

Editorial

Special Issue: “Social Network Analysis”

Jeroen K. Vermunt¹ and Marijtje A. J. van Duijn²

¹Tilburg University, the Netherlands

²University of Groningen, the Netherlands

The current special issue of *Methodology* has emerged from the 2004 Fall Meeting of the Social Science Section of the Netherlands Society for Statistics and Operations Research organized by the two guest editors. The aim of this meeting on social network analysis was to give social scientists an overview of the state of art of this very interesting and lively methodological field. Five of the seven contributions to this special issue were presented at this meeting. Two additional articles were requested to further broaden the scope with recent developments related to network data collection and latent space modeling. In our opinion, the current special issue covers the most important recent developments in social network analysis; that is, developments in the collection, graphical representation, and statistical analysis of social network data. As far as data analysis is concerned, articles deal with the analysis of personal networks, single static complete networks, dynamic complete networks, and multiple complete networks.

In the first contribution, we provide an introduction to the field of social network analysis, where the focus is on showing what makes analyzing (and collecting) social network data different from dealing with other types of data. Moreover, the other six articles appearing in this issue are positioned in the social network literature. The next contribution, by Gerich and Lehner, deals with the collection

of social network data, or, more specifically, with the collection of ego-centered network data by means of computer-assisted self-administered interviews (CASI). Brandes, Kenis, and Raab present two applications of network visualization by means of the software visone, with the aim to demonstrate that, when using the right tool, visualization cannot be used only for description, but also for explanation. Shortreed, Handcock, and Hoff's contribution deals with latent space models for complete networks, with a special focus on the comparison of different methods for obtaining the latent positions of actors—which can be depicted in a graph—from the estimated distances between actors. Vermunt and Kalmijn present a latent class and a standard random effects model for personal network data in which the dependent variables are categorical variables. Whereas most methods for the analysis of data from complete network data can only deal with a single static network, the last two contributions describe models for multiple networks and multiple observations of the same network. More specifically, Zijlstra, van Duijn, and Snijders describe a multilevel extension of the p_2 model for the analysis of multiple social networks, and Steglich, Snijders, and West provide an introduction to the stochastic actor-oriented approach for modeling network change.