

Barnes J A. Class and committees in a Norwegian island parish.
Hum. Relat. 7:39-58, 1954.
[London School of Economics, University of London, England]

Social relations in Bremnes, Norway, fall into three categories: relatively stable formal organizations serving many different purposes, unstable associations engaged in fishing, and interpersonal links that combine to form a social network and on which perceptions of class are based. In fishing situations, orders are given and obeyed; in the other social settings, consensus decisions are reached obliquely and tentatively. [The *SCI*® and *SSCI*® indicate that this paper has been cited in over 160 publications since 1955.]

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I spent 1952 and part of 1953 in western Norway, carrying out what I initially perceived as a "community study." I soon discovered that although the people I worked with had the cultural values of a "community," their social structure was quite unlike the paradigmatic *gemeinschaft*. Their social world had an abundance of formal organizations, but most individuals appeared to make decisions with reference to personal contacts that often cut across organizational boundaries. I tried to capture this configuration with the label "network" and applied it to the class system, one of the foci of my inquiries.

When I returned to Manchester, England, I used the term in the first paper I wrote on my research. Then I moved to the London School of Economics and found that Elizabeth Bott was grappling with somewhat the same pattern of relations in her work on married couples. Neither her findings nor mine attracted much attention at the time. Other inquiries with the social network as their central analytical tool followed, notably those inspired by Clyde Mitchell.¹ These made a great impact on micro-sociology, and Bott's book² and my paper came back into currency. There is now a flourishing speciality of network analysis that has its own journal, *Social Networks*; a professional organization, the International Network for Social Network Analysis; and introductory textbooks.^{3,4}

My career led me away from Norway and network analysis. I became interested in the sociology of knowledge and, in particular, in the development of specialties in social science. I've tried to keep in touch with network analysts if only as an outsider. I've even been rash enough to tell them what they look like from the outside.⁵

My paper deals not only with social networks in Norway but also with processes of decision-making. All the instances of citation that I've seen invoke only my comments on networks. I still think that what one might call the "Duke of Plaza Toro" mode of leadership I observed in some Norwegian contexts merits further analysis, but perhaps I shall have to write another paper to prove my point.

1. Mitchell J C, ed. *Social networks in urban situations: analyses of personal relationships in Central African towns*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969. 378 p. (Cited 370 times.)
2. Bott E. *Family and social network*. London: Tavistock, 1971. 252 p. (Cited 585 times.)
3. Berkowitz S D. *An introduction to structural analysis*. Toronto: Butterworth, 1982. 234 p.
4. Burt R S. *Toward a structural theory of action*. New York: Academic Press, 1982. 381 p.
5. Barnes J A. Modelling: for real or for fun? *Connections* 6(1):15-21, 1983.