

Facebook as a Way of Life: Louis Wirth in the Social Network¹

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Comment [SMS1]: Should you be marked as the corresponding author? Or Larissa?

The paper began as Larissa's undergraduate course paper, but given all the changes, it's a good idea to have Wyly as corresponding author.

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Abstract

The rise of social networking practices has inspired widespread public debate and scholarly attention: a growing share of social relations began to take place online in the virtual worlds of social media sites at the same time that the ‘real’ world became majority-urban. What are the implications of these trends for how we understand the geography of urban society? In this paper, we re-engage one of the foundational contributions of twentieth-century Chicago School sociology, Louis Wirth’s article “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” (1938) to understand the socio-spatial implications of social media in an era of planetary urbanization. A growing body of evidence suggests that central elements that Wirth saw as defining urbanism -- the calculating instrumentalism of daily life, the paradox of individual isolation fueling the proliferation of voluntary associations and organizations, the “segmented selves” of complex divisions of labor - are being reproduced and reconfigured in socially networked lives. The centripetal social relations of the twentieth-century metropolis are overlaid by networking practices that mediate each urbanite’s blend of local, regional, national, and transnational social relations. The result is an intricate, evolving world system of socially and spatially segmented urban ways of life.

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Not long ago, the number of Internet users on the planet surpassed 2.4 billion, the number of social media users exceeded 1.6 billion. and Facebook, Inc., completed the integration of its

Comment [SMS5]: I don't buy this figure, unless it's calculated using only those who are Internet users (and not the global population as a whole).

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database of birthdays -- a billion and counting -- with its firehose of other relational data in order to provide birthday gift recommendations optimized according to users' expressed preferences as observed through online activities of 'friend' networks, corporate 'likes,' and various keyword mentions in postings and status updates (Facebook 2012; [Radicati, 2012](#); Schemann 2012; Sengupta 2012). All of these trends have coincided with the long-anticipated arrival of a truly global urbanism: sometime in 2007, the world crossed the fifty-percent threshold, and now a majority of the world's population lives in urban areas (Burdett and Sudjic 2007). Does the meaning of urbanism change when a third of humanity is on the Internet, a seventh is on Facebook, and hundreds of millions more are on other social networking sites around the world? What are the implications when the world's most highly urbanized societies are now described by marketing firms as the places with the highest rates of Facebook "population penetration" (Figure 1)?

In this paper, we analyze today's fast-changing world of networked urbanism by [looking back to an earlier era of transformation that required new thinking -- the Chicago School of sociology](#) (Burgess and Bogue 1964; Harvey 2001; Phillips 2009; Sampson 2012). There is now a rich, expanding contemporary literature on the implications of social networking and the interrelations among localized, face-to-face activities and the social encounters taking 'place' on social networks (Lanier 2010; Gruzd et al. 2011; Takhteyev et al. 2012; Rainie and Wellman 2013). At the same time, the popular press -- including the technology press -- provides a steady stream of anxious discourse on the behavioral consequences of digitally connected lives (Carr 2011; Marchie 2012; Marder et al. 2012; Partnoy 2012; Rosen 2012; Schmemann 2012) that is [curiously](#) reminiscent of Simmel, Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber, Marx, and other classical theorists who struggled to make sense of the social consequences of the rapid industrialized urbanization

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of the late nineteenth century. Yet the middle generations between today’s technosocial frontier and the ‘classical’ roots of sociology are now ignored, and indeed the entire Chicago School is a tradition that “many triumphantly consider dead” (Sampson 2012, 31). However, we argue that sociologist Louis Wirth (1897-1952), and in particular the “magnificent synthesis” (LeGates and Stout 2011, 96) developed in his landmark article “Urbanism as a Way of Life” (Wirth 1938), can serve as a valuable guide to contemporary conditions. When he declared that the city “is the initiating and controlling center of economic, political, and cultural life that has drawn the most remote parts of the world into its orbit and woven diverse areas, peoples, and activities into a cosmos,” Wirth (1938, 2) gave voice to the kind of bold generalizations that had already made the Chicago School famous -- and that would later lead critics to attack the approach as an obsolete modernism. Yet Wirth’s synthesis clearly anticipated the urban facets of what Scott (2011) calls “cognitive-cultural capitalism”; other aspects of Wirth’s theory illuminate the “evolving world of networked individualism” that Rainie and Wellman (2013) identify in the rise of social networking practices that are creating “a new social operating system.” Wirth is worth re-reading, reconsidering, and re-thinking, because he gives us a unique perspective on today’s dizzying digital worlds.

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- Deleted:** inspire a revolutionary backlash a few years hence
- Comment [SMS9]:** Awkward phrasing
- Deleted:** Yet Wirth’s synthesis clearly identified the essence of today’s planetary urbanization in what Scott (2011) has theorized as “cognitive-cultural capitalism”;
- Comment [SMS10]:** Incomplete thought – worth re-reading, etc. in order to…….?

To explain how Wirth’s thought in the 1930s is relevant for today’s world of social networking, we first examine how his views on urbanism developed. Then, we distill the essential elements of his theory that are relevant to contemporary circumstances. We then apply Wirth’s theorization to analyze and interpret the implications of social networking practices for urbanism as a way of life in a world of expanding connectivity.

The City as the “Incarnation of the Good Life”

Louis Wirth was born in 1897 In Gemünden, a small village of about nine hundred people in the German Rhineland. He was the oldest son of Joseph and Rosalie Lorig Wirth, Jewish cattle merchants and small farmers who lived in a house that had been in the Wirth family for four centuries (Wirth Marvick 1964). The Wirth family was prosperous, and their home was “a social center” for the village’s small number of established Jewish families; but for Louis, the small town “was always an exemplification of the narrowness and monotony of village life,” and he “was never tempted to romanticize rural life or to bemoan the rural-urban migration.” (Wirth Marvick 1964, 334). “The city appeared to us as the incarnation of the good life,” recalled one of Louis’s brothers; “less toil and more leisure to pursue intellectual interests.” (quoted in Wirth Marvick 1964, 334).

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Wirth Marvick says 18 or 20, and I don't have primary archival source material on any exact figure.
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Wirth’s mother encouraged these intellectual interests. Rosalie had several uncles and brothers who had emigrated to America, and when one of her brothers visited Gemünden in 1911, she saw an opportunity for Louis to get a better education than what was available locally. Louis joined his maternal uncle’s family in Omaha, Nebraska, where he quickly distinguished himself in the public schools. He won a regional scholarship to the University of Chicago, arriving just before the First World War on a campus thriving with a mixture of radical anti-war activities and innovative intellectual currents in social inquiry. Wirth first planned to study medicine, but he soon discovered the new field of sociology in courses with Albion W. Small, Robert E. Park, and Ernest W. Burgess. After completing an undergraduate degree he took a position supervising the division for delinquent boys administered by the Jewish Charities of Chicago. He returned to Hyde Park for graduate work, completing an M.A. in 1925, and then a Ph.D. in 1926 with a doctoral thesis, *The Ghetto*. Wirth obtained a short-term appointment at Chicago, and then a post at Tulane, but his contract was not renewed amidst controversy over his

progressive politics. He attained a Social Science Research Council fellowship, however, that took him to Germany and France in 1930-1931 for research on the sociology of intellectual life. During Wirth's travels, Park became acting chair of the Department of Sociology at Chicago, and secured an offer of an associate professorship for Wirth. Wirth returned to Chicago to begin a focused academic career, **and having witnessed** the early days of the Fascist rise, he worked between 1932 and 1937 to get the entire Wirth family out of Germany, with most settling in the U.S.

Comment [SMS12]: Unclear – did this work to get the family out interfere with his academic career? The “but” implies that it did.

I don't think there's any evidence on that, so I've re-worded.

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Wirth “combined in a rare form the attributes of theorist, penetrating critic, and empirical investigator” (Hauser 1952, 365). Most of his theoretical scholarship was focused on “the problem of consensus as the basis of social order,” (Reiss 1964, xvii) which he investigated through empirical and policy work on race relations, urban and metropolitan growth, housing, urban planning, and mass communication. But his time was short. “He died in action, so to speak,” (Hauser 1952, 365) suffering a coronary thrombosis after stepping away from the podium when he finished a lecture on race relations to an audience at the University of Buffalo in May of 1952. Memories of Wirth soon blurred amidst the political and intellectual ferment of the 1960s, as a new generation of scholars challenged the “extraordinarily powerful influence” of a Chicago School tradition that they criticized as having been co-opted by economics methods that effectively legitimated social inequalities (Harvey 1973, 130-147; see also Harvey 2001, 68-89). It is unfortunate that Wirth, who had made room in his theory of urbanism to reflect critically on “the fact that the corporation has no soul” (Wirth 1938, 13), was soon remembered primarily as “a charter member of urbanism incorporated,” (Martindale 1958, 28) obscuring crucial aspects of his intellectual development.

Under Park's leadership, the Chicago sociologists mobilized empirical neighborhood research to operationalize two explicitly "constructivist epistemologies" (Entrekin 1980) of social reality: American pragmatism and neo-Kantian German philosophy. "What is the reality?" asked Park in a course lecture, *Notes on Method*, in April of 1927; "The reality to us is a construct. It is bound up in what we want to do" (quoted in Entrekin 1980, 48). Park distinguished between historical events as "given," versus phenomena for scientific study as "objects, activities, things and their relations"; things -- for Park, synonymous with objects and entities -- "are, in some sense, constructed by the human mind. ... the elements which enter into a process of scientific thought, are not the 'raw' data of original experience, but are invariably constructed by the mind of the thinker for the purposes of the task at hand." (Park, 1934 unpublished manuscript, cited in Entrekin 1980, 50). At the same time, however, Park relied on evolutionary theory for a ready-made framework to justify the scientific study of society (Gregory 2009). Entrekin (1980) identifies a "double irony" when the mechanistic "positivistic geography" of the 1960s quantified the holistic, processual ecological approach developed by Park in the 1920s: the new spatial-statistical analysis entailed a complete reversal of how Park, as a neo-Kantian, would have approached time (history) and space (geography), as well as the distinction between the idiographic (particular, unique) and the nomothetic (universal generalizations, scientific laws).

Yet Entrekin's (1980) painstaking work in the archives also reveals another irony that shaped the context of Wirth's thought in ways that resonate with contemporary trends in science and technology. Evolutionary theory was more than a metaphor for how to define the urban; it was also a guide for how to theorize and how to think about thinking (see Beauregard 2012 on the distinction). "Park espoused a cognitive Darwinism," Entrekin (1980, 47) concludes, "in

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which knowledge evolved and expanded in order to meet the needs created by new problems

faced by man.” The notion of cognitive Darwinism slipped into obscurity after Dewey’s death,

but the idea clearly anticipates contemporary theories of the internet enabling the “evolution of global intelligence” (Dyson 1997, 2012), the simultaneous obsession with the “neuroplasticity” of individual brains (Carr 2011; Garcia and Saad 2008) and the emergence of collective, socially networked “hive minds” (Shirky 2008, 2010; see also Castells 2012).

Recall Park’s principles: (quoted in Entrekin 1980, 48, 47): “The reality ... is a construct. It is bound up in what we want to do,” and the things we study “are invariably constructed by the mind of the thinker for the purposes of the task at hand,” as “knowledge evolve[s] and expand[s] in order to meet the needs created by new problems faced by man.”

What if these principles are applied to the study of society as a whole, for the purposes of collective improvement? Cognitive Darwinism came out of the pragmatist approach that John

Dewey was developing (Campbell 1995) when Park, as an undergraduate, studied with him at Michigan in the 1880s. Dewey’s perspective on the Darwinian revolution in philosophy as a “new logic for application to mind and morals and life” (quoted in Campbell 1995, 28) shaped Park’s efforts to make a place in the philosophy of science for the discipline of sociology -- what he came to call “the science of collective behavior” (Park 1921, 21). The Chicago School

theorists’ evolutionary thought itself evolved, of course, moving away from its biological, individual-organism roots (Bulmer 1997) towards an emphasis on the evolution of large social

groups and institutions (like neighborhoods and cities). Wirth was the key figure in this shift,

and his perspective thus helps us to see what is new -- and what is not -- in today’s popular

discourse of global technological evolution. Wirth’s abiding interest in the construction of

consensus -- and his effort to urbanize and collectivize the individualistic, “atomistic point of

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I put it in italics because it’s just a repeat of what appears, with direct quotes, in the previous pages. I’ve tried to reword to clarify.

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Deleted: *Reality is a construct, and it is bound up with what we want to do. The things we study are, in some sense, constructed by the human mind for the purposes of the task at hand. And our knowledge evolves and expands in order to meet the needs created by new problems faced by humanity.*

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view arising out of the biological and mechanistic tradition” (Wirth 1939, 965) was deeply indebted to Park. It was also shaped by Dewey’s pragmatism and cognitive Darwinism. And Wirth’s deep concern for “the problem of consensus as the basis of social order” (Reiss 1964, xvii) is an historical bridge between today’s interest in the global, collective communication power of “networks of neural networks” (Castells 2012, 219) and the very origin of sociology itself in the philosophy of Auguste Comte (1798-1857). The very first manuscript (“The Social Organism and the Collective Mind”) that became part of Park’s foundational *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* begins with Comte’s conceptualization of society as a “collective organism” of consensus:

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“The individual, as Comte expressed it, is an abstraction. Man exists as man only by participation in the life of humanity ... the individual man was, in spite of his freedom and independence, in a very real sense ‘an organ of the Great Being’ and the great being was humanity. Under the title of humanity Comte included not merely all living human beings ... but he included all that body of tradition, knowledge, custom, cultural ideas and ideals, which make up the social inheritance ... an inheritance into which each of us is born, to which we contribute, and which we inevitably hand on through the processes of education and tradition to succeeding generations. This is what Comte meant by the social organism.” (Park 1921, 2)

Comment [SMS18]: Unclear what the relevance of this section is and how it ties to your main argument. Need to tie in better or remove, and also to clarify some of the more jargon aspects of it

Comte’s “Great Being” bears a striking resemblance to how today’s Silicon Valley visionaries -- and their critics -- understand the internet and the information society (Carr, 2011; Lanier, 2010, 2013). By one estimate, the proportion of the world’s entire stock of recorded information stored in digital form increased from about 25 percent in 2000 to more than 98 percent in 2013 (Mayer-

I’ve tried to reword to clarify. This is central to the argument in demonstrating that a lot of what is described as being new in social networking actually has a long history -- at least in theory. The fact that hundreds of millions of people are interacting over social media is of course new, but the theoretical implications of ‘collective intelligence’ on an urban-and-then-global scale are not new -- and that’s where Wirth helps us bridge the link between today and a lot of nineteenth-century philosophy...

Schönberger and Cukier 2013, 9). A rapidly increasing share of the vast “social inheritance” that concerned Comte -- and that inspired Park and Wirth -- is becoming a digital inheritance. Part of that digital experience involves the relations among billions of urban residents, and certain social processes foresaw by Louis Wirth so many years ago.

Urbanism as a Way of Life

These are the contextual factors that shaped Louis Wirth’s famous article on urbanism as a way of life. In this piece, Wirth theorized that there is a distinctively urban kind of personality marked by cold, instrumental rationality, individual isolation alongside rich organizational complexity, and a ‘segmented self’ of multi-faceted roles in complex divisions of labor. Wirth’s article is an undisputed classic, but often the most influential ideas receive the most harsh criticism. As LeGates and Stout (2011, 96) note, some contemporary experts attack Wirth’s claim as “nothing more than the social scientific verification of the obvious,” while others maintain that “there is no such thing as an ‘urban personality’ or an ‘urban way of life.’” Both reactions fall into the trap of litigating the validity of a static dichotomy rather than exploring the dynamic transformation of social relations and spatial form since the 1930s. If there is no longer any distinctively urban personality today, it is because communications technologies have spread urban ways of life to many suburban and rural areas; and if this seems obvious today, it was new and disorienting in the early twentieth century.

Wirth’s 1938 article was a synthesis of his scholarly research as well as policy work as a member of the Committee on Urbanism of the Roosevelt Administration’s National Resources Planning Board (Reiss 1964, xxix). The tactic he adopted in the article was deceptively simple:

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Um, by everyone who cites Wirth but does not bother to read him or his mentors...

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Comment [SMS23]: This section implies that everybody either thinks that Wirth’s idea is so obvious as to be unimportant, or to say that he’s full of crap. Seems unlikely that he’s got no champions out there.

Comment [SMS24]: This statement implies that as scholarly theories change, the world itself will change. Is this actually so?

Well, yes, but we were not actually making that claim. To us, “interplay” means that both are changing, but not necessarily that theories cause changes in the world.

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re-orient the conventional wisdom by re-defining key words. Wirth began with a comprehensive review of the literature produced by geographers, historians, economists, and political scientists who had struggled to create unambiguous thresholds defining the urban/rural dichotomy according to thresholds of size, density, and heterogeneity. **Then he demonstrated how the search for definitive thresholds was misguided under conditions of rapid change: he applied each of these criteria -- size, density, and heterogeneity -- to analyze the processes that changed how individuals experienced collective social organization.**

Comment [SMS27]: Unclear. What does it mean to reconstruct criteria as processes?

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Three elements of Wirth's theory of urbanism remain relevant to contemporary circumstances.

First, Wirth theorizes the social effects of increasing the "size of the population aggregate":

...increasing the number of inhabitants in a settlement beyond a certain limit will affect the relations between them and the character of the city. Large numbers involve ... a greater range of individual variation. Furthermore, the greater the number of individuals participating in a process of interaction, the greater is the *potential* differentiation between them. ... Increase in the number of inhabitants of a community beyond a few hundred is bound to limit the possibility of each member of the community knowing all the others personally. ... The increase in numbers thus involves a changed character of the social relationships (Wirth 1983, 10-11).

Second, Wirth deduces the development of the segmented self:

The multiplication of persons in a state of interaction under conditions which make their contact as full personalities impossible produces that segmentalization of human relationships which has sometimes been seized upon by students of the

mental life of the cities as an explanation for the ‘schizoid’ character of urban personality. . . . Characteristically, urbanites meet one another in highly segmental roles. . . . Our acquaintances tend to stand in a relationship of utility to us in the sense that the role which each one plays in our life is overwhelmingly regarded as a means for achievement of our own ends. Whereas, therefore, the individual gains, on the one hand, a certain degree of emancipation or freedom from the personal and emotional controls of intimate groups, he loses, on the other hand, the spontaneous self-expression, the morale, and the sense of participation that comes with living in an integrated society (Wirth 1983, 12-13).

Third, Wirth hypothesizes the evolution of new relations between self and society:

“Being reduced to a stage of virtual impotence as an individual, the urbanite is bound to exert himself by joining with others of similar interest into organized groups to obtain his ends. This results in the enormous multiplication of voluntary organizations directed towards as great a variety of objectives as there are human needs and wants” (Wirth 1938, 22).

Each of these facets of Wirth’s vision -- the scalar consequences of urbanization, the segmented self, and the new relations between individual and collective identity -- provide valuable insights into contemporary similarities between cities and networked society.

Wirth in the Social Network

The global urban population share now stands at the level reached in the United States in about 1920. As the world has become majority urban, social networking practices have diffused widely: one industry source indicates that 46 percent of people surveyed around the world use

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social networking every day (Woodhouse 2011, 25), with Facebook's 1.11 billion monthly active users (Olanoff 2013) constituting the largest of a complex, evolving galaxy of competitors, each with hundreds of millions of active users. Not everyone is on social media, of course, and it is important to avoid the hyperbole and generalizations of the wired world. Even after considering these caveats, however, the urbanization of social networking merits careful scrutiny. Simple linear regression indicates that two-fifths of the wide cross-national variance of Facebook market penetration rates can be associated with cross-national urbanization rates (Fig. 1). The causal relations here are overdetermined: social networking activity may be nothing more than an outcome of urbanization, or it may be jointly determined by the social and economic causes of urbanization, or the causal linkages may vary from place to place. What is certain, however, is the simultaneous occurrence of two historically unprecedented phenomena: a majority-urban world, and a world where billions of people can and do regularly engage in social relations through dynamic networks transcending geographical proximity. As the world has become 'urban,' social media has transformed key facets of urban social relations while also diffusing them across suburban and rural areas. We highlight here four aspects of urbanization first outlined in Wirth's "Urbanism as a Way of Life," and show how they also apply to the new social relations emerging with the rise in social media use.

Size of the Population Aggregate

First, social networking is reproducing some of the systematic regularities of social organization that first inspired "Chicago style" social science (Harvey 2001, 72-73). The familiar rank-size distribution of the world's most populous cities, for instance, is closely

Comment [SMS29]: Given that 46% of the global population isn't even on the internet, this number is dubious.

Yes and no. First, every year, the numbers go up, so it's not helpful to focus on the percentage of people who are not on the internet. Second, part of what matters here is that very powerful investors and institutions are acting on this information -- and more and more institutions are actually doing everything they can to force people to use the internet (for example, replacing human customer service with various web-based systems, pushing people into online banking, etc., etc.)

Comment [SMS30]: This number also seems quite inflated. Implies that about half of all global internet users are on Facebook each month.

This figure comes from SEC regulatory filings to investors. That does not make it perfect, but it's a widely-recognized benchmark and the best data available.

The implied half-of-all users quirk appears because the estimates for global internet usage are not as consistent as those for Facebook (which, recall, is a publicly ... [1])

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paralleled by the smaller but growing rank-order estimates of Facebook users by city (Fig. 2). The position of individual cities in the two hierarchies diverges sharply, but there is a shared regularity of the urban system -- the reasonably straight line of the log-log relationship for the top of the hierarchy, albeit with a plurality bias at the peak (cf. Berry 1964; Liu and Taylor

2011). At the peak of the Facebook urban hierarchy are Bangkok, with an estimated 8.7 million users, Jakarta with 7.4 million, Istanbul with 7.1 million, and London with 6.1 million. The notable absences from the peak compared with the “real” hierarchy (Guangzhou, Shanghai) are a reminder that Facebook is only one part of the social media world. China has an hierarchical authoritarian internet regulatory regime, in the form of the state-monitored controls known as “The Great Firewall of China,” and this is a clear reminder that the geography of politics and law still matter in a networked world. But China also has the world’s highest rates of daily social media usage (Woodhouse 2011, 25) and in a society undergoing the largest magnitude of urbanization the world has ever known -- China recently announced a twelve-year plan to relocate 250 million rural residents to cities (Johnson 2012) -- internet connectivity is one of the factors conditioning the “changed character of the social relationships” of urban life identified by Wirth. Thus while China’s largest cities do not rise to the top in the worldwide urban system when Facebook is used as an indicator. Wang et al. (2010) identify striking rank-size relations in communication networks within China’s internal networks, as measured through online forums, blogs, video sharing sites, game chat rooms, and other internet circuits. It is not too much of an exaggeration to observe that new urban systems are evolving in the social media world, creating digital modifications of Berry’s (1964) “cities as systems within systems of cities.”

Segmented Selves

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The source is indicated on the figure.

Comment [SMS35]: Clarify – exemplify it to what ends?

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Comment [SMS36]: Is it highest in rate of use (%), or just highest in absolute numbers of users?

Highest rate of use of daily social media, as a percentage of all internet users.

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Comment [SMS38]: Significance of this for your argument?

Comment [SMS39]: Unclear – what do you mean here by “new urban systems” – are you saying that they are reconfiguring social relationships among people in cities? Between cities?

Both. The “urban systems” literature is huge, and influential, and readers will know what we mean...

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The second issue involves the “multiplication of persons in a state of interaction under conditions which make their contact as full persons impossible” (Wirth 1938, 12). This is the segmented self that was new in the era of classical sociology, but that has become a much more pervasive aspect of metropolitan life in the twenty-first century. To be sure, everyone segments themselves in daily “presentations of self” (Goffman 1959) that have nothing to do with internet connectivity: we take on different persona at work, with family, with friends, or with strangers on a crowded street. Yet for anyone who spends any significant time in today’s social media world, segmentation has become ubiquitous, prolific, and often quite speedy and sophisticated, mediated by software and multiple digital identities.

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Some valuable evidence on these trends comes from “The Social Side of the Internet,” a telephone interview survey of 2,303 adults aged 18 and over in the continental U.S. conducted in November and December of 2010 for the Pew Research Center’s Internet and American Life Project; one-third of the interviews were conducted with cell phone users to account for the transition away from landlines (Rainie et al. 2011). Exploration of the microdata file released by the Pew researchers yields several intriguing findings. Not surprisingly, internet usage has become generalized among American adults. Only a quarter of adults never use the internet, and on this measure today’s urbanites have more in common with small-town and rural residents than they do with suburbanites -- for whom internet usage rates approach 90 percent (Table 1). Among adults who use the internet, suburbanites are the most frequent users: 56 percent use the internet or email several times a day from home, and 47 percent do so several times a day from work (Table 2). Rural residents are significantly less connected. Suburbanites are also more likely to make use of social media (69 percent) compared with residents of small towns (60

Comment [SMS40]: But isn't this always the case in the physical world as well, and not only online? Everyone segments themselves – I'm a different person at work than I am when out drinking beer with friends, and different yet again when I'm home with my family. It seems that, with Facebook, the segmentation is in some ways less – for the most part, all my “friends” are created equal in terms of what they see/don't see online – you don't have different tiers or circles of friends, each with designated access to different parts of your profile (at least, not very easily – if it is possible, few people do it).

Good point -- segmentation is not unique to social media. I've re-worded.

But on your second point -- this is incorrect. A lot of Facebook users spend a lot of time adjusting the features explicitly designed for the management of friends -- what they can see of you, of other parts of your social network, and what order they appear to you when you log on depending on how often they communicate with you.

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percent) and rural areas (50 percent); but the gap between suburbs and big-city residents (3.8 percent) is rather modest (Table 3).

The segmentation of self is less about residential location *per se* than the volume and heterogeneity of social stimuli -- and this is where the internet has dramatically transformed the spatiality of social life. One quarter of American adults who use the internet report that the internet has enabled them to be active in “a lot more” social, civic, professional, religious, or spiritual groups than they otherwise would be able to; the share is highest among big-city residents (32 percent), and lowest among rural residents (20 percent) (Table 4). At the same time, more than a quarter of internet users report that they spend more time participating in these groups because of the internet, compared with only a tiny share (less than 6 percent) who see a direct, zero-sum tradeoff between online and offline community engagement. On the other hand, 29 percent of internet users report that they find it difficult or very difficult to keep up with group information, even though one third of these apparently overwhelmed users report that because of the internet they are devoting *more* time to their organizations. Two-thirds of all internet users report no difficulty keeping up with community activities (Table 5), although it is important to recall that all of these tabulations exclude the one-quarter of adults who do not use the internet. For those who do spend time online, however, the results imply a complex picture: *more* community engagement, *more* time devoted to social and civic group activity, and *more* difficulty keeping up with news and information.

Such findings give Rainie and Wellman (2013) a sense of optimism for an era of “networked individualism,” but time is not unlimited, and the expanded scope of social relations seems to be altering the depth and meanings experienced by segmented selves. Statistical analysis of one large database of more than one million Facebook users (Wolfram 2013)

indicates that the median number of “friends” is 342; a more recent Pew survey of U.S. teenagers (Madden et al. 2013) finds a median of 300 Facebook friends. Hypothetically, for a person who spends three hours every day socializing with friends, a sense of fairness would imply budgeting 4.2 minutes per week for each of 300 friends. Such rigid equity is clearly unrealistic, and mandates greater flexibility in the potential meanings of “friend”: about a third of U.S. teenagers have among their Facebook “friends” celebrities, musicians, or athletes (Madden et al. 2013). Social media have also given rise to a phenomenon labeled by IBM researchers as “identity management” through “multiple presentations of self in Facebook” (DiMicco et al., 2007; see

also Rosen 2012, 19). Part of this process is now subject to automation, thanks to the burdensome task of managing increasingly complicated lists of friends. To make things easier, in 2011 Facebook introduced a new system for “smart lists” that “create themselves and stay up-to-date based on profile info your friends have in common with you -- like your work, school, family, and city” (Ross 2011). Yet users are still able to modify lists and manage social ties through a wide variety of manual features, and many people devote considerable time to managing their networks as well as curating the details of their lives for varied audiences.

Madden et al. (2013, 9) describe this as “profile pruning”: half of teen Facebook users have deleted or edited something they posted in the past, or deleted comments from others on their profile; 45 percent have removed their name from photographs that have been tagged to identify them. Marder et al. (2012) find that users’ awareness of the risks of information sharing among “conflicting social spheres” (e.g., the employer who sees the wild party photographs)

significantly exacerbates anxiety and tension in social networks. Information networks are only partially freed from place-bound constraints, and thus the phenomenon of conflicting social spheres is produced through the interactions between physical place and communication

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networks, Papacharissi (2013) reviews the evidence on this phenomenon, and concludes that “the ability to edit, or *redact* one’s own, multiple self-performances, may afford a sense of place, even if temporarily so, for the individual”; such “redactional acumen becomes a survival skill” for the “networked sense of self.” (218). The networked sense of self -- the “segmentalization of human relationships” that fascinated Wirth (1938, 12) -- seems to have become more pervasive and more stressful. In focus groups with teenage Facebook users, Madden et al. found that “[t]he stress of needing to manage their reputation on Facebook” is now contributing to “waning enthusiasm” for social networking; “Nevertheless, the site is still where a large amount of socializing takes place, and teens feel they need to stay on Facebook in order to not miss out” (2013, 7).

Comment [SMS42]: I don’t see how this relates to place/sense of place at all.

I’m not sure how to make this clearer. When people go to a place of work, for example, that is one ‘social sphere,’ people need to balance what people from that sphere/place see of other aspects of one’s social life. So the ability to edit or redact a social profile is not just informational, but may shape individuals’ perception of place.

Individuals and Collective Behavior

The third development entails changes in the role of individuals in social organization. Wirth’s (1938, 12) reading of Durkheim and Simmel shaped his cautious stance towards the “impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental” nature of individuals’ social lives in the big overwhelming city; but Wirth’s insight was how the urbanite’s *anomie* fostered the city’s collective achievements of complexity, through the “enormous multiplication of voluntary organizations” (22) as individuals seek connection and community. The Pew data indicate that, at least for U.S. adults, these connections are now completely interwoven with social media. Across different types of collective group activity, social media users have higher participation rates in 23 of 28 categories (Table 6). There are, to be sure, important exceptions: non-social media users have higher participation rates in AARP and similar groups, labor unions, veteran’s groups, farm organizations, and churches and other religious affiliations. These exceptions

reflect social media of past and future: older social relations and institutions of yesterday, and traditional theological alternatives to the trending cloud-computing evangelism of Silicon Valley (Lanier 2013). For everything else in the present, however, contemporary social media enables and conditions the proliferation of organizations “directed toward as great a variety of objectives as there are human needs and interests” (Wirth 1938, 22). Organizations can be good or bad, and the apparent detail of the Pew survey response categories is deceptive: where on Table 6 do we place Facebook hate groups (Oboler 2008) or the “voluntary associations” of people who devote major investments of time to consume or contribute to the massive virtual landscape of “racism, porn, gore, misogyny, incest, and exotic abominations” of the user groups on Reddit (Chen 2012, 1)? Other voluntary organizations appear and disappear with a speed that defies categorization as well as normative judgment: Wang et al. (2010) analyze hundreds of the “people powered” search and organizing activities in China known as the “human flesh search engine,” spanning the range from citizen shamings of corrupt local officials, to much more petty, personal, and hostile versions of “digital witch hunts.”

Evolution of the Great Being

The fourth process involves a more explicitly evolutionary aspect of urbanism as a way of life. In a little-noticed section near the end of his article, Wirth (1938, 23-24) sketched a broad-brush historical view of the decline of village kinship and other pre-industrial institutions of social organization, and then considered the future of the cities of his day:

In the face of the disappearance of the territorial unit as a basis of social solidarity we create interest units. Meanwhile the city as a community resolves itself into a

series of tenuous segmental relationships superimposed upon a territorial base with a definite center but without a definite periphery and upon a division of labor which far transcends the immediate locality and is world-wide in scope. The larger the number of persons in a state of interaction with one another the lower is the level of communication and the greater is the tendency for communication to proceed ... on the basis of those things which are assumed to be common or to be of interest to all.

It is obviously, therefore, to the emerging trends in the communication system and to the production and distribution technology that has come into existence with modern civilization that we must look for the symptoms which will indicate the probable future development of urbanism as a mode of social life. The direction of the ongoing changes in urbanism will for good or ill transform not only the city but the world.

Comment [SMS43]: Are these two paragraphs a single quote? Or are they from different places? Citations needed w/ page numbers.

This is all a single quote, and the citation is above -- Wirth 1938, 23-24.

Wirth failed to anticipate Facebook's "friend recommendation" and "sponsored stories" features, or the algorithmic content and advertising delivery systems of online retailers and news/entertainment corporations -- which have achieved extraordinary precision in transforming the "interest to all" tendencies of mass communication into the customized "interest to you" stream of status updates, content recommendations, Twitter feeds, and FourSquare check-ins. Yet the transition from mass to micro-targeted communication is most certainly evolutionary in the spirit of Wirth and his mentors. Robert Park's (1921) "social organism and the collective mind" bears a striking resemblance to Clay Shirky's (2008) idea of crowdsourcing as the "hive

mind.” Comte’s “Great Being” looks a lot like the “Gutenberg moment” by which Google is transforming everyday practices of geographical knowledge production (Schuurman 2013) and earning \$40 billion annually from digitally-optimized advertising. The constructivist

epistemologies of Dewey’s cognitive Darwinism, “in which knowledge evolved and expanded in order to meet the needs created by new problems” faced by humanity (Entrekin 1980, 47) find contemporary expression in computer scientists’ efforts to transform “Big Data” into “collective awareness” through “synergy between computer networks and social networks” (Pitt et al. 2013, 41). Researchers and corporations (led by IBM) see a vision of adaptive “smart cities,” where sensor networks and social data are monitored in real time to manage regulations and incentives - transforming raw data into “a higher form of collective awareness that can motivate users to self-organize and create innovative solutions to various socioeconomic problems.” (Pitt et al., 2013, 40; see also Dyson, 1997, 2012; Lanier 2010, 2013). In other areas of study, it is now possible to map at least part of Park’s (1921) “social organism” and “collective mind” in real time on a transnational scale. Geographers are sifting Twitter feeds to infer the global “technology of religion” (Shelton et al. 2012) and are mapping geo-tagged Tweets measuring the minute-by-minute circulation of news through local, regional, national, and transnational circuits (Crampton et al. 2012).

Comment [SMS44]: Say what?

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We need to be very careful here, to avoid the exaggeration and hyperbole of assuming that every *individual* is living some sort of Facebook urbanism as a way of life; this is clearly not the case. But more than a few people *are* spending a lot of time on social media of many kinds, and the range of social experiences that take “place” in these virtual worlds is expanding: 67 percent of all internet users in the U.S. now use a social networking site (Duggan 2013, 2), while comparative survey data between 2006 and 2012 of U.S. teenagers on social media document

significant increases in the proportion who post the city or town where they live (from 61 percent to 71 percent), the name of their school (49 percent to 71 percent), their cell phone number (2 percent to 20 percent), their email address (29 percent to 53 percent), and photos of themselves (79 percent to 91 percent) (Madden et al. 2013, 3). Nine-tenths of teenage Facebook users are friends with people who do not attend the same school, and one-third are Facebook friends with people they have not met in person (not including celebrities, musicians, or athletes) (Madden et al. 2013, 6). Employers, school districts, and government agencies at all levels now devote considerable time and resources to developing, revising, and policing “social media policies.”

All of the individual activities and decisions of social media users, moreover, add up to something that is much more than simple arithmetic aggregation; the whole is much more than the sum of its parts. With 1.11 billion monthly active users spending an average of 31 minutes on the site per day (Alexa 2013), Facebook alone is a fast-evolving informational ecosystem of 34.1 billion minutes of human communication every day -- translating to 64,878 years of human expression that can be measured, monitored, mobilized, and (Facebook’s stockholders hope) monetized. This is where the neo-Kantian and cognitive Darwinian heritage cannot be forgotten, because Wirth’s “major achievement was to make the transition from the first to the second generation of the Chicago School,” as he moved beyond the “natural process and laissez-faire attitudes of his teachers in classical ecology” (Vance 1952, 96) and re-scaled the evolutionary metaphors of Park to the broader perspective of an evolving urban-industrial modernity -- an historical trajectory that, for Wirth, merited “the study of consensus as the central task of sociology” (quoted in Reiss 1964, xvii). Today, a growing share of consensus -- and disagreement -- takes place in an evolving interplay between street and tweet, mediated by technologies that are analyzed in the literature with evolutionary metaphors applied to the

Comment [SMS45]: I don’t follow you here, or see how it relates to your argument.

The revisions earlier in the manuscript should now make it clear. Influential people today -- Castells, and a lot of Silicon Valley analysts, are using Darwinian evolutionary metaphors all over the place. Wirth did it before they did, and he did it with a lot more care and caution than a lot of today’s technological evangelists.

changing nature of social institutions and social movements (Dyson 1997, 2012; Garcia and Saad 2008; Lanier 2010, 2013). Institutions and social movements are increasingly analyzed, ranked, and understood in terms of real-time social media quantitative measures of collective magnitude: to get major media coverage, a new social movement now has to get hundreds of thousands or even millions of likes on Facebook. Once the critical mass is reached, however, media coverage portrays a movement as a phenomenological entity in itself -- as a coherent object. In a wide-ranging analysis of the protests of the Arab Spring and Occupy events in hundreds of cities around the world in 2011, Manuel Castells (one of the most authoritative and strident critics of the old ecological tradition of the Chicago School in the 1970s see Harvey 2001, 78) now theorizes a new ecology of social movements as “networked in cyberspace and urban space,” with shared meanings emerging from “mental processing” that is “conditioned by the communication environment”:

Enthusiastic networked individuals ... are transformed into a conscious, collective actor
.... social change results from communicative action that involves connection between networks of neural networks from human brains stimulated by signals from a communication environment through communication networks. (Castells 2012, 3, 6, 219).

Orbit and Cosmos, Yesterday and Tomorrow

What are the implications of seeing today’s world of urbanization and social networking practices from the vantage point of Wirth’s (1938, 2) view of the city as a center that has drawn “the most remote parts of the world into its orbit and woven diverse areas, peoples, and activities into a cosmos”? Wirth is by no means the only theorist from previous centuries who gives us a

Comment [SMS46]: Unclear – is Harvey “one of the most authoritative and strident critics...”?

Harvey’s passage describes how Castells was the most outspoken and authoritative critic of the Chicago School in the 1970s...

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Comment [SMS47]: Implies that the mass of individuals becomes a single entity, with a single goal/consciousness, which seems questionable.

Yes, of course this is questionable. But Castells, who by various measures is the single most widely cited living sociologist, is saying it, and lots of people -- and corporations and investors -- are acting as if it is true. Our central point is that Wirth anticipated this kind of theory and practice, and that Wirth helps us to make up our own (individual) minds on whether a collective (hive) mind is a meaningful phenomenon.

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fresh perspective on our networked present. Yet Wirth's synthetic understanding of urbanism is unique, as is his role in a Chicago School intellectual movement to understand urbanism in a particular time and place. Overenthusiastic extrapolation of the Chicago model to other cities in the positivist search for general-systems regularities in the 1960s tainted the approach. What is clear now is the remarkable geographical contingency of social and spatial relations in an urbanizing world. This is where it is important to consider the interactions among the four Wirth-inspired processes we have described. The size of the population aggregation, segmented selves, individual-collective relations, and dynamic "collective mind" processes, all come together in geographically specific ways -- and with variable relations to internet connectivity and social media. Together, these interactions are reshaping the future of society, associations, and human place. Two implications of our findings are most important.

First, today's social networking practices are enmeshed in geographical variations in the meaning of the "urban." The Pew data indicating the highest uptake of social media in suburbs rather than central cities reflects what urbanism now means eight decades after Wirth was writing. In the United States, for at least half a century now, the vast majority of new homes and new jobs have emerged in metropolitan areas -- especially in the suburbs, in a dispersed pattern of "edgeless cities" and complex, multidimensional mixtures of residential, commercial, and infrastructural spaces in the "new suburban metropolis" (Lang 2009, 727). Wirth wrote at a time when he could see the very first years of the big technology-driven dispersal of urbanism in the twentieth century: the automobile, the single-family house on a private lot, the telephone hooked into an expanding (wired) network of systems and exchanges, and a few channels of color television. Now, twenty-first century urbanism (and suburbanism) around the world involves different mixtures of centrality, density, housing type, and communications technology. But

internet connectivity and active participation in social media seem to be the most generalized worldwide commonality in contemporary social engagement and mass movements -- among American suburban middle-class people as well as people in the Global South aspiring to middle-class economic opportunity (Castells 2012). Internet life and digital social connectivity have, in many places, come to produce the twenty-first century version of the what the telephone, the automobile, and the television were doing to change metropolitan life only in Wirth's urban American in the 1920s.

We are not aware of any systematic data comparable to the Pew survey on urban/rural contrasts in social media outside the U.S. But some evidence does seem to suggest that social media adoption depends considerably on telecommunications infrastructures; in most but not all places in the Global South, these investments tend to favor urban areas. Connectivity is certainly transforming life in rural areas, but the largest number of lives reshaped seem to be in the fast-growing cities of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Increasingly, Wirth's system-scale and segmentation/collective effects are taking place on mobile devices: there are only 40.7 computers at home per 100 households in the world, compared with 96.2 per 100 of mobile cellular subscriptions (ITU 2013). "For many people outside of the metropolitan areas of Europe and North America," Ling and Horst (2011, 363) conclude in a survey of the literature, mobile communication "is literally their first use of electronically mediated interaction." The mobile growth of social networking -- Facebook has been under massive pressure from investors to reorient its revenue model towards mobile advertising (Goel 2013) -- is an accelerated, more spatially contingent version of what Wirth saw. The raw technical constraints to global communications have fallen, even if there are many political, economic, and legal structures that maintain geographical variation. But the first implication is clear: the "controlling and initiating

center” of Wirth’s (1938, 20) “cosmos” is now a spatially decentralized galaxy of networks, spreading across cities as well as suburbs and rural areas.

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These networks, however, are dominated by a relatively small number of giant media companies. This is the second implication. Social media is, increasingly, being designed as a delivery mechanism for targeted advertising. Regardless of the noncommercial origins of many networks, and the noncommercial motives of many users, the institutions and network designs of social media are increasingly driven by what Mander (2012) calls the “privatization of consciousness” in the increasing scope and sophistication of advertising and other sectors of “cognitive-cultural capitalism” (Scott 2011). Silicon Valley’s Marshall McLuhan, Jaron Lanier (2013, 7, 108) suggests that “[s]oftware could be the final industrial revolution,” but warns that a small number of massive databases controlled by oligopolistic “Siren Servers” has altered the economics of information: “Your lack of privacy is someone else’s wealth.” Wall Street investors were very happy when Facebook integrated its customized ad-targeting code with its database of more than a billion birthdays (Sengupta 2012). In the information industries, a comparatively small number of giant corporations (and, in some parts of the world, quasi-state institutions) maintain market dominance in circulation, rents and royalties, and analytical power - even while software innovations and a widespread democratization of creative capacities are automating and de-skilling dozens of once-secure middle-class professions (photographers, journalists, musicians). Under conditions of economic austerity and rising competition, we are seeing new practices -- crowdsourcing, crowdfunding -- that reconfigure and transform Wirth’s ideas of the calculating mind, segmented self, and relations between individual isolation and collective association. Given the constraints of individual human attention in a world of information overload, we may also expect more rapid changes in how individuals relate to

collective social institutions -- corporations, governments, families, cities, nations -- as people and institutions move more of their activities into the social media world. Wirth (1938, 24) glimpsed an earlier generation of “emerging trends in the communication system,” and helps us to see both the good and the bad in today’s social networks of rapid human communication in an urbanizing world.

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Conclusions

“As Carl Sandburg once said:

Put the city up; tear the city down

put it up again; let us find a city

Yet Chicago would never be ‘found.’ For it was not only a place, but a process.”

Mayer and Kohn (1969, 464)

Approximately one century after Louis Wirth arrived in Hyde Park to study at the University of Chicago, each of us regularly boards one of the express buses connecting various parts of the City of Vancouver and its suburbs to the Point Grey peninsula campus of the University of British Columbia. The scene is the same on almost every trip: most people ignore the people sitting next to them, while focusing devoutly on the informational worlds delivered through cellphones, BlackBerries, iPhones, iPads, and all sorts of other connected mobile devices. In some ways, there is nothing new here: books and newspapers have long allowed riders on public transit to avoid their neighbors in favor of other imagined worlds. Yet in other ways the instantaneous, interactive connectivity that is becoming more pervasive in so many parts of the digitally-connected world -- with a population of 2.4 billion and growing -- does

create genuinely new possibilities. Those smartphones on the crowded bus allow people to keep friendships going across vast distances. They allow people to keep up with fast-breaking newsfeeds on events just across town, or across the world. And they enable the speedy coordination of a last-minute face-to-face meeting -- and, from time to time in various places -- a mass protest that may just evolve into a broader social movement. In recent days, a wave of protests involving at least a quarter-million demonstrators spread from Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro to scores of smaller cities; the protest was “sparked earlier this month by a 10-cent hike in bus and subway fares” and was “organized via social media”; yesterday, “[h]undreds of Brazilians took to the street in Vancouver in a show of solidarity,” mirroring dozens of “Change Brazil” protests in many other cities (CBC News 2013). Watch the YouTube video of the protest, and you see a festive but insistent crowd in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery, holding signs and singing loudly; at least half of the people in the crowd are holding cameras or smartphones, recording this urban encounter so it can be uploaded to the fast-evolving transnational urban system of social media.

In this paper, we analyzed the theoretical and empirical relations between these new social-media worlds and the legacy of the Chicago School urban sociologist Louis Wirth (1897-1952). Through Wirth’s (1938) “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” key currents in the nineteenth-century philosophical origins of sociology provide valuable insights into the exciting yet confusing blend of continuity and change in the urban experience. Not everyone is an urbanite, and not everyone is on social media; but the world is now majority-urban, a third of humanity is regularly connected to the internet, and a seventh regularly conduct significant parts of their social lives on today’s leading network, Facebook. Wirth’s (1938) distillation of the wide-ranging transformations of early twentieth-century modernist urbanism help us understand the

Comment [SMS48]: Seems worth noting , perhaps earlier, that China bans Facebook and has their own system, Renren (sp?). So geography still plays a role in connectivity and access to the networked world.

Good point. I’ve noted this earlier in the section on size of the population aggregate.

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new **hierarchies emerging** on social networks, the “segmented self” of the **multi-tasking** metropolitan mind, the proliferation of voluntary associations of all kinds, and the evolution of networked social movements that are now widely understood as **conscious, collective phenomena** that are more than simply the sum of individual choices and decisions. In a majority-urban world of social media, **urbanism has become a distinctively networked way of life**, and “ongoing changes” in this new hybrid of material and virtual relations “**will for good or ill transform not only the city but the world**” (Wirth 1938, 24).

Comment [SMS49]: Not sure what you mean by this.

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Comment [SMS50]: Stereotypes. Plenty of unsophisticated boobs in cities, plenty of sophistication out in the sticks.....

information overload is the key point... revised to address this

Comment [SMS51]: How so? Implies a sort of superorganic phenomenon, no?

Wow, wonderful comment. I agree. It would take another full-length paper, however, to explore the full implications here -- and I'd have to re-read Duncan and Ley's 1980 paper to dive into that...

Comment [SMS52]: See my comments in the response letter -- implications of bringing “urban” style connections to non-urban settings seems to be an important shift that you should address.

addressed a bit earlier...

Comment [SMS53]: Given Wirth's predictions/analysis of the effect of the new urban lifestyle on people, what sort of transformations seem likely?

Mentioned some implications in the new discussion section...

Acknowledgements

For valuable comments and recommendations on an earlier version of this manuscript, we are grateful to Steven M. Schnell, Susan Hanson, Samuel Johns, Manu Kabahizi, Tomi Ihalainen, and the anonymous *Geographical Bulletin* referees.

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Table 1. Internet Usage.

<i>Which of the following best describes where you now live?</i>	<i>Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?</i>			<i>Weighted N</i>
	<i>(row percentages)</i>			
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know / refused</u>	
A large city	73.1	26.9	0.0	489
A suburb near a large city	86.7	13.3	0.0	536
A small city or town	71.9	27.9	0.2	797
A rural area	74.0	25.9	0.0	442
Don't know / refused	48.8	43.4	7.7	39

Data Source: Authors' analysis of Rainie, Purcell, and Smith (2011).

Table 2. Frequency of Internet Usage.

<i>Which of the following best describes where you now live?</i>	<i>About how often do you use the internet or email from home ?</i>								<i>Weighted N</i>
	<i>(row percentages)</i>								
	<i>Several times a day</i>	<i>About once a day</i>	<i>3-5 days a week</i>	<i>1-2 days a week</i>	<i>Every few weeks</i>	<i>Less often</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Don't know / refused</i>	
A large city	46.4	16.5	17.7	6.9	4.0	1.9	6.0	0.5	368
A suburb near a large city	56.4	20.1	8.7	7.4	2.2	2.9	2.3	0.1	471
A small city or town	42.1	20.8	12.3	11.1	5.1	5.5	3.1	0.0	583
A rural area	35.5	25.8	10.7	9.8	6.4	4.2	7.5	0.0	329
Don't know / refused	52.7	3.8	11.4	10.8	6.6	0.0	10.7	0.0	20

<i>Which of the following best describes where you now live?</i>	<i>About how often do you use the internet or email from work ?</i>								<i>Weighted N</i>
	<i>(row percentages)</i>								
	<i>Several times a day</i>	<i>About once a day</i>	<i>3-5 days a week</i>	<i>1-2 days a week</i>	<i>Every few weeks</i>	<i>Less often</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Don't know / refused</i>	
A large city	42.5	7.6	2.9	2.8	0.9	1.4	40.0	1.9	368
A suburb near a large city	47.1	7.8	2.6	1.9	1.6	1.2	37.4	0.3	471
A small city or town	32.0	6.8	3.0	4.2	1.4	2.8	49.2	0.1	583
A rural area	28.1	6.8	4.0	4.6	1.3	1.4	53.2	0.6	329
Don't know / refused	26.8	0.0	11.1	2.4	12.1	2.3	45.1	0.0	20

Data Source: Authors' analysis of Rainie, Purcell, and Smith (2011).

Table 3. Social Media Usage.

<i>Which of the following best describes where you now live?</i>	<i>Do you ever use the internet to use a social networking site like MySpace, Facebook, or LinkedIn.com?</i>			<i>Weighted N</i>
	<i>(row percentages)</i>			
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know / refused</i>	
A large city	65.0	35.0	0.0	368
A suburb near a large city	68.8	31.2	0.0	471
A small city or town	60.2	39.6	0.1	583
A rural area	50.4	49.6	0.0	329
Don't know / refused	57.3	42.7	0.0	20

Data Source: Authors' analysis of Rainie, Purcell, and Smith (2011).

Table 4. Internet and Community Engagement.

Overall, does the internet make it possible for you to be active in a greater number of groups than you otherwise would be able to, or does it have no impact on this?

(row percentages)

<i>Which of the following best describes where you now live?</i>	<i>(row percentages)</i>			<i>Weighted N</i>
	<i>Yes, a lot more groups</i>	<i>Yes, just a few more groups</i>	<i>No, internet has no impact</i>	
A large city	31.7	16.6	49.6	291
A suburb near a large city	26.9	22.9	49.4	406
A small city or town	25.6	20.3	53.3	441
A rural area	19.9	18.5	61.3	265
Don't know / refused	11.1	26.4	46.7	16

Data Source: Authors' analysis of Rainie, Purcell, and Smith (2011).

Table 5. Community Engagement and Keeping Up with Information.

Would you say that it is very easy, easy, difficult, or very difficult to keep up with all the news, info, and activities of the different groups in which you are currently active?

(Weighted N)

<i>Overall, would you say that you spend</i>	<i>Very easy</i>	<i>Easy</i>	<i>Difficult</i>	<i>Very Difficult</i>	<i>Don't know/refused</i>
<i>More time participating in social, civic, professional, religious, or spiritual group activities because of the internet</i>	44	198	102	32	11
<i>Less time participating in social, civic, professional, religious, or spiritual group activities because of the internet</i>	13	37	25	7	1
<i>The internet has no impact on the amount of time you spend participating in these types of groups</i>	140	507	187	55	49
<i>Don't know / refused</i>	1	6	1	0	2

Data Source: Authors' analysis of Rainie, Purcell, and Smith (2011).

Table 6. Collective Participation Rates by Social Networking Status.

Type of group	<i>Social Media User?</i>	
	Yes	No
Community groups or neighborhood associations	22.0	20.1
Church groups or other religious or spiritual organizations	38.9	45.4
Sports or recreation leagues, whether for yourself or for your child	29.7	24.6
Hobby groups or clubs	20.6	18.8
Performance or art groups, such as a choir, dance group, or craft guild	13.4	9.3
Professional or trade associations for people in your occupation	26.8	20.0
Parent groups or organizations, such as the PTA or local parent support group	17.3	10.1
Youth groups, such as the Scouts, YMCA or 4-H	12.3	8.9
Social or fraternity groups, sororities or fraternities	10.0	7.6
Veterans groups or organizations such as the American Legion or VFW	5.4	7.7
Literary discussion or study groups, such as a book club or reading group	13.7	10.1
Charitable or volunteer organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity or the Humane Society	29.1	20.3
Consumer groups, such as AAA or coupon sharing groups	28.6	25.2
Farm organizations	3.9	5.0
Travel clubs	6.4	5.7
Sports fantasy leagues	10.6	4.6
Gaming communities	8.3	3.3
National or local organizations for older adults, such as AARP	11.8	19.5
Political parties or organizations	18.9	15.1
Ethnic or cultural groups	7.0	4.8
Labor unions	8.7	8.8
Support groups for people with a particular illness or personal situation	20.6	17.3
Alumni associations	20.0	13.9
Fan groups for a particular TV show, movie, celebrity, or musical performer	8.4	3.5
Fan groups for a particular sports team or athlete	13.3	6.4
Fan groups for a particular brand, company or product	4.7	2.0
Environmental groups	9.6	7.2
Other type of professional, religious, or spiritual group not already mentioned	4.1	3.4

Data Source: Authors' analysis of Rainie, Purcell, and Smith (2011).

parts of the world into its orbit and woven diverse areas, peoples, and activities into a cosmos” (Wirth, 1938, p. 2). Replace “city” with “Facebook” (980 million estimated users), “Qzone” or “Sina Weibo” (480m and 300m, respectively, mostly in mainland China), “Vkontakte” (112m, Russia and former Soviet Republics), or any of dozens of other growing online communities. An urbanizing world is a socially-networked world. Urbanization rates account for 39 percent of the cross-national variance in Facebook’s market penetration. Circle areas are proportional to the number of active Facebook users. *Data Sources:* site registered user estimates from various sources compiled and distributed via Wikipedia; Facebook country figures from publicly distributed estimates of users over previous three months as of July 1, 2012, from Social Bakers (2012); urbanization rates from World Bank (2011). Note: not all countries are labeled, and 32 countries or territories are omitted due to missing information either on Facebook users or urbanization rates.

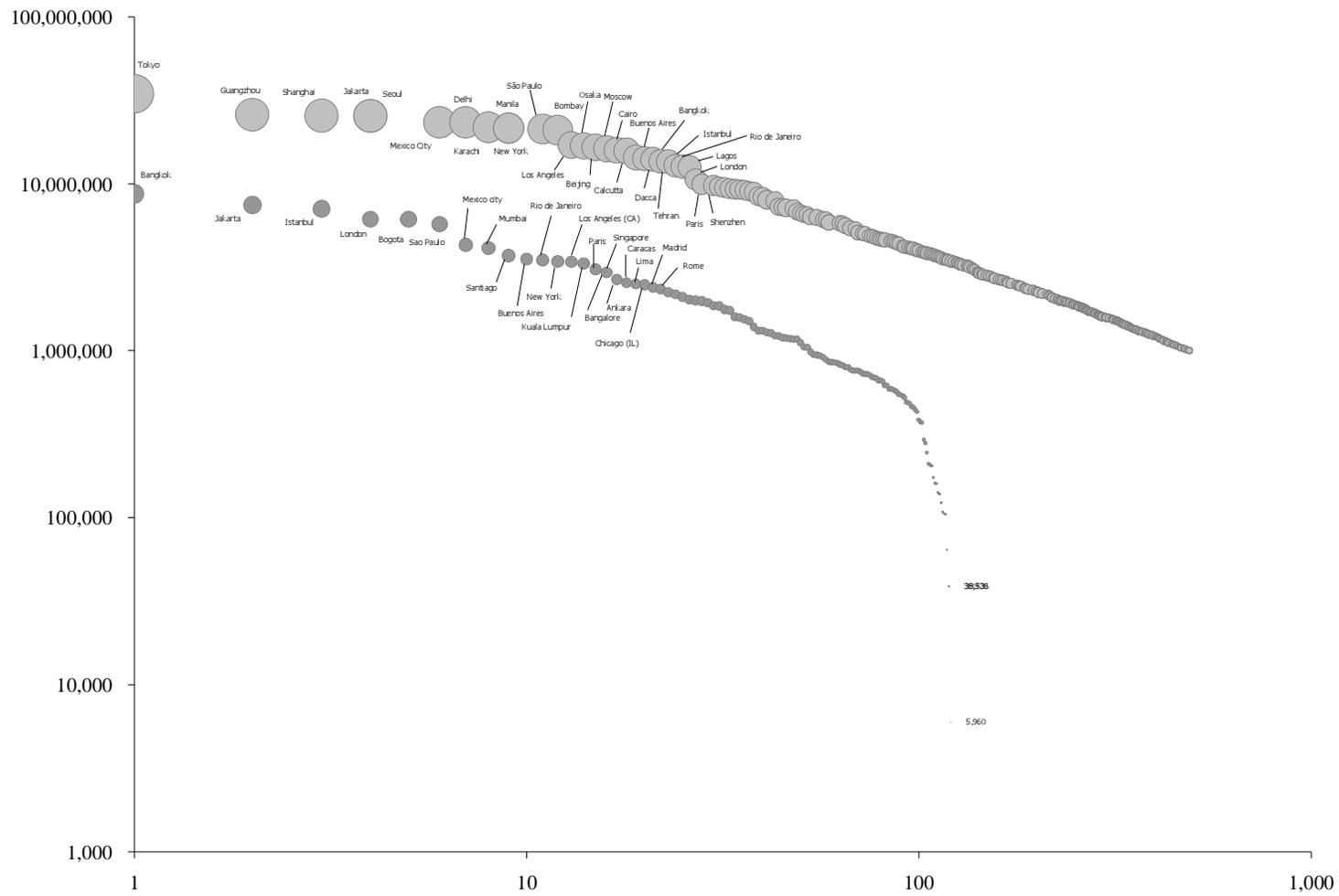


Figure 2. “Real” and “Facebook” Urban Hierarchies. Log city population (vertical axis), as a function of log rank (horizontal axis). City Facebook membership figures from publicly distributed estimates of users over previous three months as of July 1, 2012, from Social Bakers (2012); city population data from World Bank (2011). Note: not all cities are labeled.

This number also seems quite inflated. Implies that about half of all global internet users are on Facebook each month.

This figure comes from SEC regulatory filings to investors. That does not make it perfect, but it's a widely-recognized benchmark and the best data available.

The implied half-of-all users quirk appears because the estimates for global internet usage are not as consistent as those for Facebook (which, recall, is a publicly traded company that has to file SEC reports on a quarterly basis), and we chose the lower, more conservative estimates on the global user figures because

Unclear. Need to discuss this figure more and how it was derived. I'm also unclear why, according to Table 2, Facebook rates are higher in suburbs than in urban areas. Are suburbs treated as "urban" for purposes of this analysis? Need to clarify here what is included in this analysis.

It is impossible to reconcile the different definitions of "urban" in the Pew dataset -- for Table 2 -- for the market estimates provided by a technology firm behind Figure 1. The relationships are worth studying, but it's impossible to reconcile these definitions. Urban and suburban in Table 2 are the result of how people responded to the Pew researcher's question about where each person lives. Figure 1, by contrast, is based on urbanization rates used by the World Bank, and there is certainly considerable institutional variation across countries in terms of exactly what this means. But these figures are used all over the place as surrogate measures, just like GDP per capita.