

**NETWORKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION –
A SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS WORKSHOP**
Hosted by International Center for Higher Education Research (INCHER)
Kassel,
June 25th-28th 2012

Follow-up of the ESF/EUROHESC Workshop on Networks in Reykjavik, June 2011

Workshop Organizers:
Žarko Dragšić, Anna Kosmützky, Peter Kretek, Georg Krücken

Short description

In several disciplines and interdisciplinary fields of studies, as well as geographical regions, the network perspective has gained prominence in recent decades. By and large, many European international comparative higher education research groups have not applied this perspective to the topics typically, although there are a few exceptions. This is in stark contrast to the way in which this perspective has been taken up by higher education researchers in North America and in mainstream social sciences. The uptake of the network approach because of its rapid theoretical and methodological development allows for new insights into many higher education topics. More importantly, the social dynamics of network logics – while contested – are increasingly in the focus as the most compelling substantive features that characterize and shape the events of the early 21st century.

In this workshop we build on the discussion as well as the practical exercises of the successfully completed workshop on Networks and Social Network Analysis funded by the ESF/EUROHESC that took place in Reykjavik in June 2011. The participants' feedback at the end of the workshop indicated a strong interest in a follow-up workshop. Twelve of the participants from the first workshop have indicated their concrete interest in their participation in this here proposed workshop. Thus, we have designed this advanced follow-up workshop that will take place at INCHER, Kassel in June this year.

It is also envisaged that researchers from EuroHESC-CRPs who are new to the network perspective and social network analysis can participate in the workshop because of a built-in beginners' workshop that will take place on Monday, 25 June. Here, the new participants will be introduced to the current theoretical discussions and debates surrounding networks, as well as experience hands-on exercises with the social network analysis software UCINET designed to operationalize the relational insights of the network approach. The advanced seminar will highlight contemporary conceptual and theoretical approaches of networks in higher education (Tuesday, June 26) and offer further practical training (Wednesday, June 27) with advanced exercises, which will support the participants' efforts to conceptualize and conduct their own network studies. In the last (closed) part of the workshop (Thursday, June 28), the group of early career researchers from EUROAC, CINHEKS and TRUE currently working on a study on collaboration in international comparative research projects will work with data on ICT based collaboration collected within the EUROHESC framework and discuss potential publication strategies.

The workshop will be co-funded by INCHER, KIGG (Kassel's International Graduate Center for Social Sciences) and ESF/EuroHESC. The network perspective on Higher Education is an evolving and compelling one, and is of relevance to all four CRPs. Namely, for EUROAC Network Analysis provides a welcome supplement to the existing methodology in the analyses of the acquired quantitative data, while CINHEKS is already thematically focused on networks. Some TRUE IPs are considering integrating SNA within their research methodology and at the same time several junior researchers in different IPs plan to or are already using SNA as part of their doctoral dissertations that are thematically linked to the TRUE project itself. The RHESI CRP with its bibliometric approach is already engaged with a perspective on formal ties and relations in scientific communication networks. Finally, the follow-up workshop is important for the cross-CRP EUROHESC early career researchers group mentioned above, which is currently working on a study on collaboration in international comparative research projects. Finally, this event will facilitate scientific exchange and collaboration within the EUROHESC framework and support future publication outputs from the various research teams.

Provisional program

Monday, June 25

Introduction to Social Network Theory and Analysis – Workshop for the KIGG (incl. all participants that are new to SNA; estimated no. of participants – 25)

Cecilia Rios-Aguilar and Manuel S. Gonzales Canche

09:00 - 12:00 (incl. 10 min. coffee break)

The social network perspective

Social capital and social networks

Network Study Design

Fundamental concepts in SNT & A

12:00 - 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 15:15 Introduction to UCINET; Exercises in UCINET – entering data, creating matrices

15:15 -15:30 Coffee Break

15:30 – 17:00

Centrality, Density, Cliques; Exercises in UCINET – interpreting measures of centrality and density

17:00 - 17:15 Coffee Break

17:15 - 18:30 Exercises in UCINET – different types of visualization tools?

End of the Introductory Workshop

Tuesday, June 26

Networks in Higher Education – Conceptual and theoretical approaches - Workshop for Higher Education Researchers (INCHER, ESF and other guests)

Location: Promotionskolleg, Universität Kassel

Expected participants: ~20

09:00 Georg Krücken: Welcome and Opening

09:15 - 10:45 Markus Gamper: Social Network Analysis: A Brief Introduction

10:45 - 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30 Richard Heidler: Case study in Network Analysis

12:30- 13:45 Lunch Break

13:45 - 15:15 Jussi Välimaa: Networks in Higher Education

15:15 – 15:30 Coffee Break

15:30 – 17:30

Cecilia Rios-Aguilar and Manuel S. Gonzales Canche

Social Network Theory and Analysis Workshop – follow-up of the ESF-Network Workshop (Reykjavik, June 2011) – Part I

Positions and Roles

Social Capital Mechanisms: Closure and Brokerage

Wednesday, June 27

Cecilia Rios-Aguilar and Manuel S. Gonzalez Canche

Social Network Theory and Analysis Workshop – follow-up of the ESF-Network Workshop (Reykjavik, June 2011) – Part II

9:30 – 11:00 Recap: Strength of Ties; Structural Holes

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:45 Exercises in UCINET – exercise structural holes and strength of tie

12:45 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 15:30 Cliques and sub-groups; Affiliation networks; Exercises in UCINET – exercises cliques and affiliation networks

15:30 – 18:00 Practical application of SN Theory in Higher Education

End of Part II

Thursday, June 28

Closed working group: EUROHESC Cross-CRP group

Expected participants: ~10

(ICT group: Amy Ewen, Bojana Ćulum, Brigida Blasi, Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, David Hoffman, Hugo Horta, Terhi Nokkala, Žarko Dragšić)

9:00 – 12:00 (incl. 10 min. coffee break)

Discussion and finalization of first research paper and data analysis

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 15:00 Next steps (e.g. presentation at the EUROHESC closing conference, further data collection, etc.)

17:00 – 19:00 INCHER Research Colloquium (open to the whole University)

Cecilia Rios-Aguilar

Tentative title:

Seeking Community and Networked Individualism: Exploring the On-line Social Networks of Community College Students