

SOC618 – Social Network Analysis

Project Plan & Peer Mentoring Instructions

By the end of Week 6 (03/02), you will submit by email (accominotti@wisc.edu) a 1-to-2-page project plan as a Word document attachment.

When you email your plan to me, please use the following file name convention:
Firstname_Lastname_Soc618_Project_Plan.docx.

I will then post your project plans on Canvas for the rest of the class to access, and in Week 7 we will engage in two peer-mentoring sessions in which we will collectively workshop your pre-posted project plans.

Instructions for both activities are as follows:

Project Plan

The project plan provides a preliminary description and justification of your chosen case; it identifies and discusses potential network concepts and networks analytical strategies that you will use to analyze your case; it also identifies potential data that you will be looking into; and it includes a preliminary bibliography.

The project plan must include these four components. The word counts below are indicative, not hard limits!

1. Research topic (~100 words)

Introduce your case study and justify it as ripe for social network analysis. Indicate the questions or issues for investigation you wish to address in your project.

2. Relevant network analytical questions, strategies, and concepts (~200 words)

Identify one or more relevant network analytical questions, strategies, and concepts from our course (see below) for investigating your case. What is the type of network analytical question you want to address? What are theoretical types of network explanations you believe will be relevant for the analysis of your case (here you may want to think of what articles, among those we're reading together, your project reminds you of)? What are the network analytical concepts / measures you are likely to work with?

Network analytical questions:

- Describing network patterns
- How do networks shape people's behaviors and outcomes?
- Where do network relations come from?

Network analytical strategies:

- Networks analyzed as pipes for accessing resources

- Networks analyzed as providers of identity
- Networks analyzed as relations managed by actors

Network analytical concepts:

- Personal networks / discussion networks
- Social capital
- Structural holes
- Weak ties
- Various forms of centrality
- Roles and positions
- Homophily / assortative mixing
- Transitivity
- Etc.

3. Data (~200 words)

Describe the data you are thinking of using for your project and indicate how they will serve your analysis. Explain what kind of network you expect to build from your data (ego network, complete network, one- or two-mode network, directed or undirected network, etc.) Address any practical considerations you may have related to your access to the data you are thinking of using.

4. Bibliography

Provide a preliminary bibliography of the network and broader social scientific literature you expect to use in your final paper.

Peer Mentoring Sessions

You are now also part of a community of social network researchers! As such, we will pursue a collective project of enhancing each other's research plans.

Our Week 7 will consist of two peer-mentoring sessions in which you will briefly present, and we will collectively workshop, your pre-posted project plans. You will read your peers' plans ahead of class, and in class you will be expected to provide constructive feedback on these. Your feedback might draw on the course material, and it should aim at generating both theoretical and practical suggestions for your peers. Reflecting on the following questions may help you compose your comments ahead of these peer-mentoring sessions:

- What do you particularly like or find interesting about the project?
- Are there other empirical or theoretical/analytical issues your peer should think about going forward?
- Are there elements of their project plans that are ambiguous and need further development?
- Do you have suggestions or feedback on their proposed data?
- What other readings/literature might they consult in developing the project?