The Strength of Weak Ties: Social Networking Meets 21st Century Political Turmoil

Mark Granovetter
Joan Butler Ford Professor
Stanford University

Thursday April 7
4 - 6 PM at the UHM
School of Architecture
Auditorium
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Mark Granovetter's 1973 paper, “The Strength of Weak Ties,” is the most cited paper in Sociology, with more than 37,000 citations. It argues that while our close friends serve vital functions for us, they form an ingrown network since they tend to know one another. Our acquaintances – weak ties – on the other hand, are less likely to know one another and more likely to connect us to social circles beyond our own: they are our “windows on the world”. The more weak ties we have, the more in touch we are with ideas, fashions, job openings and whatever else is going on in diverse and far-flung communities. Professor Granovetter talks about how he came to write this paper; where it fits in the history of social network analysis; how its argument has held up over the years; and what light it may shed on recent social turmoil and revolutions, where it’s often been claimed that social networks are at the core of the new political developments.

Mark Granovetter is a professor of sociology and the Joan Butler Ford Professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University. He received an AB in History from Princeton and a PhD in sociology from Harvard. With more than 110,000 citations, his work on social network theory, economic sociology and on the spread of information in social networks has had a profound and broad-based impact on cutting-edge research in sociology, economics, business, computer science, and others. His theories are adopted in virtually all business disciplines: consumer demand, e-commerce, organization science, HRM, innovation network, and entrepreneurship. His work is also a source of inspiration for the business models of Facebook, LinkedIn and others in the digital economy. Granovetter is the recipient of many prestigious awards and honorary degrees, and in 2014 was on the Thomson Reuters’ list of predicted future Nobel Prize winners in economics.