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The "Network Society"

Castell's Triology

- Develops a "grand narrative of the present" where the entire planet is capitalist

- Volume I - The Network society - outlines basic tenets of a "network society"

- Volume II - The Power of Identity - outlines various processes of social change

- Volume III - End of Millennium - processes of historical transformation

Basic Thesis

- Relation between IT-Globalization-Social Development
- Two key trends in the information age
- New capitalism - global and informational
- Challenged by social movements based on cultural singularity - affirming identity
- Dialectical opposition of "self and the net"

Network Society

- Network basic form of social structure
- Social interactions take place in a "networking logic"
- Example stock exchange
- Not restricted to financial systems
- Networks not new, informational basis is what is new

Castell's IT Paradigm

- Information - raw material also outcome
- ITs are pervasive - all aspects of life
- ITs foster a networking logic because it allows to deal with complexity, which in itself is increased by IT
- Specific ITs converge into highly integrated systems

Theoretical Assumptions

- Dialectical interaction of social relations (modes of production) and technological innovation (modes of development)

- The way social groups define identity shapes the institutions of society (unlike Marxist view of identity as effect)

- Production-Development dialectic

Modes of Production

- Social relationship of the production process, class relations
- Capitalist systems and institutions embody certain social relationships
- Institutions for creation of surplus and regulation of distribution
- Driven by a capitalist logic

Modes of Development

- Technological arrangements to convert labor into a product

- The dominant mechanism for this conversion is informational

- Driven by a logic of its own- interface between science, technology and how organizations incorporate new knowledge

Network Society - Characteristics

- Represents a structural transformation (production, power and experience)
- Social processes organized around networks
- Studying the logic of these networks
- Logic based on the "power of flows" rather than "flows of power" (the "flow society")
- Social morphology dominates social action

"Space of flows"

- Global networks, comprising of:
- Technology (infrastructure) places (hubs and nodes), and managerial elite
- Topology defines inclusion/exclusion and also intensity of interactions
- Space of flows defined by
  - timeless time
  - placeless space

Place and Space

- Organizations are based in places
- Organizational logic is "placeless"
- Depend on space of flows of information networks
- Increasing complexity of networks, more place-independent
- "Structural schizophrenia"

The notion of "flows"

- Material basis of society defined by "flows"
- Flows of information asymmetric, power-ridden
- "Power of flows" more important than "flows of power"
- Flows of - finance, information, technology, and images

Space of Flows

- Space brings together practices in time
- "Space of flows" - versus
- "Space of places" (physical space)
- Organization located in places, logic "placeless"
- Megacities - simultaneously globally connected and locally disconnected

Power

- Not in institutions
- Located in networks
- Lies in codes of information
- Three kinds of dichotomies
  - net and the self
  - timeless time and placeless self
  - inclusion and exclusion