

SO312 – Communities and Networks

Kathy Giuffre

Block 5, Spring 2007

We will examine the ways in which different types of community structures allow for different possibilities for individual and group actions -- deviance and conformity, successful challenges to outside authority and failures, the emergence of spectacular subcultures. Some of the questions that we will be asking are:

- What is a community (as opposed to a collection of individuals)?
- Where does it come from?
- What are some different types of communities in terms of structure? in terms of purpose?
- How do communities get people to conform?
- How does communal membership shape identity?
- What allows/leads people to break away from community norms?
- How do different types of community structures generate spectacular subcultures?
- How and when do these communities/subcultures resist outside (mainstream) forces?
- How and when do they fail?
- What can we expect with new types of communities (e.g., virtual communities)?

We will emphasize (but not exclusively use) network theory to delve into the issues of community structure, formation, and dissolution. Network theory differs somewhat from more traditional sociological paradigms in that it takes *the relations between people or groups of people* as the most important aspect of analysis rather than the individual attributes of those people. The computers in the Sociology Department computer lab in Palmer 130 have a software package for analyzing social networks installed on their hard drives. I will be showing use how to use it and we will be working on class projects to analyze real life network data.

Readings: I will expect you to have completed each of the readings assigned for each day by the beginning of class on that day. Reading should be seen as an active, critical exercise. You should question what you read, think about it, relate the readings to each other and to your own experiences.

There are three books assigned; all are available in the bookstore:

- Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*
- Gans, *The Urban Villagers*
- Mauss, *The Gift*

The rest of the readings are online at the Tutt Library e-reserves site.

Grading: There will be an in-class final exam on Wednesday, February 14. You will not receive a passing grade in the course unless you pass the final exam. In addition you will also be required to write a final paper (which is described more fully on a separate hand out) and to complete some homework assignments. Late papers will be marked down *one grade per day*. Your performance on each of these will constitute approximately one third of your grade although I will take into consideration improvements in your performance as the course progresses and, especially, class participation.

I consider an "A" to denote work of excellence, rising above the merely sufficient and competent to incorporate new insights as well as creative and critical thinking. It will, of course, be well written and demonstrate depth of thought and clarity of conception. A "B" denotes a mastery of the concepts and issues, competent and well-written work. A "C" is given for work with logical inconsistencies, which fails to adequately explore all the arguments related to the topic, which has errors or fact or which is badly written and poorly organized or conceptualized. A "D" is for work that fails to meet even these minimal standards. An "NC" is for work of exceedingly poor quality, including work that is plagiarized, unintelligible, and/or handed in extremely late.

Office Hours: I will be in my office for office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 to 2:00. You can always email me at kgiuffre@coloradocollege.edu or call my office phone at 389-6645.

Reading Schedule:

- Tues, 1/23
- Ferdinand Toennies, "From Community to Society"
 - Emile Durkheim, "De la division du travail social"
 - Ronald Breiger, "The Duality of Person's and Groups"
- Wed, 1/24
- Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, chapters I, II, and IV
- Thur, 1/25
- Ulf Hannerz, "Thinking with Networks"
 - Ulf Hannerz, "The Setting", "Waiting for the Burning to Begin" and "Appendix: In the Field" from *Soulside: Inquiries into Ghetto Culture and Community*
- Fri, 1/26
- Louis Wirth, "The Chicago Ghetto", "The Vanishing Ghetto" and "The Return to the Ghetto" from *The Ghetto*
 - Rytina and Morgan, "The Arithmetic of Social Relations"
- Mon, 1/29
- Elizabeth Bott, "Kinship Relations and Conjugal Roles"
 - Wellman and Wortley, "Different Strokes from Different Folks: Community Ties and Social Support"
 - Travers and Milgram, "An Experimental Study of the Small World Problem"
- Tues, 1/30
- William Allen, "The Setting", "The Anatomy of the Town", "Enter the Nazis", "The Terror System", "The Atomization of Society", "From Enthusiasm to Ritual" and "Life in the Third Reich" from *The Nazi Seizure of Power*
- Wed, 1/31
- No class – individual meetings in my office to discuss projects
- Thur, 2/1
- Class meets, but there is no assigned reading
- Fri, 2/2
- No class – annotated outline of final paper is due by 3 p.m. in my office or by email
- Mon, 2/5
- Herbert Gans, "The West End: An Urban Village", "The Italians of the West End", and "Redevelopment of the West End" from *The Urban Villagers*
 - Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties"
- Tues, 2/6
- Eugene Genovese, "The Naming of Cats", "The Myth of the Absent Family", "Romances of the Field", "Reading, Writing and Prospects", "De Big Times", and "The Slave Revolts" from *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*
- Wed, 2/7
- Mark Feinberg, "The Social Structure of Racism in an Urban Community"
 - Kai Erickson, "The Witches of Salem Village" from *Wayward Puritans*
- Thur, 2/8
- Howard Becker, "The Culture of a Deviant Group" from *Outsiders*
 - Tony Jefferson, "Cultural Responses of the Teds"; Dick Hebdige, "The Meaning of Mod"; and John Clarke, "The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community" from Hall and Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*
- Fri, 2/9
- Ray Oldenburg, "The Problem of Place in America", "The American Tavern", and "Classic Coffeehouses" from *The Great Good Place*
 - White, Boorman, and Breiger, "Social Structure from Multiple Networks. I. Blockmodels of Roles and Positions"
- Mon, 2/12
- selections from Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, (this will be handed out in class)
- Tues, 2/13
- Final Paper Due**
- Wed, 2/14
- Final Exam**