

Social Network Analysis Study Group (BSA - SNAG) Annual Report (2013/14)

Name: Social Network Analysis Study Group (BSA - SNAG)

Established: 2006, renewed 2013

Members: 123

Income: £153,45 (September 2013)

Aims:

The group aims to support sociologists interested in social network analysis within BSA, to offer an opportunity for discussion and interaction with like-minded colleagues, and to coordinate activities of common interest. Focus is on use of *mixed methods in social network studies* of sociological relevance.

Review of the year:

After a phase of stagnation, the group has undergone profound renewal with the appointment of *two new convenors* in January 2013, Paola Tubaro (University of Greenwich) and David Miller (University of Bath). Due to multiple commitments, Miller stood down in September 2013 to be replaced by Alessio D'Angelo (Middlesex University).

A primary goal of the new convenors has been to give new life to the group. Initial steps involved:

- A new version of the website¹, online since April 2013;
- Restructuring and enhanced use of the JISC mailing list² for recruitment of new members, and for communication with existing members; the list is also used to keep track of membership;
- Co-sponsorship of the Summer School in Social Network Analysis offered by the Centre for Business Network Analysis at the University of Greenwich, 17 – 25 June 2013, allowing BSA members to benefit from a 10% discount on registration fees;
- A first group meeting on Friday, 28th June 2013 at the University of Greenwich, during the 9th UK Social Network Analysis Conference.

After this initial phase of re-launch, the June meeting was an important opportunity to make important decisions about the orientations of the group and to plan future activities. It was decided to focus on mixed method approaches to social network analysis, for two reasons:

- to appeal to a larger audience within sociology (and particularly within the BSA), whose practices are globally more inclined towards qualitative and mixed, rather than quantitative, methods;
- to distinguish the group's activities from those of other associations and centres in the multi-disciplinary field of social network analysis, where quantitative approaches are more common.

¹ <http://www.britsoc.co.uk/study-groups/social-network-analysis-group-%28snag%29.aspx>

² <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=SNA>

Along these lines, three main initiatives have been organised so far:

- A *one-day training event on "Mixed methods in social network analysis"*, organised as part of the Winter School in Analytical Methods at the University of Greenwich on 8 January 2014. The workshop involved three BSA-SNAG instructors (Alessio D'Angelo, Louise Ryan and Paola Tubaro), and offered a significant fee discount for BSA members (about 40%). It attracted 16 participants from UK and overseas institutions.
- A *one-day seminar on "Mixed Methods Approaches to Social Network Analysis"*, scheduled to take place at Middlesex University on 12 May 2014, and organised by the two convenors with Prof. Louise Ryan. After securing the participation of a high-calibre keynote speaker, Prof. Nick Crossley, we diffused a call for papers and we were pleased to receive a large number of submissions (19). We have selected 8 of them and are now in the process of informing presenters and setting up a programme. Organisational support is being provided by the BSA. A 30% fee discount is offered for BSA members.
- A *Study Group meeting at the upcoming BSA conference* in Leeds, 24 April 2014. This will be used as an opportunity to discuss future plans and initiatives with the group members and other academics.

Concluding remarks:

Overall, results obtained so far are very encouraging and we feel our efforts to revitalise the group are being rewarded. Membership, as measured by the number of registrations on the JISC mailing list, has grown steadily in the last six months and we are receiving growing number of inquiries and expressions of interest from scholars both within and outside BSA.

As a future perspective, we are considering the possibility of making the training event and the seminar a regular activity, to be offered every year; other communication tools (such as Facebook page or Twitter account) may be put in place to facilitate group interactions.

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