

Social Network Analysis Study Group (BSA - SNAG) Annual Report (2016/17)

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

Established: 2006, renewed 2013

Members: 164

Income: £283.96

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, to diffuse information on relevant publications and events, 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:

The group consists of a large number of subscribers to the JISC SNA mailing list, though very few of them are BSA members, and very few are actively involved in research in the sociology of social networks. For this reason, the group has focused on a small number of activities, primarily aiming to build on past successes and aiming to address issues that emerged as important, but without actively trying to expand any further.

The two group convenors, together with Prof Louise Ryan (also of BSA-SNAG) guest-edited a special issue of *Sociological Research Online*, on the theme of "Visualization in Mixed-Methods Research on Social Networks". The special section, which was published in May 2016, draws on the experience of a one-day workshop which the group organised in 2014. The section comprises five papers which explore the potential of visual tools in research designs and methodologies, including qualitative approaches. They provide evidence and examples of how visualization can enhance social network studies, supporting data collection, exploratory analysis and presentation of results. The papers tackle substantive subjects as diverse as friendship networks, migrants' networks and online networked health communities. For more details see: www.socresonline.org.uk/21/2/contents.html

Building on this experience, the group is organizing a stream plenary session on "Visualisation and social networks in mixed-methods sociological research", at the upcoming BSA Conference (April 2017). This session will go further in developing the group's work on visualisation by examining how visual techniques can be included in the data analysis process – an aspect that has remained insufficiently developed so far. It will also extend the discussion to a wider range of empirical contexts of analysis, such as internet networks in addition to classical face-to-face networks, and historical networks; and it will bring a fresh perspective by involving some panellists who did not participate in the publication.

Another activity undertaken this year has been the update and renewal of the group web page on the BSA's website, to better present recent and prospective activities.

Concluding remarks:

Overall, results obtained so far are very encouraging and our efforts to revitalise the group are

gradually being rewarded, despite the persistently low number of highly active members. In the year to come, we aim to build on our previous experience and continue the work already started, also involving interested other group members in the planning and design of future activities.

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