

## Social Network Analysis Group (SNAG)

Co-convenors: Prof Alessio D'Angelo, University of Derby and Prof Louise Ryan, London Metropolitan University

2 online events so far in 2026

### 1. [Innovating Ego-Network Research with Interactive Visual Tools](#)

Nuria Targarona Rifa, Louise Ryan & Alejandro Ciordia (organised in collaboration with EMCRs on Social Networks Group in the Netherlands). 20 March 2026

(based on the published article 0 Social Categories and Boundary-Making: Exploring the Potential of Interactive Visual Tools to Study Boundary Work within Personal Networks. In *Sociological Research Online*

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13607804251347267>

The speakers made the case for new **interactive qualitative data collection strategies** to inductively explore social categorisation and boundary-making processes within personal networks, bringing together the potential of visualisation and personal network research. Their presentation introduced an innovative methodological procedure for in-depth interviewing that consists of asking participants to report on specific network members while using **two novel interactive visual tools** displayed on electronic devices. By discussing examples from our research, the presenters illustrated the method's potential in the data collection and analysis stages and highlight the technical, methodological, and conceptual contributions it can make to the study of social boundaries.

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### 2. 'You Need a Network': How Highly Skilled Refugees Build Social Networks to Convert Cultural Capital and Reclaim Professional Identities

Speakers: Louise Ryan, Maria Lopez and Alessia Dalceggio held on 24 February 2026

Based on their recent publication 'You Need a Network': How Highly Skilled Refugees Build Social Networks to Convert Cultural Capital and Reclaim Professional Identities. *Sociology*, 60(2), 388-406.

Drawing upon social network analysis and longitudinal research with recently resettled Afghans in London, the speakers explored social capital in navigating upward mobility and rebuilding professional identities. Following forced migration even the most experienced and highly qualified professionals may face deskilling – 'starting from zero'. While acknowledging structural barriers, and racialised discrimination, it is important to understand refugees' strategies to rebuild careers. Building upon the 'presentation of the networked self', the presentation examined the role of relationality in how professional identity is reclaimed. Social networks can be useful routes to jobs.

However, as the speakers noted, the extent to which social connections may help with reclaiming one's former career depends, partly, on forging 'vertical ties' with those who are willing and able to recognise and legitimate that professional status.