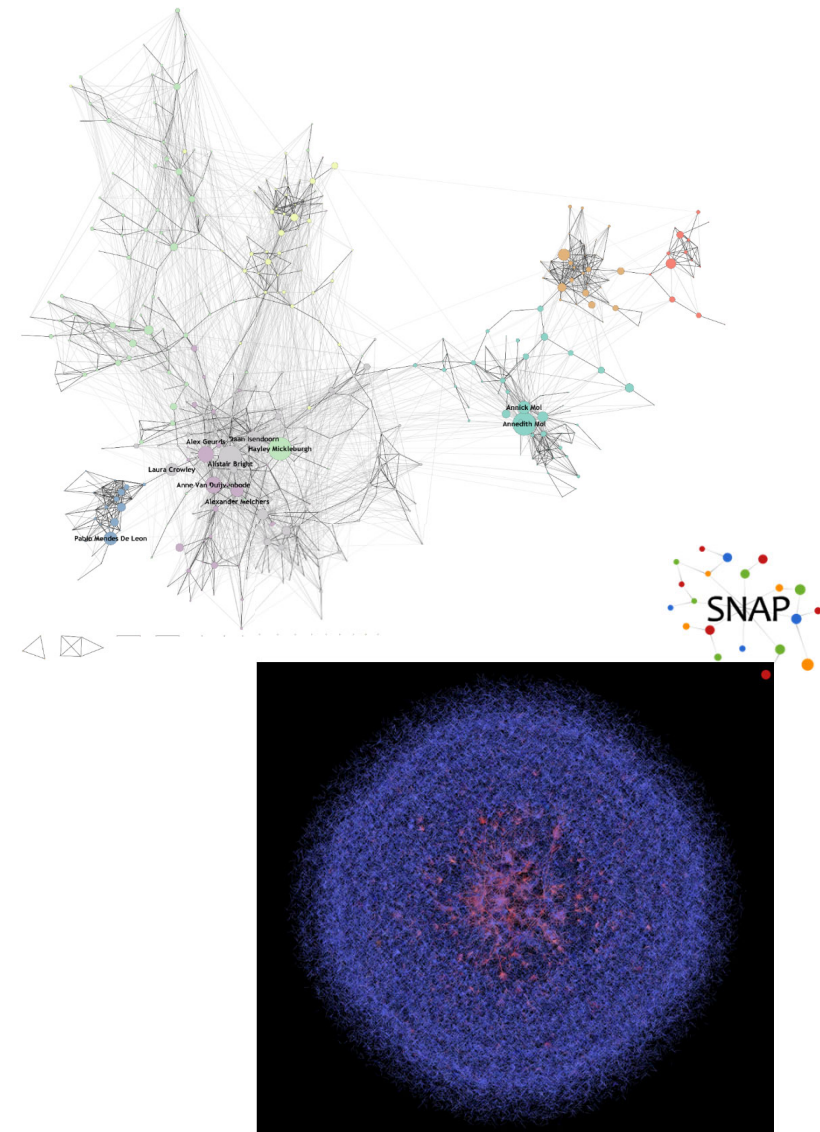


Urdu Refugees

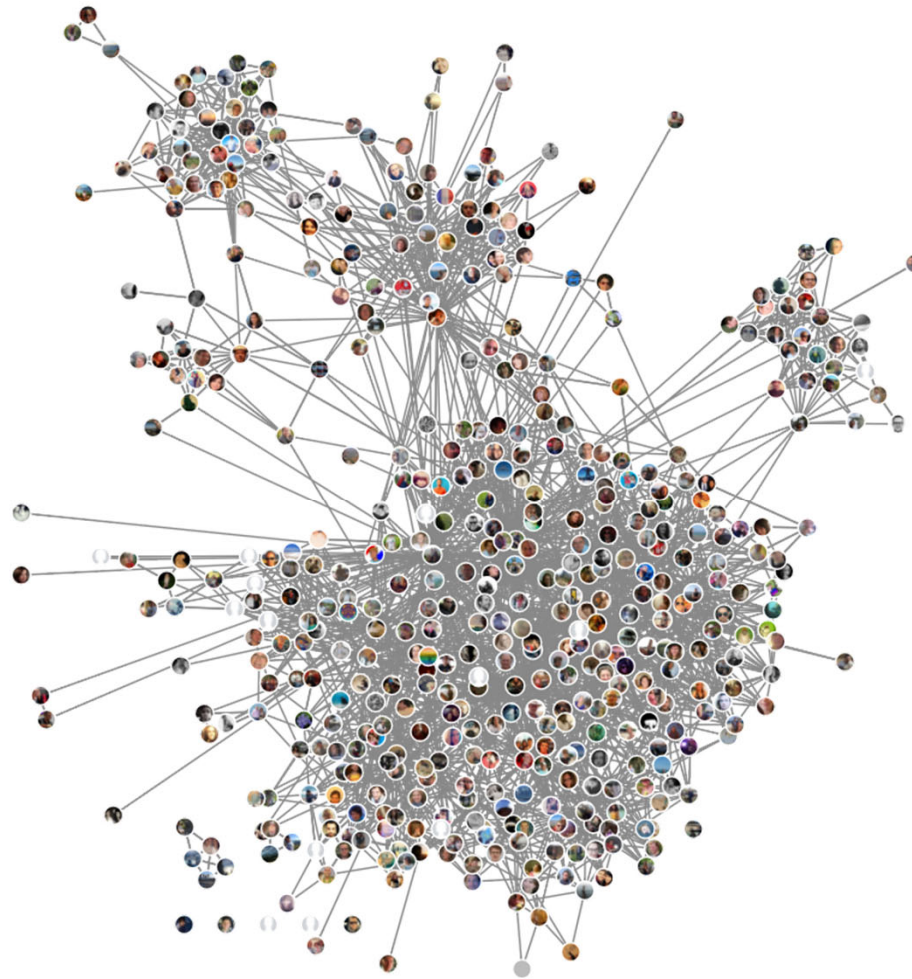


Social Network Analysis

- The analysis of relations through graphs at the level of individual nodes to give insights into structural groups and dynamics
- Roots in:
 - Network Science (Computer Science)
 - Sociology (Sociometrics)
- More on this in Information Visualization



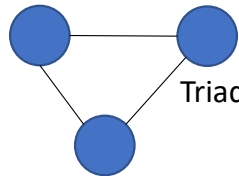
Let's talk about my Ego(-network)!



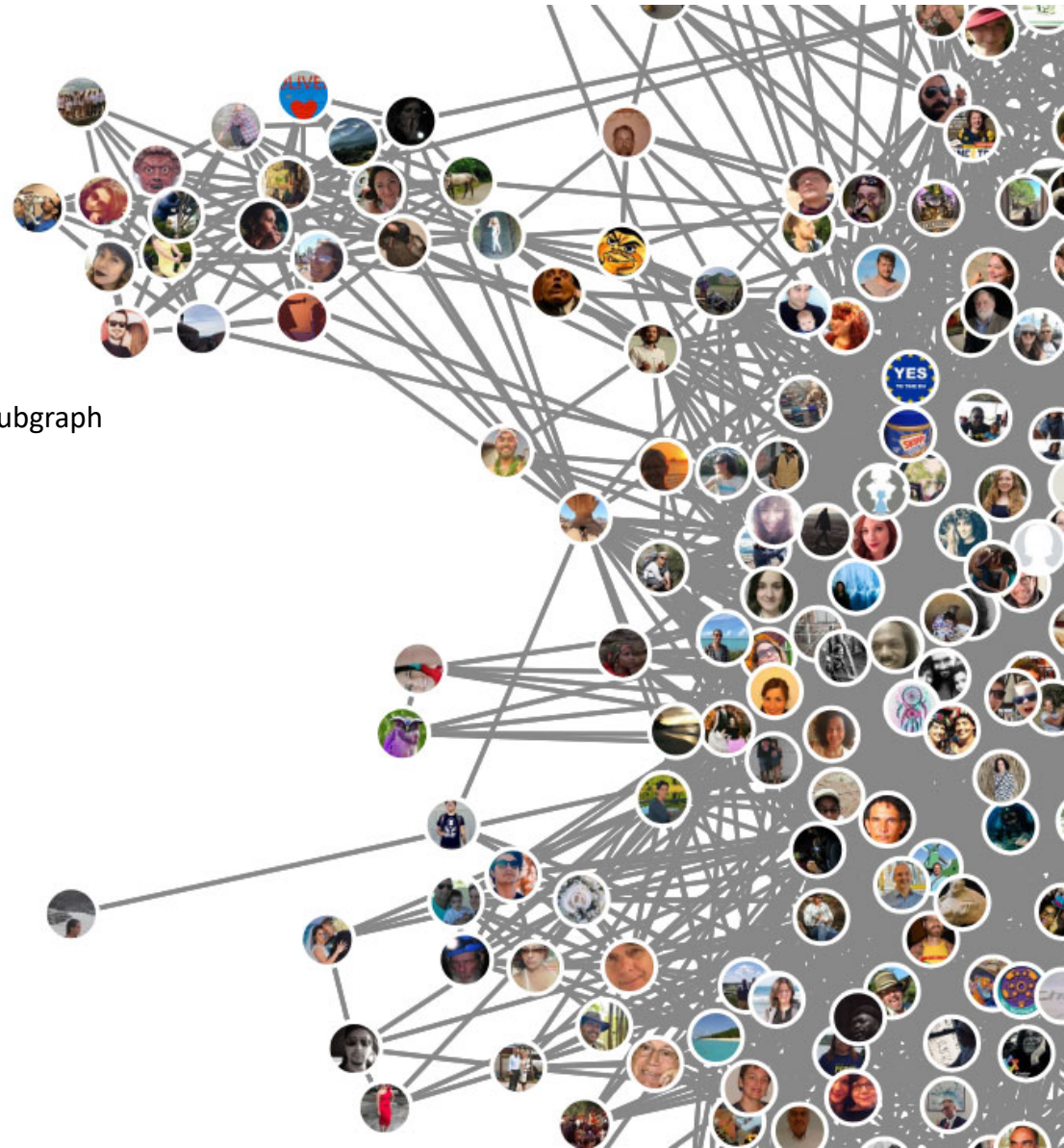
● Node (vertex, site, actor)



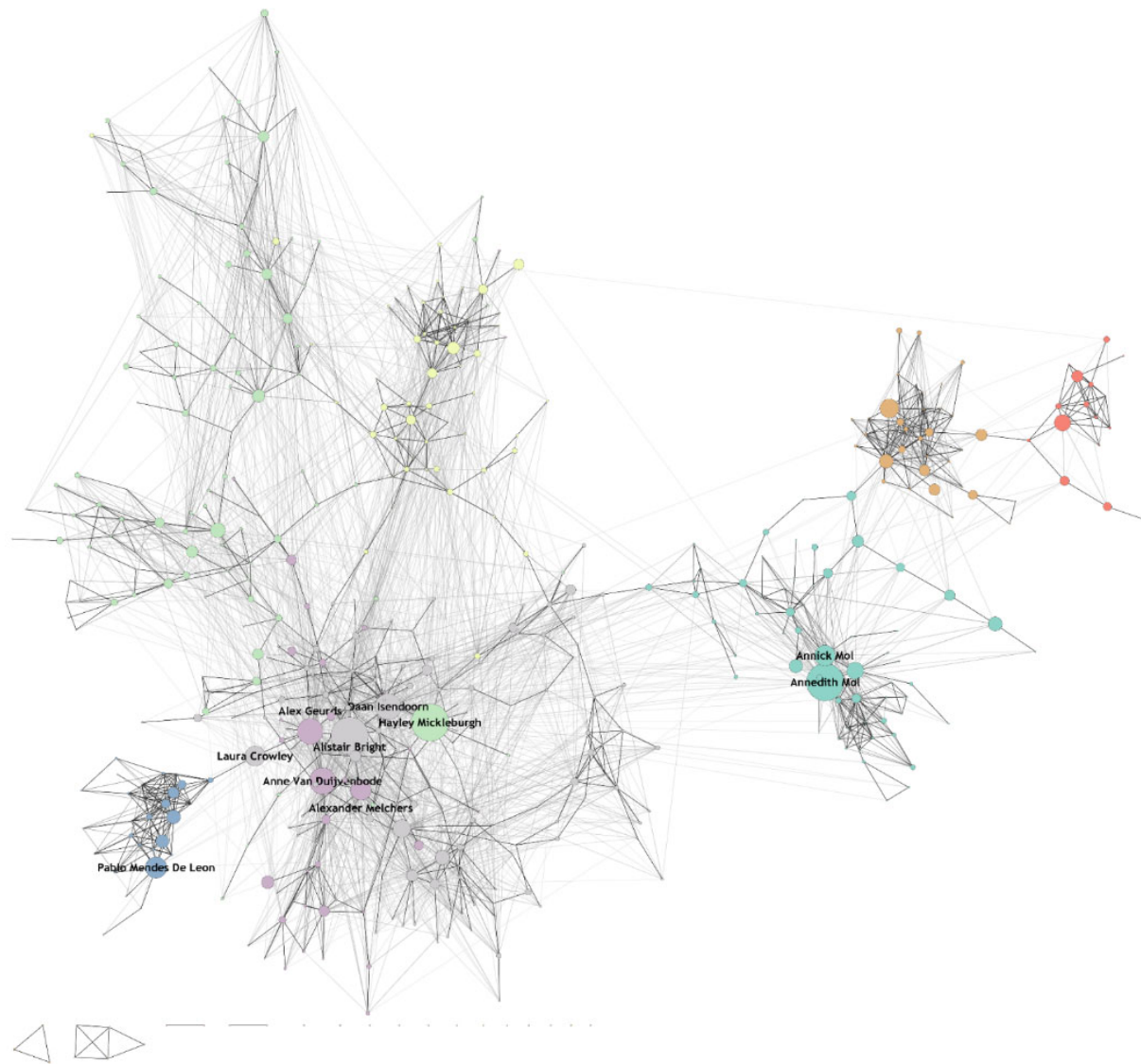
Link (tie, bond, relations), dyad



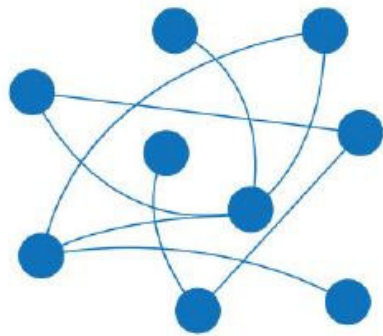
Triad, a type of clique, which is a network community or subgraph



<https://lostcircles.com/>

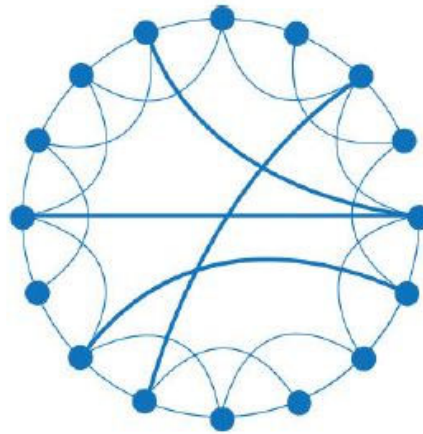






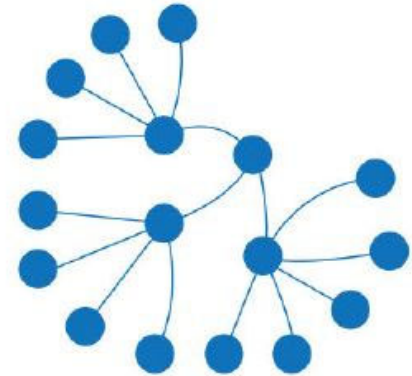
Random

Average distributions.
No structure or hierarchal patterns.



Small-World

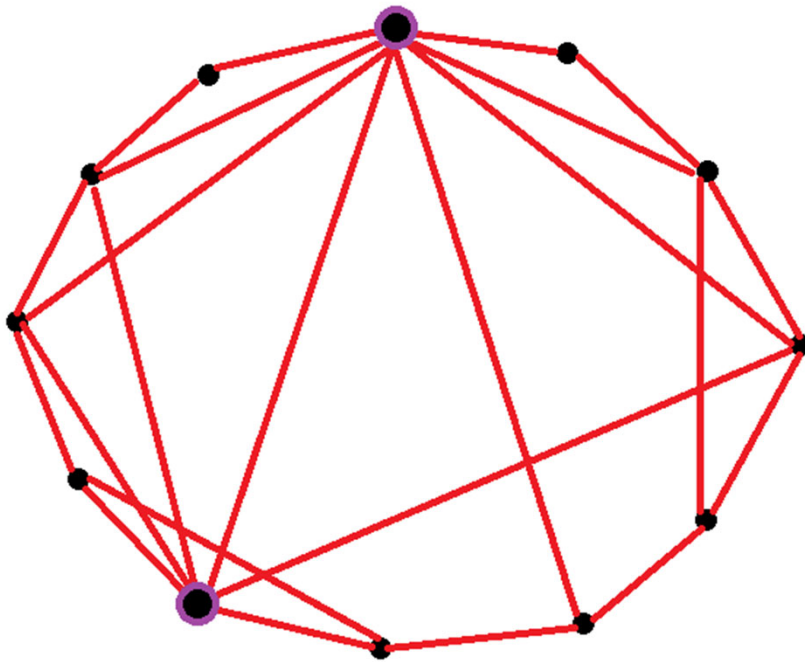
High local clustering and short
average path lengths.
Hub-and-spoke architecture.



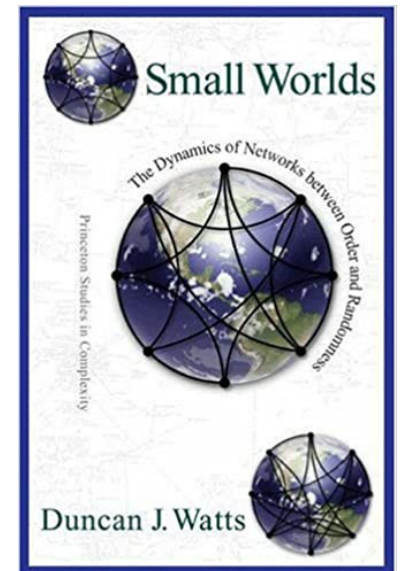
Scale-Free

Hub-and-spoke architecture preserved at
multiple scales.
High power law distribution.

'Regular' social networks: Small World Networks (Watts)

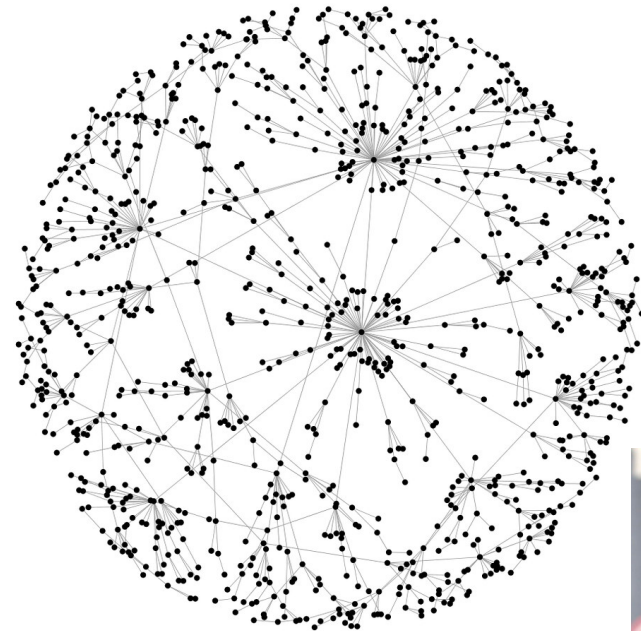


- Most nodes are not neighbors
 - Cliques
- But a network can still be traversed



Of person(a)s, communities, and cult influencers

- Scale-free networks
- Hub formation:
 - Time (early = better)
 - Preferential attachment
 - “Rich get richer”
 - Pareto Principle: ‘80% of X have 20% of Y’
 - 80% of people i
 - ‘Fitness’: The right role at the right time?
- Network dynamics can explain the structure of our online (social) networks, but not the quality of individual persons



How Everything Is Connected to
Everything Else and What It Means for
Business, Science, and Everyday Life

Linked



"Remarkable... A sweeping look at a new and exciting science." —Scientist
Albert-László Barabási



Pewdiepie (Felix Kjellberg), first individual to gain 100 million followers

No class next week!

- Literature re-cap on Brightspace: online on Monday, fill in before Tuesday 27-10
- Make sure you've read all the reading and done the Working with the Web tutorial.

Stay healthy and happy and protect each other!