# Biological Contagion

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## Principles of Complex Systems, Vols. 1, 2, & 3D
## CSYS/MATH 6701, 6713, & a pretend number, 2024–2025

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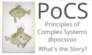
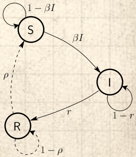
Computational Story Lab | Vermont Complex Systems Center
Santa Fe Institute | University of Vermont



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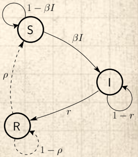

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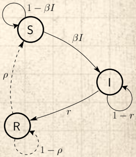
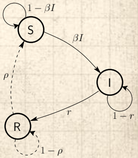


# Outline






THE SUN
THE GOLDEN AGE OF REDUCTIONISM
THE MANIFESTO
WELL OF SCALES
THE LAWS OF DECAYING POWER
THE UNEXPECTED TRANSFIGURATION
MINISTRY OF RANDOM WALKS
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THE SMALLNESS OF WORLDS
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THE NETWORKS FREE OF SCALE

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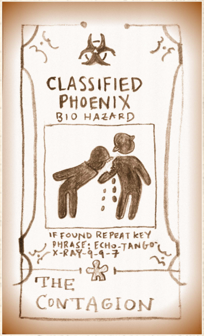
CLASSIFIED
PHOENIX
BIO HAZARD
IF FOUND REPEAT KEY PHRASE: ECHO-TANGO X-RAY-9-4-7
THE CONTAGION


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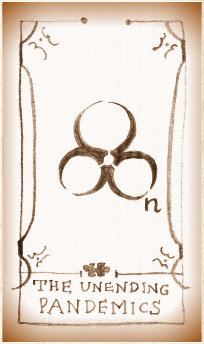
n
THE UNENDING PANDEMICS

# An awful recording: Wikipedia's list of epidemics from 430 BC on.

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## List of epidemics

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is a **list of epidemics** of infectious disease. Widespread and chronic complaints such as heart disease and allergy are not included if they are not thought to be infectious.

*This list is incomplete; you can help by expanding it.*

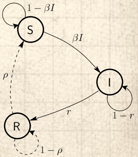
| Death toll (estimate) | Location | Date | Comment | Disease | Reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ca. 75,000 - 100,000 | Greece | 429–426 BC | Known as Plague of Athens, because it was primarily in Athens. | unknown, similar to typhoid | |
| ca. 30% of population | Europe, Western Asia, Northern Africa | 165–180 | Known as Antonine Plague, due to the name of the Roman emperor in power at the time. | unknown, symptoms similar to smallpox | |
| | Europe | 250-266 AD | Know as the Plague of Cyprian named after St. Cyprian Bishop of Carthage. | unknown, possibly smallpox | |
| ca. 40% of population | Europe | 541–542 | Known as Plague of Justinian, due to the name of the Byzantine emperor in power at the time. | Bubonic plague | [1] |
| 30% to 70% of population | Europe | 1346–1350 | Known as "Black Death" or Second plague pandemic, first return of the plague to Europe after the Justinianic plague of the 6th century. | plague | [2] |
| 5-15 million (80% of population) | Mexico | 1545-1548 | Cocoliztli | viral hemorrhagic fever | [3][4][5] |
| 2 - 2.5 million (50% of population) | Mexico | 1576 | Cocoliztli | viral hemorrhagic fever | [6][7][8] |
| | Seneca nation | 1592–1596 | | measles | [9] |

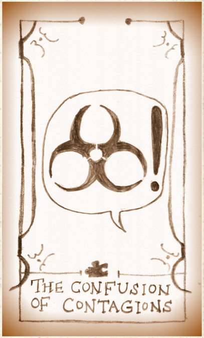
Plague panel with the triumph of death. 1607–35, Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin

An artistic portrayal of cholera which was epidemic in the 19th century








THE CONFUSION
OF CONTAGIONS

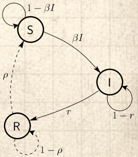
# Contagion

## A confusion of contagions:

- Did Harry Potter spread like a virus?
- Can disinformation be "infectious"?
- Suicide, violence?
- Morality? Evil? Laziness? Stupidity? Happiness?
- Religion?
- Democracy ...?
- Language? The alphabet? [10]
- Stories?







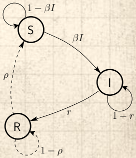
# Contagion

## Naturomorphisms

- "The feeling was contagious."
- "The news spread like wildfire."
- "Freedom is the most contagious virus known to man."
  —Hubert H. Humphrey, Johnson's vice president
- "Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm."
  —Samuel Taylor Coleridge

## Optimism according to Ambrose Bierce:

The doctrine that everything is beautiful, including what is ugly, everything good, especially the bad, and everything right that is wrong. ... It is hereditary, but fortunately not contagious.



# Social contagion

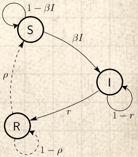




## Eric Hoffer, 1902–1983

There is a grandeur in the uniformity of the mass. When a fashion, a dance, a song, a slogan or a joke sweeps like wildfire from one end of the continent to the other, and a hundred million people roar with laughter, sway their bodies in unison, hum one song or break forth in anger and denunciation, there is the overpowering feeling that in this country we have come nearer the brotherhood of man than ever before.

Hoffer was an interesting fellow...



# The spread of fanaticism

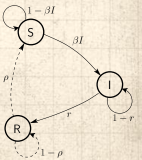




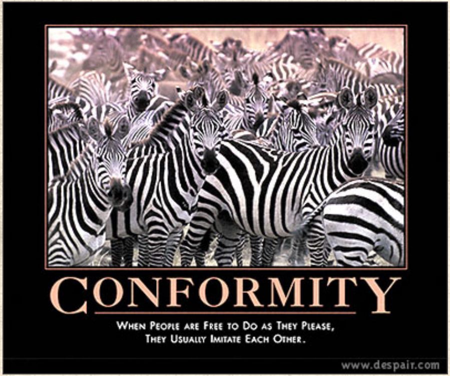
Hoffer's most famous work: "The True Believer: Thoughts On The Nature Of Mass Movements" (1951) [12]

Aphorisms-aplenty:

- "We can be absolutely certain only about things we do not understand."
- "Mass movements can rise and spread without belief in a God, but never without belief in a devil."
- "Where freedom is real, equality is the passion of the masses. Where equality is real, freedom is the passion of a small minority."



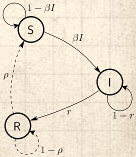
# Imitation



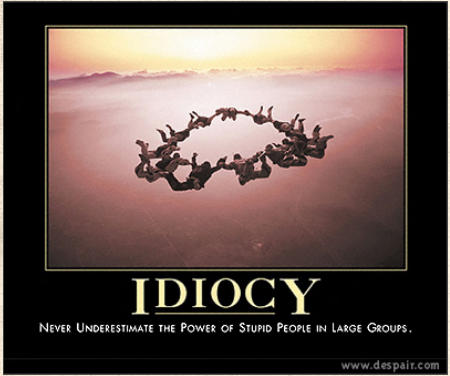

despair.com

"When people are free to do as they please, they usually imitate each other."

—Eric Hoffer "The Passionate State of Mind" [13]

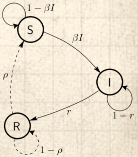


# The collective...

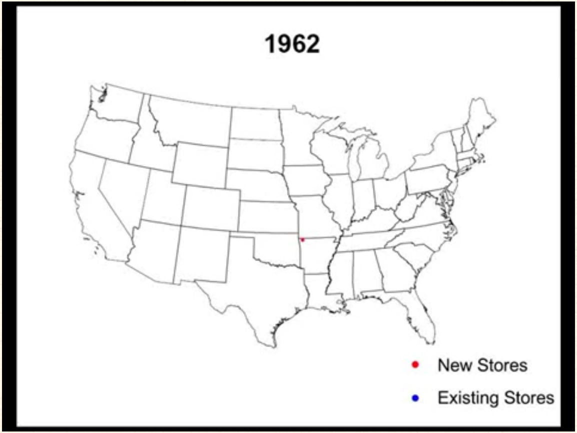



despair.com

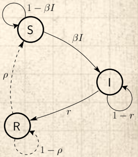
"Never Underestimate the Power of Stupid People in Large Groups."



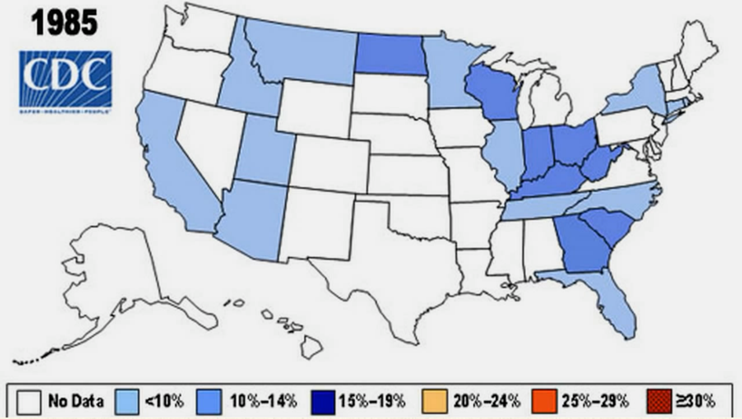
## Examples of non-disease spreading:



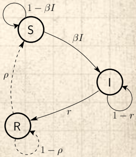

Spreading of certain buildings in the US.



## Marbleization of the US:



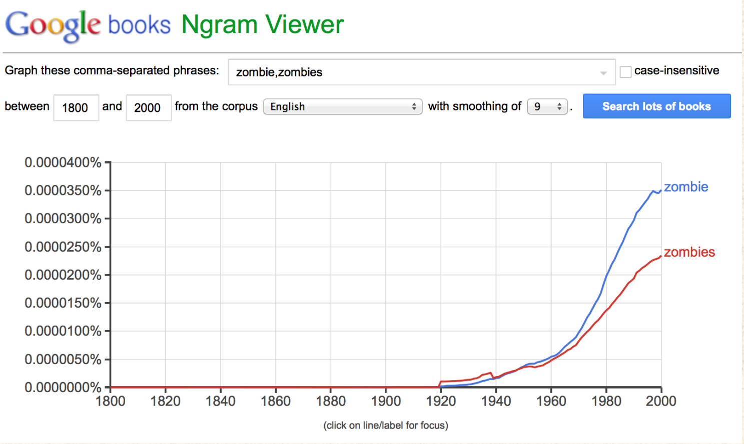

The spreading of spreading.

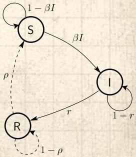


# The most terrifying contagious outbreak?

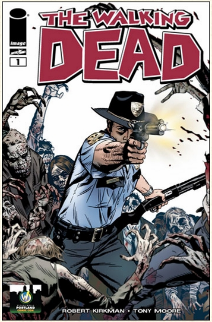


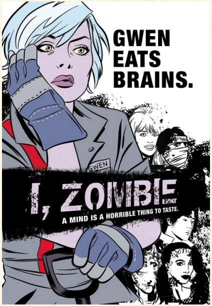




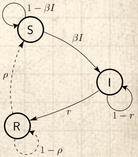




THE
WALKING DEAD


THE WALKING
DEAD
ROBERT KIRKMAN • TONY MOORE


GWEN
EATS
BRAINS.
GWEN
I, ZOMBIE
A MIND IS A HORRIBLE THING TO TASTE.


iZOMBiE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$\rho$
$r$
$1-r$
$1-\rho$

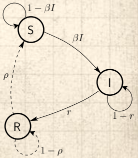
# Contagion





## Definitions

- (1) The spreading of a quality or quantity between individuals in a population.
- (2) A disease itself:
  the plague, a blight, the dreaded lurgi, ...
- from Latin: *con* = 'with' + *tangere* 'to touch.'
- Contagion has unpleasant overtones...
- Just Spreading might be a more neutral word
- But contagion is kind of exciting...

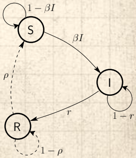


# Contagions

## Two main classes of contagion

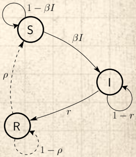
1. Infectious diseases:
   tuberculosis, HIV, ebola, SARS, influenza, zombification, ...

2. Social contagion:
   fashion, word usage, rumors, uprisings, religion, stories about zombies, ...



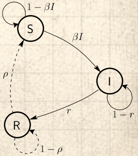
## Archival footage from the Black Plague:

Bring out your dead.



# Community—S2E06: Epidemiology


"I thought I was special"

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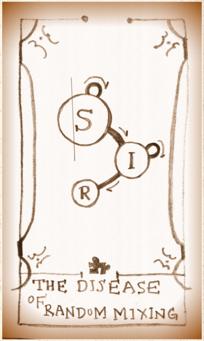
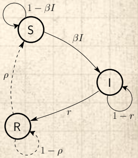

S
I
R
THE DISEASE OF RANDOM MIXING

# Mathematical Epidemiology

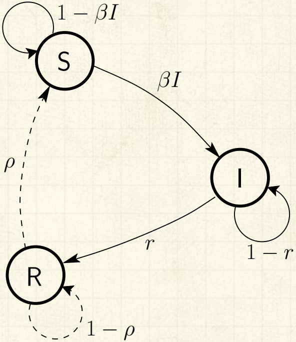
## The standard SIR model [18]

- = basic model of disease contagion
- Three states:
  1. S = Susceptible
  2. I = Infective/Infectious
  3. R = Recovered or Removed or Refractory
- $S(t) + I(t) + R(t) = 1$
- Presumes random interactions (mass-action principle)
- Interactions are independent (no memory)
- Discrete and continuous time versions



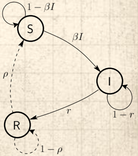
# Mathematical Epidemiology

## Discrete time automata example:




Transition Probabilities:

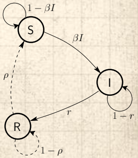
$\beta$ for being infected given contact with infected
$r$ for recovery
$\rho$ for loss of immunity



# Mathematical Epidemiology

## Original models attributed to

- 1920's: Reed and Frost
- 1920's/1930's: Kermack and McKendrick [14, 16, 15]
- Coupled differential equations with a mass-action principle



# Independent Interaction models





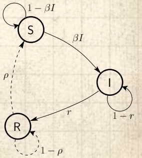
## Differential equations for continuous model

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}}{\mathrm{d}t} S = -\beta I S + \rho R$$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}}{\mathrm{d}t} I = \beta I S - r I$$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}}{\mathrm{d}t} R = r I - \rho R$$

$\beta$, $r$, and $\rho$ are now rates.



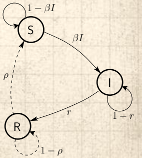
# Reproduction Number $R_0$





## Reproduction Number $R_0$

- $R_0$ = expected number of infected individuals resulting from a single initial infective
- Epidemic threshold: If $R_0 > 1$, 'epidemic' occurs.
- Exponential take off: $R_0^n$ where $n$ is the number of generations.
- Fantastically awful notation convention: $R_0$ and the $R$ in $SIR$.



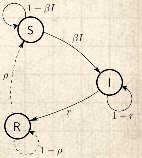
# Reproduction Number $R_0$





## Discrete version:

- Set up: One Infective in a randomly mixing population of Susceptibles
- At time $t = 0$, single infective random bumps into a Susceptible
- Probability of transmission = $\beta$
- At time $t = 1$, single Infective remains infected with probability $1 - r$
- At time $t = k$, single Infective remains infected with probability $(1 - r)^k$



# Reproduction Number $R_0$





## Discrete version:

- Expected number infected by original infective:

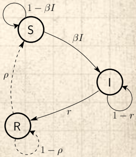
$$R_0 = \beta + (1-r)\beta + (1-r)^2\beta + (1-r)^3\beta + \dots$$

$$= \beta\left(1 + (1-r) + (1-r)^2 + (1-r)^3 + \dots\right)$$

$$= \beta \frac{1}{1-(1-r)} = \beta/r$$

For $S(0) \simeq 1$ initial susceptibles
($1 - S(0) = R(0)$ = fraction initially immune):

$$R_0 = S(0)\beta/r$$

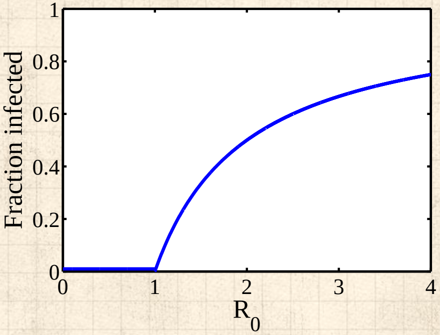


# Independent Interaction models

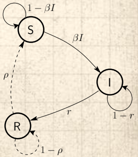




Example of epidemic threshold:




- Continuous phase transition.
- Fine idea from a simple model.



# Independent Interaction models





## For the continuous version

- Second equation:

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}}{\mathrm{d}t} I = \beta S I - r I$$

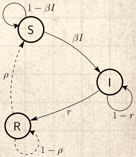
$$\frac{\mathrm{d}}{\mathrm{d}t} I = (\beta S - r) I$$

- Number of infectives grows initially if

$$\beta S(0) - r > 0 \Rightarrow \beta S(0) > r \Rightarrow \beta S(0)/r > 1$$

where $S(0) \simeq 1$.

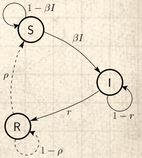
- Same story as for discrete model.



# Independent Interaction models

Many variants of the SIR model:

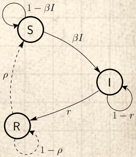
- SIS: susceptible-infective-susceptible
- SIRS: susceptible-infective-recovered-susceptible
- compartment models (age or gender partitions)
- more categories such as 'exposed' (SEIRS)
- recruitment (migration, birth)



# Watch someone else pretend to save the world:



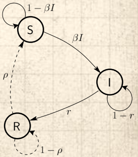


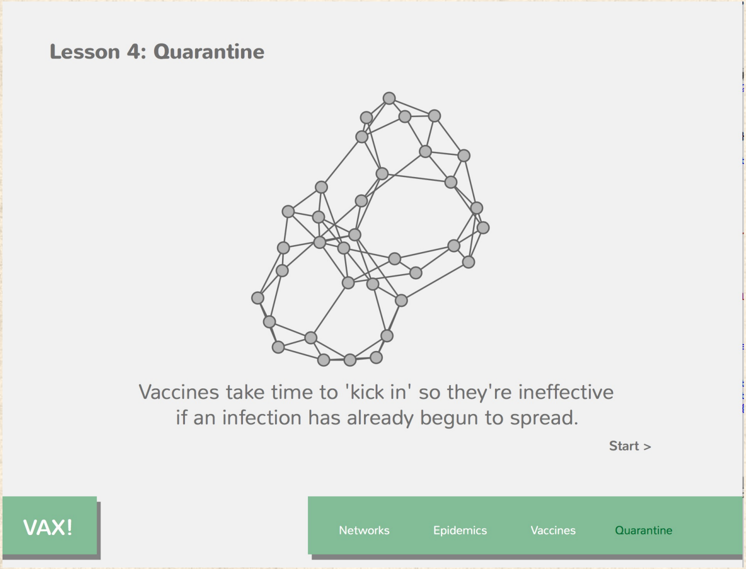
# Save the world yourself:


- And you can be the virus.
- Also contagious?: Cooperative games ...



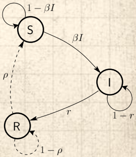


# Neural reboot—Save another pretend world with Vax:



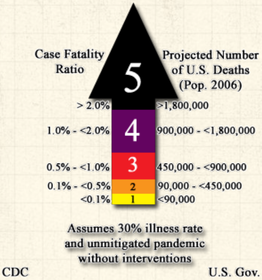




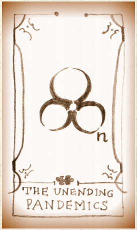



## Pandemic severity index (PSI)

- Classification during/post pandemic:




- Category based.
- 1–5 scale.
- Modeled on the Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale.

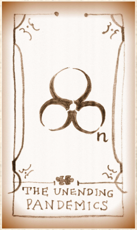


## For novel diseases:

1. Can we predict the size of an epidemic?
2. How important is the reproduction number $R_0$?

## $R_0$ approximately same for all of the following:

- 1918-19 "Spanish Flu" $\sim$ 75,000,000 world-wide, 500,000 deaths in US.
- 1957-58 "Asian Flu" $\sim$ 2,000,000 world-wide, 70,000 deaths in US.
- 1968-69 "Hong Kong Flu" $\sim$ 1,000,000 world-wide, 34,000 deaths in US.
- 2003 "SARS Epidemic" $\sim$ 800 deaths world-wide.



# Size distributions

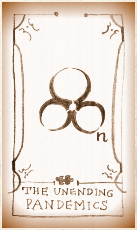
As we know, heavy-tailed size distributions are somewhat prevalent in complex systems:

- earthquakes (Gutenberg-Richter law)
- city sizes, forest fires, war fatalities
- wealth distributions
- ‘popularity’ (books, music, websites, ideas)
- Epidemics?

Power law distributions are common but not obligatory...

Really, what about epidemics?

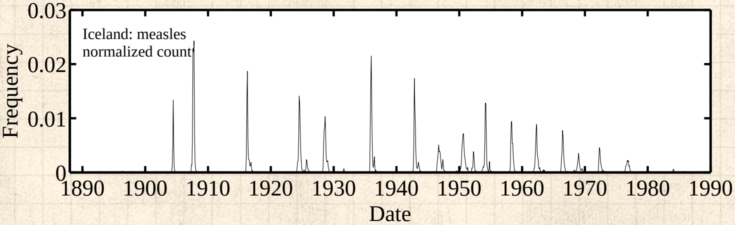
- Simply hasn’t attracted much attention.
- Data not as clean as for other phenomena.



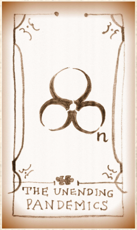
# Feeling Ill in Iceland



Caseload recorded monthly for range of diseases in Iceland, 1888-1990

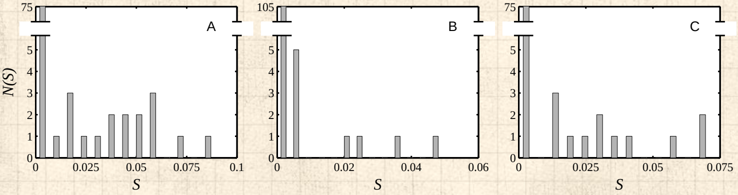



- Treat outbreaks separated in time as 'novel' diseases.



# Really not so good at all in Iceland

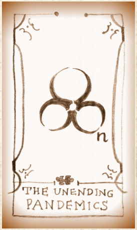
Epidemic size distributions $N(S)$ for Measles, Rubella, and Whooping Cough.




Spike near $S = 0$, relatively flat otherwise.

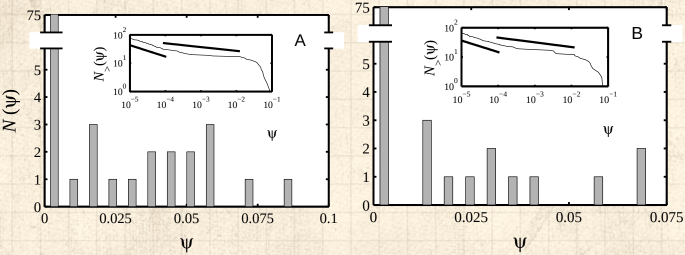






# Measles & Pertussis



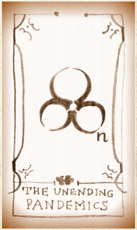



Insert plots:

Complementary cumulative frequency distributions:

$$N(\Psi' > \Psi) \propto \Psi^{-\gamma+1}$$

Limited scaling with a possible break.

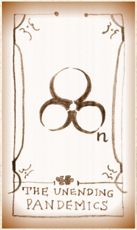


# Power law distributions

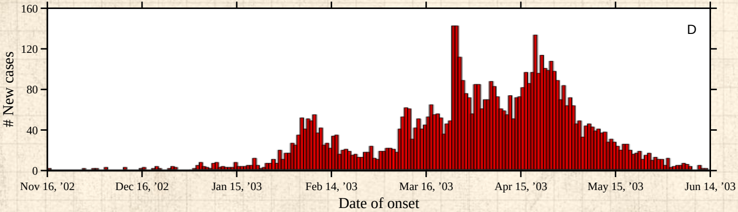
## Measured values of $\gamma$:

- measles: 1.40 (low $\Psi$) and 1.13 (high $\Psi$)
- pertussis: 1.39 (low $\Psi$) and 1.16 (high $\Psi$)

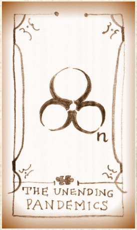
- Expect $2 \le \gamma < 3$ (finite mean, infinite variance)
- When $\gamma < 1$, can't normalize
- Distribution is quite flat.



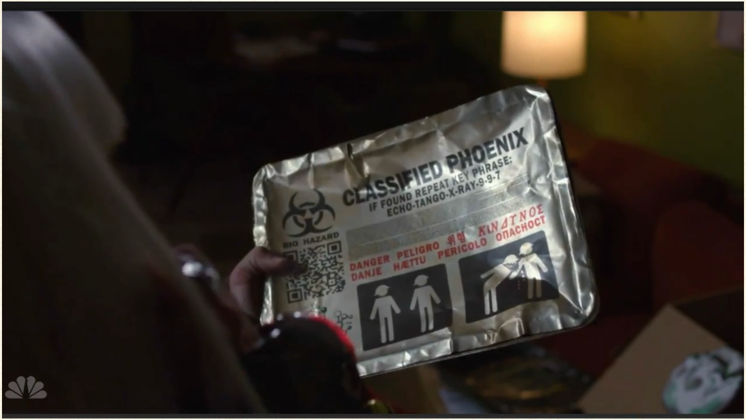
# Resurgence—example of SARS




- Epidemic slows...
  then an infective moves to a new context.
- Epidemic discovers new ‘pools’ of susceptibles: Resurgence.
- Importance of rare, stochastic events.



# Community—S2E06: Epidemiology




Classified Phoenix.

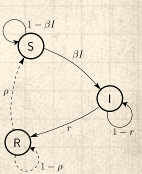
# The challenge





So... can a simple model produce

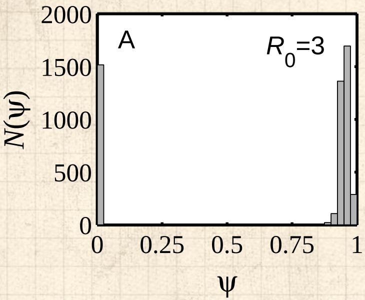
1. broad epidemic distributions
   and
2. resurgence ?



# Size distributions

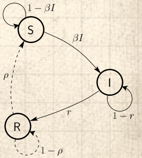







Simple models typically produce bimodal or unimodal size distributions.

- This includes network models: random, small-world, scale-free, ...
- Exceptions:
  1. Forest fire models
  2. Sophisticated metapopulation models



# Burning through the population

## Forest fire models: [19]

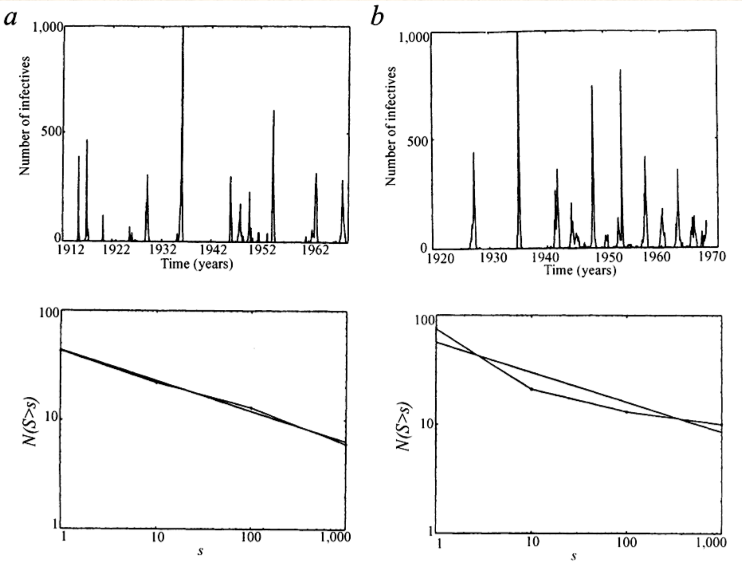
- Rhodes & Anderson, 1996
- The physicist's approach:
  "if it works for magnets, it'll work for people..."

## A bit of a stretch:

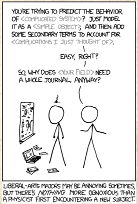
1. Epidemics ≡ forest fires
   spreading on 3-d and 5-d lattices.
2. Claim Iceland and Faroe Islands exhibit power law distributions for outbreaks.
3. Original forest fire model not completely understood.


LIBERAL-ARTS MAJORS MAY BE ANNOYING SOMETIMES, BUT THERE'S *NOTHING* MORE OBNOXIOUS THAN A PHYSICIST FIRST ENCOUNTERING A NEW SUBJECT.

# Size distributions

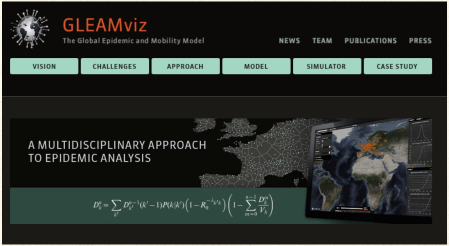



From Rhodes and Anderson, 1996.

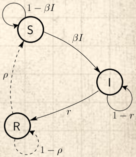


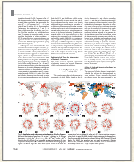
# Sophisticated metapopulation models:

- Multiscale models suggested earlier by others but not formalized (Bailey [1], Cliff and Haggett [6], Ferguson et al.)
- Community based mixing (two scales)—Longini. [17]
- Eubank et al.'s EpiSims/TRANSIMS—city simulations. [9]
- Spreading through countries—Airlines: Germann et al., Colizza et al. [7]



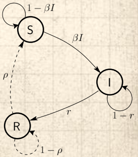

- GLEAM: Global pandemic simulations by Vespignani et al.





"The hidden geometry of complex, network-driven contagion phenomena"

Brockmann and Helbing,
Science, **342**, 1337–1342, 2013. [5]



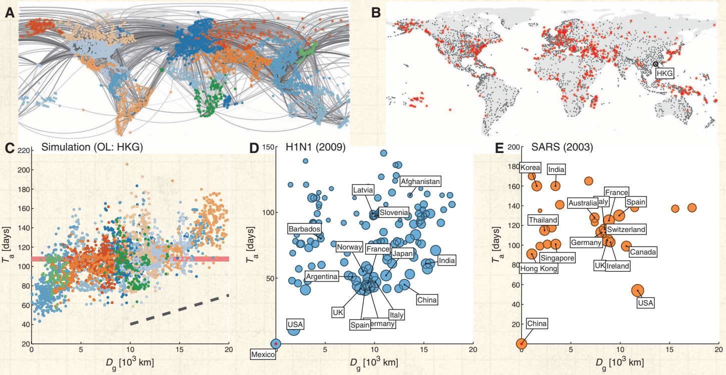
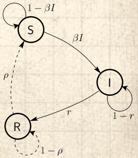



**Fig. 1. Complexity in global, network-driven contagion phenomena. (A)** The global mobility network (GMN). Gray lines represent passenger flows along direct connections between 4069 airports worldwide. Geographic regions are distinguished by color [classified according to network modularity maximization (*39*)]. **(B)** Temporal snapshot of a simulated global pandemic with initial outbreak location (OL) in Hong Kong (HKG). The simulation is based on the metapopulation model defined by Eq. 3 with parameters $R_0 = 1.5$, $\beta = 0.285$ day$^{-1}$, $\gamma = 2.8 \times 10^{-3}$ day$^{-1}$, $\varepsilon = 10^{-6}$. Red symbols depict locations with epidemic arrival times in the time window 105 days $\leq T_a \leq$ 110 days. Because of the multiscale structure of the underlying network, the spatial distribution of disease prevalence (i.e., the fraction of infected individuals) lacks geometric coherence. No clear wavefront is visible, and based on this dynamic state, the OL cannot be easily deduced. **(C)** For the same simulation as in (B), the panel depicts arrival times $T_a$ as a function of geographic distance $D_g$ from the OL [nodes are colored according to geographic region as in (A)] for each of the 4069 nodes in the network. On a global scale, $T_a$ weakly correlates with geographic distance $D_g$ ($R^2 = 0.34$). A linear fit yields an average global spreading speed of $v_g = 331$ km/day (see also fig. S7). Using $D_g$ and $v_g$ to estimate arrival times for specific locations, however, does not work well owing to the strong variability of the arrival times for a given geographic distance. The red horizontal bar corresponds to the arrival time window shown in (B). **(D)** Arrival times versus geographic distance from the source (Mexico) for the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. Symbols represent 140 affected countries, and symbol size quantifies total traffic per country. Arrival times are defined as the date of the first confirmed case in a given country after the initial outbreak on 17 March 2009. As in the simulated scenario, arrival time and geographic distance are only weakly correlated ($R^2 = 0.0394$). **(E)** In analogy to (D), the panel depicts the arrival times versus geographic distance from the source (China) of the 2003 SARS epidemic for 29 affected countries worldwide. Arrival times are taken from WHO published data (*2*). As in (C) and (D), arrival time correlates weakly with geographic distance.



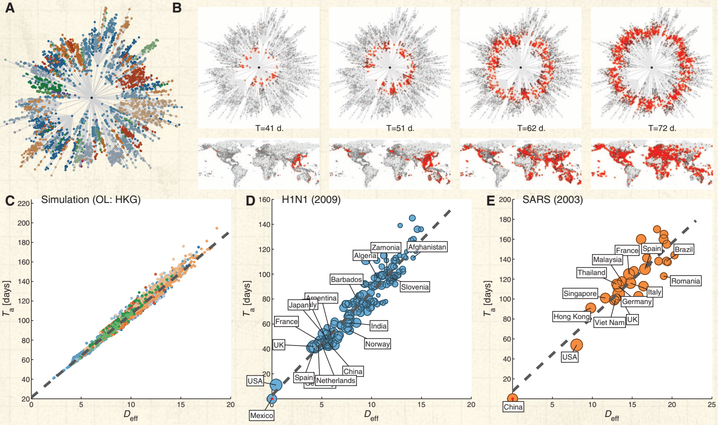
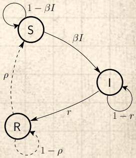



**Fig. 2. Understanding global contagion phenomena using effective distance.** (**A**) The structure of the shortest path tree (in gray) from Hong Kong (central node). Radial distance represents effective distance $D_{eff}$ as defined by Eqs. 4 and 5. Nodes are colored according to the same scheme as in Fig. 1A. (**B**) The sequence (from left to right) of panels depicts the time course of a simulated model disease with initial outbreak in Hong Kong (HKG), for the same parameter set as used in Fig. 1B. Prevalence is reflected by the redness of the symbols. Each panel compares the state of the system in the conventional geographic representation (bottom) with the effective distance representation (top). The complex spatial pattern in the conventional view is equivalent to a homogeneous wave that propagates outwards at constant effective speed in the effective distance representation. (**C**) Epidemic arrival time $T_a$ versus effective distance $D_{eff}$ for the same simulated epidemic as in (B). In contrast to geographic distance (Fig. 1C), effective distance correlates strongly with arrival time ($R^2 = 0.973$), i.e., effective distance is an excellent predictor of arrival times. (**D** and **E**) Linear relationship between effective distance and arrival time for the 2009 H1N1 pandemic (D) and the 2003 SARS epidemic (E). The arrival time data are the same as in Fig. 1, D and E. The effective distance was computed from the projected global mobility network between countries. As in the model system, we observe a strong correlation between arrival time and effective distance.



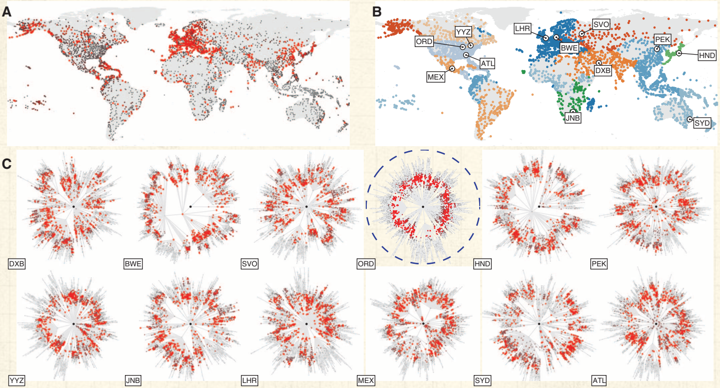
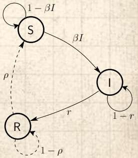
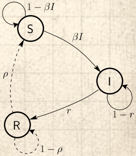



**Fig. 3. Qualitative outbreak reconstruction based on effective distance.** (**A**) Spatial distribution of prevalence $j_n(t)$ at time $T = 81$ days for OL Chicago (parameters $\beta = 0.28\ \text{day}^{-1}$, $R_0 = 1.9$, $\gamma = 2.8 \times 10^{-3}\ \text{day}^{-1}$, and $\varepsilon = 10^{-6}$). After this time, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the correct OL from snapshots of the dynamics. (**B**) Candidate OLs chosen from different geographic regions. (**C**) Panels depict the state of the system shown in (A) from the perspective of each candidate OL, using each OL's shortest path tree representation. Only the actual OL (ORD, circled in blue) produces a circular wavefront. Even for comparable North American airports [Atlanta (ATL), Toronto (YYZ), and Mexico City (MEX)], the wavefronts are not nearly as concentric. Effective distances thus permit the extraction of the correct OL, based on information on the mobility network and a single snapshot of the dynamics.



# Community—S2E06: Epidemiology

Scenario B.

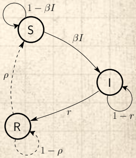


# Size distributions





- Vital work but perhaps hard to generalize from...
- ⇒ Create a simple model involving multiscale travel
- Very big question: What is $N$?
- Should we model SARS in Hong Kong as spreading in a neighborhood, in Hong Kong, Asia, or the world?
- For simple models, we need to know the final size beforehand...

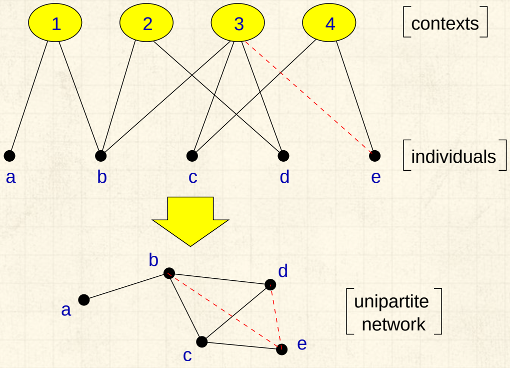


# Improving simple models

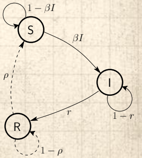




## Contexts and Identities—Bipartite networks




- boards of directors
- movies
- transportation modes (subway)



# Improving simple models





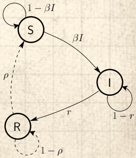
## Idea for social networks: incorporate identity

## Identity is formed from attributes such as:

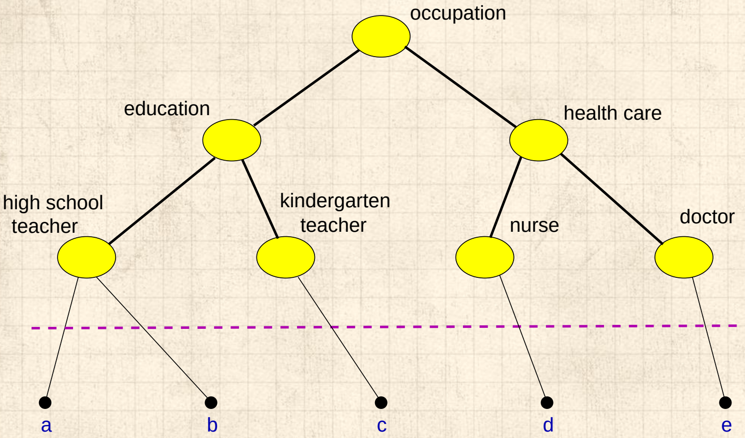
- Geographic location
- Type of employment
- Age
- Recreational activities

## Groups are crucial...

- formed by people with at least one similar attribute
- Attributes ⇔ Contexts ⇔ Interactions ⇔ Networks. [23]



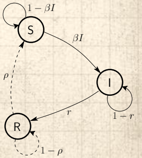
# Infer interactions/network from identities



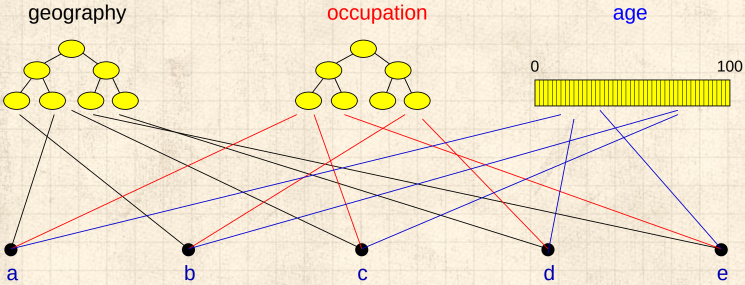

Distance makes sense in identity/context space.







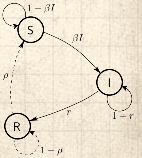
# Generalized context space




(Blau & Schwartz [3], Simmel [20], Breiger [4])







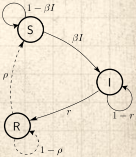
# A toy agent-based model:


Multiscale, resurgent epidemics in a hierarchical metapopulation model

"Multiscale, resurgent epidemics in a hierarchchial metapopulation model"
Watts et al.,
Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci., **102**, 11157–11162, 2005. [24]

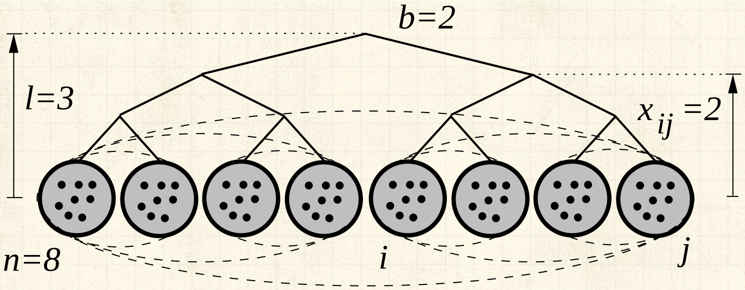
## Geography: allow people to move between contexts

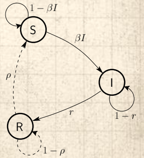
- Locally: standard SIR model with random mixing
- discrete time simulation
- $\beta$ = infection probability
- $\gamma$ = recovery probability
- $P$ = probability of travel
- Movement distance: $\Pr(d) \propto \exp(-d/\xi)$
- $\xi$ = typical travel distance



# A toy agent-based model

## Schematic:



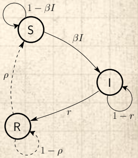



# Model output





- Define $P_0$ = Expected number of infected individuals leaving initially infected context.
- Need $P_0 > 1$ for disease to spread (independent of $R_0$).
- Limit epidemic size by restricting frequency of travel and/or range

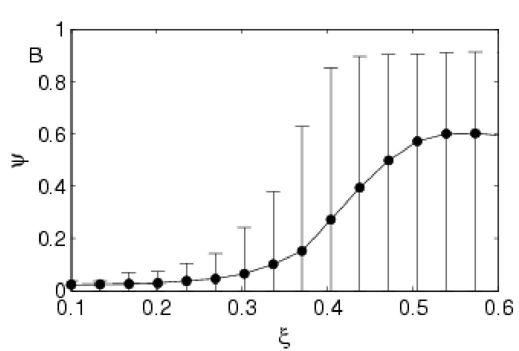


# Model output

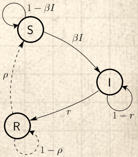




## Varying $\xi$:

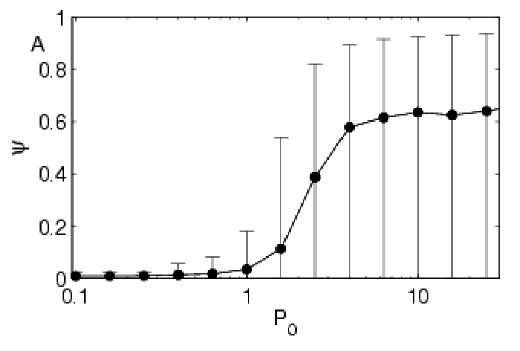



- Transition in expected final size based on typical movement distance (sensible)



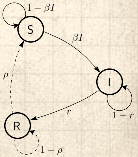
# Model output

## Varying $P_0$:

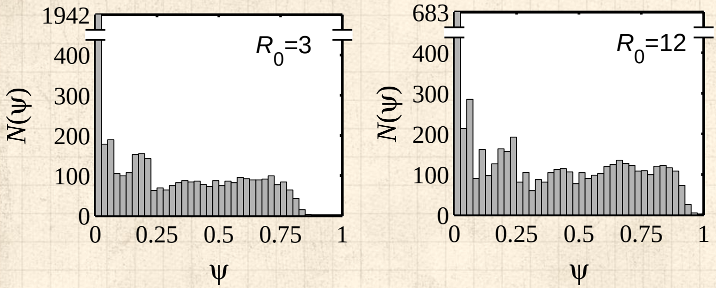



- Transition in expected final size based on typical number of infectives leaving first group (also sensible)
- Travel advisories: $\xi$ has larger effect than $P_0$.





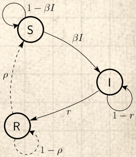
# Example model output: size distributions




- Flat distributions are possible for certain $\xi$ and $P$.
- Different $R_0$'s may produce similar distributions
- Same epidemic sizes may arise from different $R_0$'s



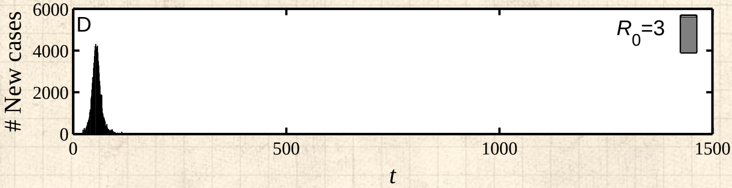


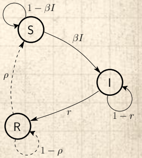


# Model output—resurgence



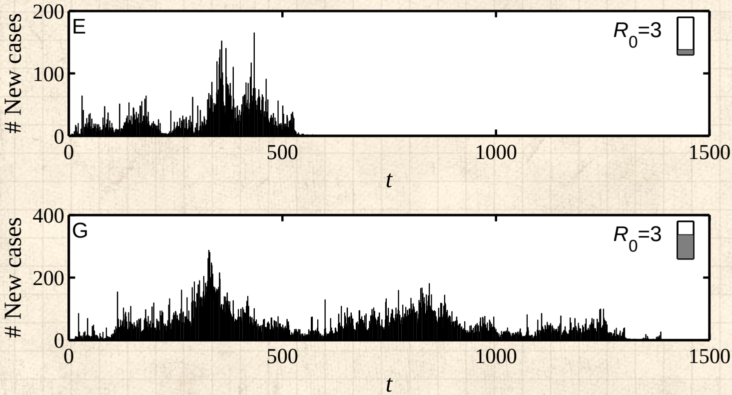
Standard model:

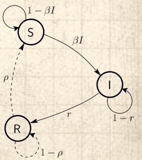


# Model output—resurgence

Standard model with transport:



# The upshot

Simple multiscale population structure

+

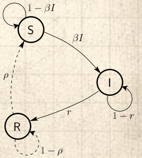
stochasticity

leads to

resurgence

+

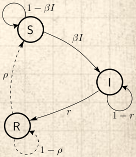
broad epidemic size distributions



# The Last of Us: Groups



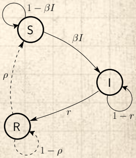


# The Last of Us: Groups

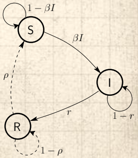




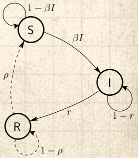
# Nutshelling

- For the hierarchical movement model, epidemic size is highly unpredictable
- Model is more complicated than SIR but still simple.
- We haven't even included normal social responses such as travel bans and self-quarantine.
- The reproduction number $R_0$ is not terribly useful.
- $R_0$, however measured, is not informative about
  1. how likely the observed epidemic size was,
  2. and how likely future epidemics will be.
- Problem: $R_0$ summarises one epidemic after the fact and enfolds movement, the price of bananas, everything.



# Conclusions

- Disease's spread is highly sensitive to population structure.
- Rare events may matter enormously: e.g., an infected individual taking an international flight.
- More support for controlling population movement: e.g., travel advisories, quarantine



# Nutshelling

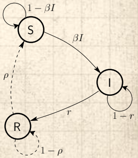


## What to do:

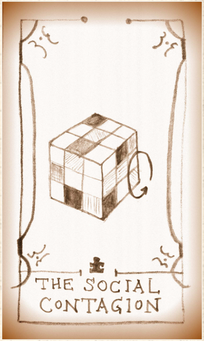
- Need to separate movement from disease
- $R_0$ needs a friend or two.
- Need $R_0 > 1$ and $P_0 > 1$ and $\xi$ sufficiently large for disease to have a chance of spreading
- And in general: keep building up the kitchen sink models.

## More wondering:

- Exactly how important are rare events in disease spreading?
- Again, what is $N$?

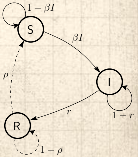



THE SUN
THE GOLDEN AGE OF REDUCTIONISM
THE MANIFESTO
THE WELL OF SCALES
THE LAWS OF DECAYING POWER
THE UNEXPECTED TRANSFIGURATION
MINISTRY OF RANDOM WALKS
THE RICH GET RICHER
THE DREAM OF EFFICIENT LANGUAGE
THE LAW OF DIGITS FIRST
THE SURPRISE OF BEING ROBUST YET FRAGILE
THE MISREADING OF THE BOOK OF SAND
THE MANY TAILS OF MANY TAILS
THE MEASURING
THE DATA POOR
THE POURING DATA
THE CHARMS OF THE MANY WRONG PATHS
THE BOOKS THAT SHOULD NOT BE OPENED
THE KNOWLEDGE OF DEAD MONKS
THE EMERGENCE OF STRUCTURE
THE EMERGENCE OF DESTRUCTION
THE EMERGENCE OF THINKING
THE EMERGENCE OF STORIES
THE MECHANICS STATISTICAL
THE THRESHOLDS OF PERCOLATION
THE NETWORKS COMPLEX
THE ELEMENTS OF WEBS
THE BIRDS OF A FEATHER
THE BIRDS NOT A FEATHER
THE ARK OF THE RANDOM NETWORK
THE STRANGENESS OF FRIENDS
THE SMALLNESS OF WORLDS
THE THEORY OF SIX DEGREES
THE NETWORKS FREE OF SCALE
THE CONTAGION
THE CONFUSION OF CONTAGIONS
THE DISEASE OF RANDOM MIXING
THE UNENDING PANDEMICS
THE THRESHOLDS OF THE MIND
THE SOCIAL WILD
THE RATIO OF GAIN
THE MECHANICS OF FAME
THE TALK OF FAME
THE STORIES CONTAGIOUS
THE JOHN DORY
THE ADJACENT NARRATIVES
THE STORYTELLERS
THE FATED ASTRAL PATH
THE PATHS OF UNIVERSALITY
THE DEPENDENT PATHS
THE TROUSERS OF BIFURCATING REALITIES
THE UNKNOWN MECHANISM
THE LANDSCAPES OF FORKING PATHS
THE NETWORKS OF BLOOD
THE TREES OF REALITY
THE ORDERS OF STREAMS
THE LAWS OF BRANCHING
THE SCALING OF BROKEN HIERARCHIES
THE BRAID OR THE BRANCH
THE LAW OF OPTIMAL FORKS
THE CHURCH OF QUARTEROLOGY
THE TRUTHICIDE
THE FAMILY OF PANCAKE COWS
THE FAMILY OF SPHERICAL COWS
THE IMPROBABLE PACHYDERM
THE ILLSCALING OF ALLOMETRIC BODIES
THE SUPPLY MOST FAIR
THE SUPPLY TO THE MOST
THE DARK ART OF GENERATING FUNCTIONS
THE RANDOM SUM OF RANDOMNESS
THE TWO-SIDED WORLDS
THE STORIES AND THE TROPES
THE TRUTH OF DIFFUSION
THE UNVEILING OF HIDDEN POWERS
THE SCRYING FOR THE SHAPES OF THINGS
THE LIMITS OF ORGANIZATIONS


THE SOCIAL CONTAGION

# Krugman, 1998: "Why most economists' predictions are wrong."

"The growth of the Internet will slow drastically, as the flaw in "Metcalfe's law"—which states that the number of potential connections in a network is proportional to the square of the number of participants—becomes apparent: most people have nothing to say to each other! By 2005 or so, it will become clear that the Internet's impact on the economy has been no greater than the fax machine's."[1]




[1] http://www.redherring.com/mag/issue55/economics.html

# Economics, Schmeconomics





## Alan Greenspan (September 18, 2007):

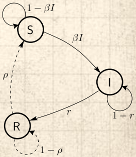
"I've been dealing with these big mathematical models of forecasting the economy ...

If I could figure out a way to determine whether or not people are more fearful or changing to more euphoric,

I don't need any of this other stuff.

I could forecast the economy better than any way I know."

http://wikipedia.org



# Economics, Schmeconomics

## Greenspan continues:

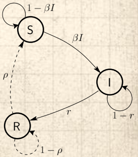
"The trouble is that we can't figure that out. I've been in the forecasting business for 50 years. I'm no better than I ever was, and nobody else is. Forecasting 50 years ago was as good or as bad as it is today. And the reason is that human nature hasn't changed. We can't improve ourselves."

## Jon Stewart:

"You just bummed the @*!# out of me."


wildbluffmedia.com

- From the Daily Show (September 18, 2007)
- The full episode is here: http://www.cc.com/video-clips/cenrt5/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-alan-gr



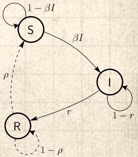
# Predicting social catastrophe isn't easy...




"Greenspan Concedes Error on Regulation"

- ...humbled Mr. Greenspan admitted that he had put too much faith in the self-correcting power of free markets ...
- "Those of us who have looked to the self-interest of lending institutions to protect shareholders' equity, myself included, are in a state of shocked disbelief"
- Rep. Henry A. Waxman: "Do you feel that your ideology pushed you to make decisions that you wish you had not made?"
- Mr. Greenspan conceded: "Yes, I've found a flaw. I don't know how significant or permanent it is. But I've been very distressed by that fact."

New York Times, October 23, 2008



# Economics, Schmeconomics



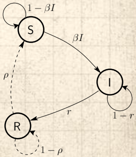


James K. Galbraith:

NYT But there are at least 15,000 professional economists in this country, and you're saying only two or three of them foresaw the mortgage crisis? [JKG] Ten or 12 would be closer than two or three.

NYT What does that say about the field of economics, which claims to be a science? [JKG] It's an enormous blot on the reputation of the profession. There are thousands of economists. Most of them teach. And most of them teach a theoretical framework that has been shown to be fundamentally useless.

From the New York Times, 11/02/2008



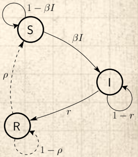
# "Waiter! There's an SIR model ramdomly mixing in my soup."[1]

## Other attempts to use SIR elsewhere:

- Adoption of ideas/beliefs (Goffman & Newell, 1964) [11]
- Spread of rumors (Daley & Kendall, 1965) [8]
- Diffusion of innovations (Bass, 1969) [2]
- Spread of fanatical behavior (Castillo-Chávez & Song, 2003)
- Spread of Feynmann diagrams (Bettencourt et al., 2006)

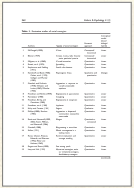
## Social contagion:

- SIR may apply sometimes ...
- But we need new fundamental models.
- Next up: Thresholds.



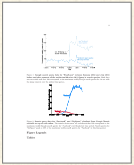

[1] Apologies sir, I'm afraid our chefs can't help themselves

# We really should know social contagion is different but …



"It's contagious: Rethinking a metaphor dialogically"
Warren and Power,
Culture & Psychology, **21**, 359–379, 2015. [22]

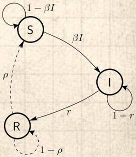
"Facebook will lose 80% of users by 2017, say Princeton researchers" (Guardian, 2014)



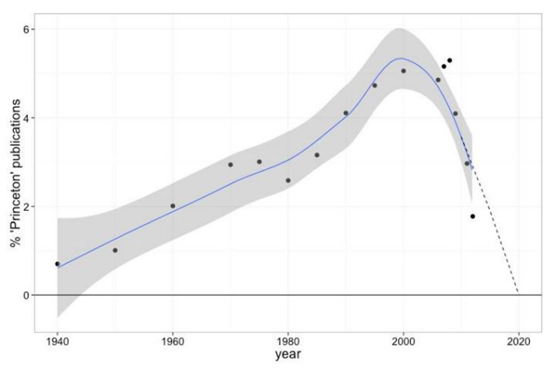
"Epidemiological modeling of online social network dynamics"
Spechler and Cannarella,
Available online at https://arxiv.org/abs/1401.4208, 2014. [21]



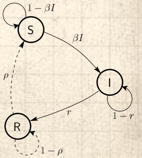




# The Facebook Data Science team's response:




Mike Develin, Lada Adamic, and Sean Taylor.



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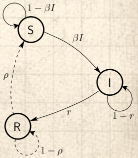

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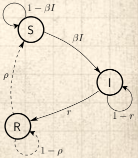

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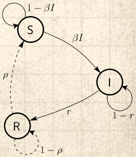

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[15] W. O. Kermack and A. G. McKendrick.
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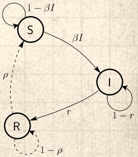

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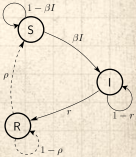

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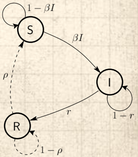

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