Publisher's Note

Principles of Sociology: Group Relationships & Behavior is the second title in Salem's Principles of Sociology series. The first is *Personal Relationships & Behavior,* and the next is *Societal Issues & Behavior.* This series is intended to introduce students and researchers to the fundamentals of important and far-reaching topics in sociology using easy-to-understand language.

The field of sociology is vital in the world we live in today, and relevant in many social groupings and behaviors. This work includes categories such as "Social Movements & Collective Behavior," "Stratification & Class in the U.S.," "Social Interaction in Groups & Organizations," and "Sociology of Religion."

The entries in this volume are arranged in an A to Z order by section, making it easy to find the topic of interest. Each entry includes the following:

- *Abstract* giving a brief introduction to the topic;
- *Overview* that presents key terms and concepts;
- Clear, concise *presentation of the topic,* including a discussion of applications and issues;
- Definitions of key *Terms & Concepts*;
- *Bibliography* for further reading.

The back matter in *Principles of Sociology: Group Relationships & Behavior* contains a thorough and valuable index.

Salem Press thanks the contributors, whose names are listed with each essay. Their diverse backgrounds include graduate degrees in a wide field of expertise and experience that allows them to offer information in language that is often more accessible than that of sociology specialists, whose explanations may be narrowly focused. A list of contributors' names follows this Publisher's Note.

The essays in this volume are written for a varied audience. Our goals include attention to clarity and avoidance of unnecessary jargon. For those readers who desire more specific information on any one topic, each essay includes a list of entries for further reading.

Principles of Sociology: Group Relationships & Behavior is, as are all Salem Press titles, available in print, as an e-book and on https://online.salempress.com.

Social Movements & Collective Behavior

INTRODUCTION

The first section explores how people act as a group to social experiences as opposed to how people act as individuals. Group psychologists argue that the behaviors, emotions, and thinking displayed by certain types of groups are very different from the behaviors that individuals normally display in their everyday life.

These articles discuss social theories that have been developed though many years of research and study of groups, crowds, mobs and riots. Contagion Theory, for example, says that the behavior and emotions of a group member can be contagious to others, causing a person to act in a way they would not if they were on their own. Examples include: people running aggressively and pushing their way through a store on Black Friday, when they normally calm and gentle; or a person laughing at a joke at a comedy show because others are laughing, even if they don't find the joke funny. Convergence Theory explores the behavior of crowds and why people act certain ways during rallies or riots. The theory suggests that when people come together they may act more aggressively than they would on their own. Convergence Theory highlights the fact that groups attract people who may share an opinion already. If people join together to protest, they share a common belief, causing collective emotions to be magnified and more explosive behavior. Emergent-Norm Theory combines the contagion and convergence theories, offering that group behavior is simply based on people following whatever social norm is taking place.

This section also deals with morals, and how society impacts, decides, and highlights moral reactions for us. The media plays a large role in modern society in how we feel and react to certain topics. Media can control how material is presented, which affects how we view a situation. A recent news story, about community members who were upset at how low-income property was being built, attempted to paint a negative picture of how the project would affect the community, without presenting any benefits. Listeners might conclude that the low-income housing was a bad idea. This is an example of how the media could create moral panic. Moral policing is when a group takes on the role of pushing their beliefs on others, for example, when a group of pro-life Christians protest outside an abortion clinic.

Large scale social movements, including the gay rights movement, women's rights movements, sexual revolutions and internet use all represent huge societal shifts in creates social change that impacts the lives of so many. These social movements towards equality represents the positive use of group dynamics and collective behavior.

Various narratives of social movements tie this section together, as storytelling is how we share experiences and information with each other. The story of group behavior or a social movement can shift and change through the voice of who is telling it. We use our storytelling power to see the benefits of how collective behavior uses group dynamics to affect social justice.

Kimberly Ortiz-Hartman, Psy.D., LMFT

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR: CONTAGION THEORY

ABSTRACT

The theory of contagion was developed in the late nineteenth century by social theorists specializing in group psychology. These group psychologists argued that the behaviors, emotions, and thinking displayed by certain types of groups were very different from the behaviors that individuals normally display in their everyday life. Simply stated, the theory of contagion posits that the emotions and actions displayed by individuals when in a group can, in a sense, become contagious and spread to other members of a group, culminating in distinct forms of social action. The first studies of social contagion focused on particular types of group formations such as crowds and mobs and used contagion theory to explain why these types of groups were prone to emotional and violent outbursts. Later reformulations of contagion theory emerging in the 1930s and continuing through the 1960s extended the theory to explain a broad spectrum of social phenomena like fashion fads, political protests, and social movements.

OVERVIEW

Gustave Le Bon: Contagion & Suggestibility

The author and group psychologist most noteworthy for developing the theory of contagion is Gustave Le Bon, who in 1891 published his famous book, *The Crowd*. In *The Crowd*, Le Bon gave an account of group formation and collective action based on psychological principles that attempts to explain the special attributes of groups and the power of groups over individuals. He argued that certain types of groups, which he defined as crowds, constitute a level of phenomena that is wholly separate from individual phenomena because of the unique psychological laws that govern the group dynamics of crowds. Thus, unlike many of the other psychological and utilitarian social theories of this era, Le Bon's theory stressed the notion that the group is more than the mere sum of the individuals of which it is composed. Le Bon (1891–1979) illustrated this idea with an analogy to chemistry:

In the aggregate which constitutes a crowd there is in no way a summing-up of or an average struck between its elements. What really takes place is a combination followed by the creation of new characteristics, just as in chemistry certain elements, when brought into contact… combine to form a new body possessing properties quite different from those of the bodies that served to form it. (p. 60)

There are two distinguishing psychological characteristics of crowds that, for Le Bon, make them more than a simple agglomerate of individuals. One characteristic is the suppression of individuality that occurs in crowd formations. Individuals caught up in crowds can lose their senses of self and begin to act almost entirely as a collective unit. As a result, individuals within a crowd can more easily act without reflecting on the consequences of their actions. The other important characteristic of crowds is the psychological transformation that occurs in an individual's mind when drawn into a crowd. Le Bon referred to this transformation in terms of the traditional psychological distinction between the conscious and unconscious spheres of an individual mind. This type of psychological theory suggests that when individuals are in a fully conscious state, they are more easily able to restrain themselves from basing their actions solely on fundamental drives and desires and thus less apt to be ruled by emotional whims and physical inclinations. Yet when the mind of an individual is controlled by a predominately unconscious state, such as when swept up in a crowd, the conscious tendencies of rational thinking and self-reflection, which normally inhibit one from acting in accordance with base instincts, are bypassed. This increased role of the unconscious thus causes one to be less restrained in the pursuit of desires and inclinations despite their consequences and more susceptible to emotional enticement.

Le Bon argued that these emergent characteristics of crowds are the result of three primary causes: "the sentiment of invincible power," "contagion," and "suggestibility" (p. 61). He attributed the feeling of invincibility to the crowd's realization of its strength in numbers, and argued that this sense of omnipotence coupled with the individual's sense of anonymity in a crowd allow the individual "to yield to instincts which, had he been alone, he would perforce have kept under restraint" (p. 61). Le Bon went on to describe contagion as a type of collective hypnotic trance in which emotions and actions, once

introduced, have a tendency to spread throughout the crowd, and concluded that suggestibility is the principle psychological force of which contagion is the effect. For Le Bon, the psychological phenomena of suggestibility and contagion emerge as a result of the psychological transformation of the individual in which the "conscious personality" disappears, allowing for a type of unconscious, unreflective, and hypnotic "fascination" to abound (p. 62).

Sigmund Freud: Libidinal Ties & Identification
Sigmund Freud built on the work of Le Bon and attempted to further explain this dynamic in which unconscious tendencies bypass the role of consciousness in certain group formations. Hence, in *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego,* Freud (1921/1959) adopted Le Bon's analysis of suggestion and contagion. In order to describe the processes behind these group processes, Freud contributed two of his own concepts: the notion of libido and the notion of identification. Libido is described, as it is elsewhere in Freud's works, as a type of emotional energy derived from sexual drives. Yet in the group context the libido takes on another role as a type of foundation or glue that binds the members of the group together in the form of libidinal ties. For Freud, these libidinal ties that exist between the members of a group owe their existence to a parallel and concurrent psychological process, which Freud refers to as identification.

In one sense identification represents the primary libidinal or emotional tie that a small child develops for the parent of the opposite sex; yet in another sense, Freud also used this initial development of an emotional tie to explain how such ties are developed between the members of a group. Thus in the first sense, the theory of identification has its roots in Freud's theory of sexuality: it is a stage in the psychosexual development of children resulting from the Oedipus complex.

The Oedipus complex is the term Freud used to describe a condition that he argued is commonly present in the sexual and emotional development of male children. In it the boy develops a type of sexual attachment to his mother as a result of his close relationship to her during the early stages of his development. As a result of this desire to have his mother, the boy simultaneously undergoes the process of identification with the father in which he desires to be like his father and to take over his role in the family:

Identification is known to psychoanalysis as the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person. It plays a part in the early history of the Oedipus complex. A little boy will exhibit a special interest in his father; he would like to grow like him and be like him, and take his place everywhere. We may say simply that he takes his father as his ideal. (Freud, 1921/1959, p. 47)

Freud thus posited that this type of identification also occurs in certain types of groups, first as a type of special interest in the group leader; then, based on the premise that the leader loves each of the members of the group equally, this identification spreads in the form of emotional or libidinal ties between the members of the group.

In order to explain how these unconscious tendencies toward identification and libidinal connections manifest themselves in the minds of group members, Freud drew on his theory of the different spheres in an individual's mind, which he refers to as the id, the ego, and the superego. Freud described the id as governed by the pleasure principle; it is the region of the mind that is connected to one's unconscious desires. Conversely, Freud refers to the ego as being governed by the reality principle; it is the component of one's mind that is more firmly rooted in consciousness and able to delay the gratification of desires presented to it by the unconscious. It follows that the superego represents a graded difference in the ego in which morality is developed.

This process of moral development, which results in the formation of the superego, is related back to the theory of identification. It is the interest the boy takes in his father that leads him to internalize the voice of the father and his command as the moral voice within his mind. For Freud, this moral voice, which is represented as the superego, is more directly connected to the unconscious than the conscious personality. As Freud (1923/1960) stated in *The Ego and the Id*:

The considerations that led us to assume the existence of a grade in the ego, a differentiation within the ego, which may be called the 'ego ideal' or 'super-ego', have been stated elsewhere. They still hold good. The fact that this part of the ego is less firmly connected with consciousness is the novelty which calls for explanation. (p. 22)

In stressing this difference in the prevalence of conscious and unconscious aspects in the ego

represented in the distinction between the ego and superego, we can see Freud expanding on Le Bon's basic psychological distinction between the roles of the conscious and unconscious in group formations. Just as identification with the father leads to the process in which the boy unconsciously internalizes the voice of the father resulting in the formation of the superego as the child's source of moral authority, so does the unconscious identification with the leader and members of a group cause both the leader and the group itself to fuse with the individual member's superego or moral voice. Hence identification and libidinal ties exist in a kind of mutually reinforcing relationship with the unconscious dimension of the individual's ego (the superego), allowing the authority of the leader and the group to take the place of the superego. Freud (1921/1959) alluded to the fundamental role of this distinction between the ego and the superego in fostering libidinal group ties and its central position in his whole theory of group psychology:

We are aware that what we have been able to contribute towards the explanation of the libidinal structure of groups leads back to the distinction between the ego and the ego ideal and to the double kind of tie which this makes possible—identification, and putting the object in the place of the ego ideal. The assumption of this kind of differentiating grade in the ego as a first step in an analysis of the ego must gradually establish its justification in the most various regions of group psychology.

FURTHER INSIGHTS

Later Sociological Applications of Contagion Theory: Herbert Blumer

American sociologists who began studying social movements in the 1930s and 40s were heavily influenced by the theory of contagion as it was presented in the model of group psychology offered by Le Bon. Of the sociologists from this period, Herbert Blumer is one of the key figures responsible for introducing the theory of contagion into a sociological framework in his theory of collective behavior.

In the classic essay, "Collective Behavior," Blumer constructed a general theory of social formations in which he attempted to identify a vast number of different types of social phenomena as manifestations of collective behavior. Blumer (Lee, 1939) wrote,

"The nature of collective behavior is suggested by the consideration of such topics as crowds, mobs, panics, manias, dancing crazes, stampedes, mass behavior, public opinion, propaganda, fashion, fads, social movements, revolutions, and reforms" (p. 167). As terms like mobs, panics, manias, crazes, and stampedes connote, Blumer, like Le Bon, was interested in the more chaotic forms of collective behavior, which he termed "elementary forms." He defined these elementary forms of collective behavior as lacking the type of social norms, or "rules" or "common understandings," that dictate how the group should behave (Lee, 1939, p. 168). The common element found in many of these forms of collective behavior is the presence of a state of "social unrest," or a type of frenzied social state characterized by "spontaneous" group behavior that is induced by some form of traumatic social event. In Blumer's words "A highly excited mob, a business panic, a state of war hysteria, a condition of social unrest represent instances of collective behavior which are of this character" (Lee, 1939, p. 168).

Contrasted to these elementary forms of collective behavior, Blumer also designated "organized forms" of collective behavior in which rules and norms begin to develop and guide group behavior as a "new social order" is formed (Lee, 1939 p. 168, 169). Blumer had these more organized forms in mind when mentioning such phenomena as social movements and reforms. As a sociologist he was interested in charting out how the spontaneous and contagious behavior of Le Bon's crowd crystallizes into more organized forms of social action. As an example of this path from social unrest to organized forms of social action, one might consider the situation the American colonists found themselves in under the rule of England: namely, how the increases in colonial taxes led to social unrest and cries of "no taxation without representation," which, in turn, led to more organized social movements like the Boston Tea Party, the American revolution, and the adoption of the federal constitution.

As a corollary to Le Bon's theory of contagion, Blumer developed the notion of "circular reaction" to explain the processes at work in the elementary forms of collective behavior. In many ways this concept functions as both a rearticulation and elaboration of the ideas that Le Bon set forth. Blumer defined circular reaction as

a type of interstimulation wherein the response of one individual reproduces stimulation that has come from another individual and in being reflected back to this individual reinforces the stimulation. Thus the interstimulation assumes a circular form in which the individuals reflect one another's states of feeling and in so doing intensify this feeling. It is well evidenced in the transmission of feelings and moods among people who are in a state of excitement. (Lee, 1939, p.170)

One can see how this definition of circular reaction is very similar to Le Bon's notions of contagion and suggestibility in which the emotions expressed by one individual can easily spread to the other members of the group. Yet Blumer also added the dimension of stimulation and interaction, highlighting the mutually reinforcing process by which these stimulations and emotions can be reproduced and intensify.

For Blumer, it is this process of circular reaction that occurs in the elementary forms of collective behavior combined with another phenomenon he defines as "restlessness" that leads to the extreme form of social unrest one sees manifested in crowds and mobs. Blumer described restlessness as the state in which "people have impulses, desires, or dispositions which cannot be satisfied by the existing forms of living," and posited that "it is only when restlessness is involved in circular reaction, or becomes contagious, that social unrest exists" (Lee, 1939, p. 171, 172).

VIEWPOINTS

Critical Perspectives on Contagion

Some of the latest developments in social movement literature, often referred to as New Social Movement (NSM) theory, have attempted to reformulate the role that emotions play in various types of social movements. NSM theorists conceive of social movements as legitimate forms of protest and reform in which actors attempt to strategically maximize their resources in order to achieve aims of social justice. They attempt to portray social movement actors as capable of operating in a rational capacity, and they study emotions as a motivational force behind collective action as well as a strategy within a repertoire of cultural tools used by social movement actors to attract sympathizers and mobilize resources to further the ends of their movements. Insofar as NSM theorists seek to study emotion as a positive force for

mobilization and a rational tool for achieving ends, they reject the theory of emotional contagion propagated by Le Bon, Freud, and Blumer. In their view, the theory of emotion contagion treats emotion as an irrational force that can to lead to deviant forms of collective action such as crowds, mobs, panics, and crazes. In *Passionate Politics,* Jasper, Goodwin, and Polletta (2001) describe what they believe to be the negative image that the theory of emotional contagion casts on social movements:

In nineteenth-century images of the mob, normal individuals were thought to be transformed mysteriously in the presence of the crowd, prone to anger and violence, and easily manipulated by demagogues. Well into the twentieth century, crowds and their dynamics were conceived as the heart of protest movements. Crowds were assumed to create, through suggestion and contagion, a kind of psychologically "primitive" group mind and group feelings, shared by all participants outside their normal range of sensibilities. (p. 2)

The question remains whether the theory of contagion found in the work of Le Bon, Freud, and Blumer retains its usefulness as an adequate explanatory mechanism when extended to more complex and organized phenomena such as social movement formations. But insofar as the more elementary forms of collective behavior are concerned, such as crowds and mobs, these theorists' contributions to the legacy of social thought are still worthy of recognition.

TERMS & CONCEPTS

Circular Reaction: A phenomenon of group interaction in which a stimulation or emotion introduced by one member of a group reproduces itself in other members in a mutually reinforcing process that builds in intensity. The term was coined by Herbert Blumer.

Collective Behavior: General types of group formations, such as crowds, mobs, masses, panics, crazes, fads, and social movements, as well as the type of actions that these groups engage in.

Contagion: A psychological theory describing a type of collective hypnotic trance in which emotions and actions, once introduced, have a tendency to spread throughout a crowd. The theory was introduced by Gustave Le Bon.

Craze: "Mobilization for action based on a positive wish-fulfillment belief" (Smelser, 1962, p. 171). A fashion fad which leads teenagers to believe that they need a certain brand of jeans could be considered an example of a craze.

Crowd: A special type of group that, according to Le Bon, is subject to unique psychological laws which cause individuals to fall into an unconscious state of mind and behaviors and emotions to spread in a contagious manner.

Identification: A concept employed by Freud to describe the first emotional tie a child forms with his or her parent of the opposite sex. In the case of male children, a boy develops an interest in his father and wants to be like him and take his place. Identification also occurs in groups in the form of interest in the group leader, and helps to explain the emotional ties that hold groups together.

Libidinal Ties: The notion of the libidinal tie is an offshoot of Freud's theory of the libido. Just as the libido exists as a form of emotional energy derived from one's sexual drives, libidinal ties constitute the emotional connections that bind the members of a group together.

Mass: Distinguished from a crowd in that it "is more heterogeneous, more anonymous, less organized and less intimately engaged in interaction" (Smelser, 1962, p. 7).

Panic: "A collective flight based on a hysterical belief" (Smelser, 1962, p.131).

Social Movement: In Blumer's account, "collective enterprises to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in conditions of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living" (Lee, 1939, p.199).

Suggestibility: The psychological force in which the mere presence of a crowd member acting in a certain way or displaying a particular emotion entices other members of the crowd to act or emote in a similar way. The term was coined by Le Bon.

Unconscious: In psychological terms, the region of the mind from which our fundamental desires emanate. When one's mind is dominated by an unconscious state, one will seek to fulfill these desires in an uninhibited manner. Within contagion theory, members of crowds are believed to be governed by an unconscious state of mind.

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# Social Media as Social Interaction

ABSTRACT

This article deals with the impact of social media on human interactions, discussing impacts from the sharing of personal information to the launching of political movements. Research that sees social media as a negative influence on social interaction is discussed as well as research that identifies the positive aspects of social media. The article also identifies the most prominent social media sites and discusses such practices as blogging, cyberbullying, sexting, and online gaming that have helped to define social interaction on social media sites in the twenty-first century

OVERVIEW

This article deals with the impact of social media on human interactions, discussing impacts from the sharing of personal information to the launching of political movements. Research that sees social media as a negative influence on social interaction is discussed as well as research that identifies the positive aspects of social media. The article also identifies the most prominent social media sites and discusses such practices as blogging, cyberbullying, sexting, and online gaming that have helped to define social interaction on social media sites in the twenty-first century.

While social media is believed to have begun with the CompuServe communities of the late 1960s and the Bulletin Board systems of the late 1970s, it was not until GeoCities introduced virtual cities in 1994 and blogging appeared on the scene three years later that the true potential of social media began to be imagined. The early 1990s also saw the advent of Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia that is defined as social media because it allows for collaborative editing of articles. Financial analyst Andrew Weinrech built on those early sites to launch Six Degrees (1997–2001) out of the belief that every person in the whole world was connected to one another within six degrees of separation, a theory introduced in 1929 in a short story by Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy. Six Degrees was the first social media site to introduce friends lists and personal profiles and use instant messaging to allow friends to chat with one another. The first decade of the twenty-first century saw
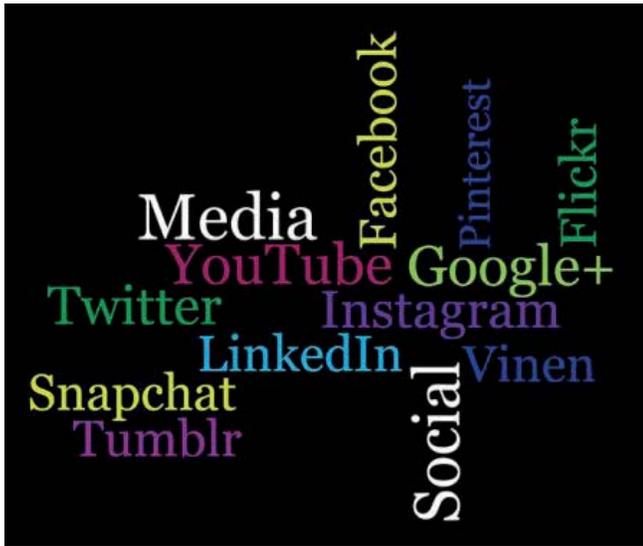
social media become a global phenomenon with the introduction of Friendster, MySpace, and LinkedIn in rapid succession.

When Mark Zuckerberg and his colleagues introduced Facebook in 2004, they revolutionized the concept of social media and changed the ways in which individuals interact with one another. For the first time, geographic boundaries ceased to matter as individuals were able to draw all the different aspects of their lives together by "friending" not only family and current friends but also friends who had not been seen for decades. Users also made new friends through Facebook groups and through Facebook's online games such as Farmville and Candy Crush Saga.

Early scholarship on social media addressed concerns over the possibility that social media would end social interaction as it existed up to that time (Mesch, 2012). With teenagers spending so much time on social media sites, it was feared that they would lose the ability to make friends in real life as online communication reduced the anxiety often experienced in real-world social relationships and removed judgments based on such factors as appearance and socioeconomic status. Communication experts bemoaned the fact that since 93 percent of communication in real life involves nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice, online users would fail to grasp nuances in conversations.

The use of emoticons, keyboard characters used to express emotions, and the use of terms such as

LOL (laughing out loud) attempted to make it clear when someone was teasing or joking. Some research did reveal that introverts were more likely than extroverts to spend time in developing online relationships, but time proved that social media was capable of adapting to the lives of its users by allowing them to enhance existing relationships while building new ones.

Two years after Facebook was launched, Twitter was introduced, offering users the opportunity to follow celebrities, musicians, sports figures, writers, and other well-known figures as well as friends and family. Unlike Facebook, which allows posts of up to 420 words, Twitter limits posts to no more than 140 characters. "Tweeting" and "retweeting" have become part of the global vocabulary. Social media has been credited with helping to elect and reelect President Barack Obama, launching the Arab Spring, providing a forum for the Occupy Wall Street movement, and increasing activism in countries around the world. Average people have become instant celebrities through social media postings, blogging, or uploading videos to YouTube or Twitch. Within their cocoons, many individuals have become so comfortable with social media that they are willing to share intimate details of their lives, describing everything from what they are cooking for dinner to describing sexual encounters and posting photographs of everything from children and grandchildren to nude "selfies" and hate symbols. Marriages have been made through connections and reconnections on social media sites, and relationships have been dissolved following a public announcement by one partner that he or she is no longer in a relationship.

The introduction of the Web 2.0 technology in 2004 meant that it suddenly became much easier for social media sites to perform the functions that have come to define social media in the twenty-first century. The foundation of all social media sites is the sharing of information. Such sites not only allow individuals to present their version of themselves to the world, they also encourage collaboration among individuals engaged in a wide range of activities. Information posted by someone is disseminated immediately upon hitting the send button, and neither the sender nor the receiver is required to pay for the service. One of the disadvantages of social media is that monitoring social sites is relatively easy for government institutions (Rodriquez, 2013), employers,

cyberbullies, hackers, and others intent on tracking the movements of others.

FURTHER INSIGHTS

Much of the literature on social media has been multidisciplinary in nature, involving sociologists, theorists, political scientists, and communication experts. Significant research has focused on social media's role in bringing together participants in transnational movements and social change projects. Rodriquez (2013) identifies three major approaches those studies have taken: networking among actors, the ways in which networks propel diffusion of new repertoires and frames, and understanding cultures developed within the new networks. Members of the media have taken a different approach, creating new terms such as "virtual barricades" and talking about "revolutions" taking place on Facebook and Twitter. A new subfield has opened up in anthropology known as "digital anthropology," which is designed to study the ways in which human lives are affected by digital data available on social media sites and the Internet.

Young people have wholeheartedly embraced the sharing of information on social media sites. They have been particularly attracted to the rapid transfer of information and to the ability to create identities away from parental oversight (Mesch, 2012). They have become adept at hiding themselves from oversight by creating false identities or usernames that have meanings only to themselves and their selected friends (Rosin, 2014). In the 1980s, online communication was generally limited to contact between people who did not know one another. By the twenty-first century, however, online contacts generally included family, friends, and colleagues as well as friends of friends and family and individuals known only though the virtual world of social media. When adults discovered Facebook, making individuals over the age of the 40 the dominant force on the social media site, younger people deserted Facebook for sites like Instagram, a service launched in 2010 that allowed users to post photographs instantly from mobile phones and other mobile devices. By 2013, fewer than 10 percent of Facebook users were under the age of seventeen.

In a Pew Research Center survey, it was revealed that nearly all American teenagers aged thirteen to seventeen visit the Internet on a daily basis, the majority use multiple social networking sites, and about nine in ten send and receive text messages (Lenhart, 2015). Another study looked at children in twenty-nine European countries between the ages of nine and sixteen, reporting that 59 percent had created profiles on social networking sites, 62 percent regularly used instant messaging, and 11 percent either wrote a blog or read one on a regular basis (Mesch, 2012).

The weblog was introduced in 1997, and blogging soon became a mainstream activity. Blogs allow creators to post information about themselves, orate on subjects such as politics or writing, or explain their worldviews to anyone willing to read the blog. Teachers often use class blogs to encourage students to write about themselves and share information with one another. Some adolescents enjoy the experience so much that they continue to blog after the class is completed. Because information shared on blogs is often intimate, researchers have used blogging to gain insight into adolescent behavior in the twenty-first century.

Williams and Merton (2008) found that 55 percent of teenagers have created profiles on social networking sites that share personal information about themselves. They found that the most common themes mentioned in adolescent blogs were romantic relationships, friends, parents, substance use, sexuality, popular culture, eating disorders, school, depression, conflicts, self-expression, and self-harm. Three-fourths of the sample was heterosexual, and 61 percent were not in a relationship at the time of the blog.

ISSUES

Since the advent of social media, researchers have devoted considerable attention to its impact, particularly on teenagers, attempting to determine whether or not it promotes the mental well-being of users (Baruth, 2014). Instead of bringing an end to social interactions, a number of researchers have found that social media sites tend to build up a strong sense of community that allows individuals to be themselves while interacting with others with whom they share interests. Reich (2010) labels this phenomenon "networked individualism." By sharing details of their personal lives and their feelings with others in the public forum of social media,

adolescents may enhance existing relationships and create new friendships. However, some research has revealed that many adolescents rate online friendships as being of lower quality than those formed in real life. Having others respond positively to information shared tends to build up self-esteem, and social media has also been shown to enhance feelings of being connected to others, thereby promoting emotional development. When children and adolescents use social media to work together on homework or group projects, academic performance may improve.

Depression and social rejection have been identified as negative impacts of social media on adolescents, but negative aspects tend to be mitigated in adolescents who have a strong support systems of family and friends in real life. While some of the fears about the dangers of social media were lulled over time, real threats remained about cyberbullying and sexting. Cyberbullying generally involves prolonged attacks against individuals with the intention of causing them harm. Examples of cyberbullying include making rude or unprovoked remarks about someone, transmitting untrue information, distributing offensive or damaging video clips, posting private messages publicly, and excluding individuals from joining online groups. Cyberbullies have the advantage of anonymity, and many take on false identities to perform bullying acts. Cyberbullies have claimed that the right to engage in such behavior is protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. In the summer of 2014, the New York Supreme Court accepted that argument, overturning a law passed in Albany County that had made cyberbullying a criminal offense. Because cyberbullies often attract a large audience, victims may feel that everyone they know is reading the false information or laughing at their behavior. Cyberbullying has been cited as a direct cause in a number of high-profile teenage suicide cases.

Despite an intense desire for privacy within their own households, adolescents have become well known for sharing too much information (TMI) on social media (Boyd, 2014). The phenomenon known as "sexting" has created great concern among parents, law enforcement, politicians, and the general public. Sexting involves sending sexually explicit text or nude photographs of one's self or others via a mobile phone or posting such messages on social media sites such as Instagram. Most commonly, the photographs originate as private messages to a boyfriend or someone a teenager is trying to impress. In most states, sexting is considered a violation of child pornography laws, and some states have passed laws that are specifically designed to make sexting illegal. Punishment varies from minor fines to felony charges.

The first sexting case to garner national attention involved teenagers at Tunkhannock Area High School in rural Pennsylvania in 2009. In 2014, a major scandal broke out in response to a sexting case at Louisa County High School in central Virginia involving the posting of more than one hundred nude photographs of girls, some as young as fourteen, from different races, religions, and social classes. While some girls had posted their own nude "selfies" on the photo-sharing site Instagram, others had sent photographs over their mobile phones to someone else privately. Most incidences of sexting, however, are never made public, particularly those that remain private between the sender and receiver. Cases that are reported to authorities tend to deal with blackmail or sexual abuse, involve an adult participant, or be motivated by malicious behavior (Rosin, 2014).

Some video gamers turned their love of video games into professions by streaming themselves playing games using the PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, Nintendo Wii, or personal computers. By paying a small stipend that is divided between streamers and Twitch, fans are able to subscribe to streams. Devoted fans may donate hundreds of dollars to help keep their favorite streamers on the service, which broadcasts live. On YouTube, where videos are pre-recorded, subscriptions are free, but streamers strongly encourage viewers to "like" them to demonstrate their popularity with advertisers from whom they may make money. Gamers from around the world have formed online communities with game streamers at the center, focusing on games such as League of Legends, World of Warcraft (WOW), Destiny, and Minecraft. Communication taking place in chat rooms may range from game play to the color of a streamer's hair to his or her sexual orientation.

Cole and Griffiths (2007) looked at the online communities that formed around massively multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPGs), finding that players from around the world reported that they have formed strong friendships with other

gamers. Many gamers reported having developed lifelong friendships, and romantic relationships have been formed among players. Contrary to earlier research which claimed that computer gaming was likely to interfere with normal social development, playing MMORPGs became seen as promoting social interaction, encouraging teamwork, fostering encouragement of other players, and promoting fun and relaxation (Cole & Griffiths, 2007). Online role playing games generally allowed users to create virtual worlds, a phenomenon that would foster an immediate sense of community among players. While online gaming was essentially the province of adolescent males until the 1990s, the introduction of Ever Quest, which targeted female players, and the aging of gamers meant that the presence of females and older males has changed the demographics of social gaming sites.

TERMS & CONCEPTS

Arab Spring: Uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa beginning in 2010 in response to postings on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter and videos uploaded to YouTube.

Blogging: Maintaining a website on which one posts personal reflections about life or particular subjects.

Cyberbullying: A pattern of harassing or abusive behaviors in which bullies use social media sites, the Internet, and online communication to damage the reputation or self-esteem of others.

Friending: Accepting someone as a "friend" on Facebook and allowing them to have access to time lines, wall posts, and friends' lists.

Game streaming: Process that allows video gamers to film themselves playing video games and broadcast that play to viewers around the world. Entire online communities have built up around game streamers.

Instant messaging (IM): Free software released in 1996 by Mirabilis that is used on social media sites to allow two users to chat with each other by typing messages into an application. Responses occur in real time unless the user has left the site, which may cause the IM to be sent as an email.

Massively multiplayer online role playing games: Online role playing games that bring players together in virtual communities to play popular games and interact with one another.

Occupy Wall Street: Movement that began on social media sites and turned into a global protest over the increasing disparity between the rich and poor in modern societies.

Retweeting: Reposting someone else's Twitter post in order to distribute the information to one's own followers.

Sexting: The practice of posting sexually explicit photographs or messages via mobile phones or social media sites. Sexting may originate as "selfies" sent as private interchanges from one person to another or as self-postings on social media sites. It may also involve redistribution of such material.

Tweeting: Term used to describe messages posted to followers on Twitter.

Web 2.0: The second generation Internet-based technology that powers social media and mobile technologies. It has been credited with promoting creativity among developers.

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Social Networks: Social Capital

ABSTRACT

Social capital is a broad and somewhat elastic term that has become familiar to many disciplines and professional vocabularies. On the one hand, the concept of social capital is used to examine the resources required to build up human capital (Coleman, 1988), while on the other, it is viewed as a major mechanism of social reproduction and is used in a critical way to highlight class inequalities and unequal access to institutional and other resources and opportunities that help develop cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985). Thus, while social capital may be used to identify negative social processes, in general it is seen as a positive effect of interaction among participants in a social network (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). The value and function of social capital is linked to trust, social networks, and tolerance. However, many commentators agree that while it is possible to identify the function of social capital, it is harder to identify the mechanisms through which it operates and to define precisely what it is.

OVERVIEW

Social capital is a broad and somewhat elastic term that has become familiar to many disciplines and professional vocabularies. On the one hand, the concept of social capital is used to examine the resources required to build up human capital (Coleman, 1988), while on the other, it is viewed as a major mechanism of social reproduction and is used in a critical way to highlight class inequalities and unequal access to institutional and other resources and opportunities that help develop cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985). Thus, while social capital may be used to identify negative social processes, in general it is seen as a positive effect of interaction among participants in a social network (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). The value and function of social capital is linked to trust, social