

# Discuss the Current Situation and Development of Social Interpersonal Relationships based on Social Atomization

Can Cui \*

Product Design Engineering, The Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, United Kingdom

\* Corresponding Author Email: cc791970302@outlook.com

**Abstract.** This paper deeply explores the phenomenon of social atomization and its extensive impact on the current situation and development of interpersonal relationships, focusing on how the information cocoons caused by the personalized recommendation system of social media and how the social distancing measures implemented during the COVID-19 epidemic have deepened this trend. Through these two specific examples, the paper reveals how social atomization has promoted the rapid change of interpersonal relationships under the background of centralized economic interests, scientific and technological progress, and the rise of individualism, leading to the disintegration of traditional social structure and the significant weakening of the connection between individuals. The article further discusses strategies to address the challenges of social atomization at the social and individual levels, highlighting the importance of promoting interpersonal connectivity through policy-making, community-building, and technology applications. Raising the openness and activities of public space, promoting the exchange of diversified information, and strengthening community cohesion are proposed as countermeasures, to promote closer and more meaningful social ties. Through a comprehensive analysis of social atomization and its impact on interpersonal relationships, this paper provides insights into understanding and responding to this complex phenomenon, while making specific suggestions for promoting social cohesion and improving the quality of interpersonal relationships to promote a more harmonious and closely connected social environment.

**Keywords:** Social atomization; interpersonal relationship; social cohesion; information cocoons.

## 1. Introduction

In today's society, the centralization trend of economic interests has shaped a special process of social atomization. In this process, the controllers of economic and social resources, the people who first acquire wealth, become social nuclei with powerful energy. And those who can provide value-added services to these wealthy classes and power groups, operate around these social nuclei like active electrons. This phenomenon leads to a rearrangement of the social structure. Young and young people tend to be part of these nuclei, while the elderly and children are increasingly marginalized. In this process, money and power became the social center, while knowledge and moral values were pushed to the edge. In this way, the rich become the center of social interaction, while the rich face the risk of being marginalized [1].

This phenomenon of social atomization not only reshapes the social structure but also profoundly affects the nature and development of interpersonal relations. Traditional models of social connection and interpersonal interaction are undergoing unprecedented changes, and the way and depth of social connection are being redefined. In this context, it is particularly important to explore the status quo and development of social interpersonal relationships, which is related to how to find and maintain interpersonal connections in the change, and how to promote social cohesion and individual social well-being in the new social structure.

Therefore, this study aims to deeply explore the transformation of social interpersonal relationships in the context of social atomization and to analyze their effects on individual life and social structure. Research questions focus on how to understand and respond to the restructuring of interpersonal relationships during the centralization of economic benefits and the implications of this restructuring for social cohesion and individual well-being. This study, it can provide profound

insight into the current change in social interpersonal relationships and provide a theoretical and practical basis for finding strategies to promote healthier social interpersonal relationships.

## 2. Overview

Social atomization refers to the state of loneliness, interaction disorder, moral disintegration, interpersonal alienation, and social anomie due to the disintegration or absence of intermediate organizations in human society. Often, crises of social atomization are accompanied by periods of social upheaval. Social atomization in interpersonal relationships is the collapse of traditional social structures, and individuals are more independent and dispersed. This is reflected in the disintegration of social organizations, the rise of individualism, the development of science and technology, and the virtualization of interpersonal relationships. This trend affects social cohesion and makes interpersonal relationships no longer dependent on the traditional social framework [2].

Social atomization has a great impact on people's social behavior and interpersonal interactions. For example, the increase of virtual social networking under technological development. More and more people rely on virtual platforms for social networking, such as social media and online communication tools. This has led to people building relationships through digital channels, reducing opportunities for real face-to-face communication. Especially in this environment, interpersonal interaction is often superficial, emphasizing images and words rather than deep emotional communication. This makes relationships even more superficial and lacks authenticity and depth. Reversing social atomization weakens the traditional face-to-face social models, such as family gatherings and neighborhood relations. People tend to act alone rather than rely on traditional social organizations and collective activities, and people are increasingly alienated. Technology has fragmented access to knowledge and ideas. Digital social networking can also lead to information overload and information filtering bubbles, making people fall into a narrow information environment. This can focus on specific things like finding like-minded people. But sometimes it comes at the expense of ignoring the wider world and society [3]. Social atomization makes the color of individualism strong in today's society, and individuals pay more attention to self-realization and independent development. This leads to a greater pursuit of personal goals than a social emphasis on shared experience and cooperation. As a result, interpersonal relationships tend to be more virtual and alienated, making individuals feel more isolated. This may lead to increased mental health problems and social anxiety.

## 3. Case Analysis

### 3.1. The Impact of Social Media on Interpersonal Relationships

Social media plays a key role in social atomization and has a profound impact on people's social patterns and interpersonal connections. In particular, in personalized media and information filtering, they have triggered a series of changes.

First of all, the rise of social media has changed people's traditional social style. They are more inclined to interact on the platform through likes, sharing, commenting, and other behaviors. The connection between people is closer than ever before. But it seems to be surrounded by the virtual world, keeping in touch with friends, family, and acquaintances. This virtual form of social interaction may have weakened real face-to-face communication and thus affected the depth of interpersonal relationships [4].

Secondly, personalized content recommendations on social media are closely related to social atom. Social media promotes the emphasis on individual subjective experience, enabling people to pay more attention to individual independent social activities rather than traditional collective social activities. This may lead to a more fragmented social behavior and a lack of coherence and deep of traditional social interaction [5]. Toutiao is the first to see a key human trait — People have the lowest psychological threshold for what they are interested in. Through smart recommendations, they

successfully reduce the cost of user reading, including in terms of screening and time. Toutiao's slogan clarifies that they are committed to pushing users through what they often follow. Similarly, when users open Taobao, they will see the pushed favorite products; when opening the network TV box, the system recommends other programs similar to the programs that users have previously watched. Even the search engine Baidu has begun to show an obvious bias. Users constantly accept the released information and then are kept in captivity, thus forming a narrow virtual world. In this world, users frequently like their favorite information, pay for the content they appreciate and complete the KPI of traffic for the APP again and again. On this basis, Internet companies will gather users with the same preferences in a certain community in a social way [6].

### **3.2. Covid-19 Period to Intensified Atomization**

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, social responses have required social distancing, wearing masks, and remote work, and these habits have changed people's daily lives and interpersonal interactions [7]. During this period, some people endure the pain caused by loneliness, while others adapt to and are willing to enjoy the lonely life, forming an individualistic social environment. With social distancing constraints, traditional face-to-face social activities are being challenged. Friends' intimate communication methods, such as gatherings and family dinners, are restricted. This situation can lead to loneliness, with many struggling with social isolation measures or complete lockdowns, and digital platforms increasingly becoming the only opportunity to communicate with the outside world. Active users of social media platforms are growing rapidly [8].

At the same time, the rise of remote work changes the way working environments and colleagues interact with each other. Virtual office reduces face-to-face communication and instead relies on digital platforms for communication, creating new challenges to teamwork and close relationships between colleagues.

These changes reflect the trend of atomization and reconstruction in modern society, and individuals are more inclined to live an independent lifestyle. People gradually alienate themselves from each other under the rational attitude of life, and the irreversible nature of globalization becomes the fact of social structure. This social atomization has had a profound impact on interpersonal relationships, challenging the traditional social model, and driving the change of social interaction.

The above two examples respectively discuss the technical factors and also consider the impact of public health emergencies on social and interpersonal relationships. They reveal different orientations of the trend of social atomization.

## **4. Discussion**

Atomization trends cause people to have broader connections on social networks, which are often shallow. Real, in-depth interpersonal communication becomes more scarce, and people's social circles become more closed.

### **4.1. Social Atomization under the COVID-19 Outbreak**

Many of the isolation measures that have emerged during the COVID-19 outbreak, while necessary to control the spread of the virus, have also exacerbated the trend of social atomization. Long-term home-stay measures during the pandemic can seriously increase loneliness among many people, create a sense of disconnection from society, and weaken social cohesion [9]. People's physical distance is transformed into psychological distance, deepening the individual's sense of isolation. During the pandemic, while digital technology (such as video calls, social media, etc.) has provided people with ways to keep in touch, it lacks the depth and temperature of face-to-face communication. People may rely more on digital devices to socialize than on traditional interpersonal interactions, which may somehow undermine the close connection between community and family. Social isolation and feelings of loneliness have been shown to negatively affect mental health [10].

## 4.2. Social Atomization

Social atomization, driven by technological advances and emergencies such as COVID-19, not only brings convenience and safety to modern life but also poses a severe challenge to the quality of interpersonal relationships. It not only weakens the emotional depth and team cohesion between individuals but also intensifies the sense of loneliness and isolation, which not only affects mental health but also may lead to an increase in psychological problems such as depression and anxiety. Social atomization may also lead to social fragmentation and increased polarization. As people increasingly form social circles around similar views and information cocoons, their exposure to different views decreases, which may hinder the formation of social consensus and aggravate differences of opinion. In the long run, this division may compromise the overall harmony of society and create more misunderstandings and conflicts. Therefore, this trend urges society to adopt multiple strategies to respond, including but not limited to increasing public space activities, promoting the exchange of diversified information, and strengthening community building. Participating in face-to-face social activities, such as community gatherings, sports activities, or cultural activities, can also enhance the individual's sense of social belonging and help to build more stable and satisfactory interpersonal relationships.

Active participation in these activities is essential to maintaining and improving the quality of interpersonal relationships. It promotes the development of empathy and the exchange of emotional support which is difficult to achieve through digital platforms. Face-to-face interactions can also facilitate nonverbal communication, such as body language and eye contact, which are important components of enhanced interpersonal intimacy and understanding. Moreover, by sharing real-world experiences, individuals can build shared memories and experiences, which provide a solid foundation for deepening relationships.

Technology can serve as a tool to maintain connections but should not completely replace real-world human interactions. Social and policymakers should also encourage and promote more public activity and community participation, providing platforms and opportunities for people to maintain and foster meaningful interpersonal relationships in an increasingly digital world.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of personalized recommendation systems for social media and isolation measures during the COVID-19 outbreak reveals the profound impact of social atomization on interpersonal relationships. The healthy development of social and interpersonal relationships cannot be separated from the diversified information exchange. This includes the development and promotion of content recommendation systems that demonstrate different perspectives, designing more inclusive and interactive public spaces, and organizing community activities to achieve and thus encourage people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Technology can serve as a tool to maintain connections but should not completely replace real-world human interactions. Social and policymakers should also encourage and promote more public activity and community participation, providing platforms and opportunities for people to maintain and foster meaningful interpersonal relationships in an increasingly digital world. Future research should focus on how to promote interpersonal connectivity through policy-making and community-building.

Overall, through case analysis, it was found that these factors intensified social atomization and harmed interpersonal relationships. Thus, future research and policymaking need to focus on how to combat this phenomenon through diverse information exchange and enhanced community building to promote healthier and stronger social connections.

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