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***The Ethical Gossip-Effect: Three Degrees of Inclusion
Gossip in Social Networks***

Using the scientific definition of gossip I present a study and its results on how to measure the networks based on dissemination of connections and information. Observing the human communication of closely knit social groups I came to the conclusion that the human networks are based on not more than three degrees of links. The gossip-effect must be considered as the prefactor of the news and opinions diffusion and dynamics at the social level.

My hypothesis: until the third degree of connections the gossip synchronizes the communication contents of the network. The fourth degree is a threshold: if the gossip can cross between the third and the fourth degree then through a phase transition it becomes something other than a gossip.

Looking at the network dynamics of transformation I can define the in-group: those who would be interested in hearing a gossip about me. The scope of the in-group can be defined by my proposed rule: the three degrees of inclusion: “my friend’s friend’s friend” count. And vice versa: the average distance of “smallest worlds” are defined by gossip. If a gossip comes from the fourth degree connection, than it rarely constitutes an in-group gossip.

The three degree length could be the longest path that yet can give a possible feedback of our connections that is still foreseeable and can be under one’s control. A possible reason can also be that this is the distance that can also be traveled backwards: the gossip can easily find its subject too. The gossip heard about our second level acquaintance can also affect our relation to our first degree friend, who tells the gossip. On the third degree this effect is minimal, on the fourth there is no such effect. The third degree is the gateway of the local communication.

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