

R2: Social Network Analysis by Dr. Getu Ambaye Teshale

My name is Dr. Getu Ambaye Teshale. I received my PhD very recently and currently I am teaching in the Department of Social Work at the University of Gondar, Ethiopia. My PhD is not only social work and social composites in Social Development...social community development that's my area of specialisation. Teaching the social work research methods, that reports qualitative elements, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, and mixed methods research. How students can develop proposals for their Masters' thesis and I've been teaching Masters' students during the summer and currently I'm teaching extension students – MS Development students and Masters of Social Work. I'm highly interested to teach [unknown] Gate Scholars.

These are some reasons that encouraged me to present this social network analysis as a distinctive research approach in social behavioural... even in natural sciences. In the first place, my PhD dissertation, I have written based on this particular research approach, social network analysis. I found it very interesting. Besides, my professor is in [unknown] University College of Social Sciences, at the University of Chicago (UIC) and I have been there for almost 6 months with her to work with some supplementary courses. And she encouraged me to apply social network analysis for my dissertation. And, besides my dissertation I made a book review, a very recent book, analysing social networks, written by three prominent persons who have contributed to the advancement of these research approach - social network analysis. That's been published in the Journal of Community Practice, in the United States. All this now encouraging me, convinced me, to disseminate these kinds of approaches to other scholars so that they can apply and it can be applicable to various, wide range of issues, problems in Africa. Urban settings, in communities, it's a tool for community development. I've read so many books related to this issue and I've found it very interesting, and even to identify critical, crucial problems, issues within the community. You know, it's for two purposes: first thing is an approach to development (one) it's a good tool and for identifying the kinds of problems among problem in poor communities in urban settings and so forth. Social Network Analysis – a tool... it's an analytical tool and also obviously applicable to this methodology. And I've submitted this article to this global conference (i.e. GKEN Conference 2015) and still I'm interested to even incorporate this particular approach to our curricula at the University of Gondar. I would like to make it part of some of the courses, such as community development, you know community assessments, it's a tool how you assess community assessments has its own techniques, and methods? Social network analysis is one of the particular methods you can assess community and their problems. And, even you can apply to how you build social capital amongst particular groups of people in the community and the like.

So one of the prominent person who has, you know, produced this software package use I-NET software. Buggati, he's in the United States, his background is from management because social network analysis is also applicable to study the effectiveness of an organisation... organisational effectiveness just like community. Applicable even in biology... you know organisms network. You can apply this kind of thinking in explaining this kind of issues. Gilchriste, she's from England, she has written a book with me and I've read her book

which says networking as a tool to community development and has reviewed England's experiences of community work, community development approaches and the like... historically and how important it is she has written well about this issue. I found it very interesting the multi-disciplinary concept. Conceptually it has drawn from sociology, social inclusion/exclusion, which can be studied through social network analysis. In political science and how people are participating in certain political issues like... In social anthropology for instance how kinship structures function among one community... ethnic groups and the like. You can study using social network analysis - kinship.

In Manchester University there are prominent figures, Michelin for instance, her study written classic book in 1965 by investigating some urban local settings in Africa – Namibia – and how rural to urban migrants cope with changing circumstances in their urban locality through their relationships and interactions. She has written well in the classic book was the starting point for framing my thinking for my dissertation work.

Now there are a number of theories that relate to social network analysis: social exchange theory, social capital, strength and weakness theory. There are debates – unresolved debates related to weak and versus strong which are place based or non-place based networks – important for the poor people. You see social capital is declining in the west due to a number of reasons... one book written by a prominent person... people [unknown] alone, you know moving alone without interaction... the neighbours do not interact in the west. And I think there are theories, very important social network theories, very important for our students social... students who are studying social work profession in terms of assessing communities and problems using for social community developments and there are also techniques, methods. Social network analysis has a unique method. Let us place social network analysis as unique and distinctive in terms of designing the research, in terms of formulating the research questions, in terms of gathering the data and in terms of analysing the data.

It's a unique approach but applicable to... it's an approach applicable to different levels of analysis. The [unknown] level, interpersonal level you can study... at community networks at community level and larger at country level you can understand/explain social network analysis at global level. You can study... online networks, cyber networks are studied. How people exchange texts... messages are analysed and interpreted and studied through different words. And it's a very, very broad, generic concept applicable to wide range of issues and problems, the flow of information. It has positive and negative effects social networks. People mobilise their networks for uprisings, and terrorism and people mobilise their social networks to support each other. Emotional supports for... for material supports, for flow of information. You see exchange of goods and commodities. It is a very important concept as far as my knowledge is concerned. And, I think this practical and theoretical techniques so it's an emerging concept currently the social networks of females versus males... social capital differences are emerging issue/ theme. I'm trying to study these kinds of things. I think it's very applicable to my professional social work especially for community development, group dynamics, group study, at societal level it has also policy implications. Currently donors such as the World Bank are highly interested to see the social capital of a

particular community are central to donors and donor development plans and so forth. I think it is a very important concept as far as my knowledge is concerned and I should convince my colleagues from the same department and incorporate, or at least I would like to make part of the research methods course and give some sections so that my students are aware of... even I'm encouraging students to apply for their Master's thesis to apply to apply for their masters as a methodology to study communities, about communities, around communities, street children how you make contact with your fathers, mothers and other people along the main street.

And, female headed households and people engaged in the informal sector even I have submitted one paper for my university 'social networks and the informal economy' you see (social networks and the informal economy) you can study how people are engaged in the informal sector, which accounts for the larger section of the population through informal... they couldn't get access to formal business, formal banking systems because of their lower income levels. The social network enables them to start entrepreneurs, become entrepreneurs especially women in selling small items of trade on a daily basis and that kinds of things can be studied through their social networks. And I've found it a very comprehensive, generic concept and applicable to a wide range of issues it's not only in social, behavioural science but also other management or even in computer sciences there are models for social network analysis that borrow from computer science and apply that as an analytical tool.