

The Prestige of Ph.D. Granting Departments of Sociology: A Simple Network Approach

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Data on the Ph.D. origins of faculty employed in Ph.D. granting departments of Sociology at 1993 and 1999 are examined. Treating these data as an exchange network allows simple network analysis tools to be used to rank programs in terms of adjacency, centrality, and efficient network size. Considerable inequality in the distribution of placement and adjacency at both years is found. Prestige elite communities are identified in patterns of reciprocated hiring. There are substantial correlations in rankings by different aspects of network position, over time, and between network and survey research methods. However, network methods allow a more complex and interesting portrait of the prestige hierarchy that is more clearly structural and positional, rather than perceptual.

INTRODUCTION

Rankings of Ph.D. granting programs in academic disciplines have long been of considerable interest to people embedded in these structures. Lately, they seem to have become a matter of some practical importance. Rankings are used by contending parties in resource allocation battles within universities, and may be important in strategic decision-making about organizational development (Markovsky, 2000). Rankings are a standard against which competitive performance of units in their organizational fields are evaluated, i.e. comparisons of sociology programs competing against one another for “niche space.” Relative standing is one way that faculty evaluate their efforts to improve program quality. Rankings may be of some significance in recruiting new faculty, attracting students and securing financial backing for programs or even entire campuses.

Despite their practical importance, the reliability and validity of rankings of graduate programs are easy to question. Different studies vary in the supposed underlying trait along which units are ranked; “quality of faculty and training,” “research productivity,” and “prestige,” among other terms are used. While various dimensions of organizational performance are, no doubt, substantially correlated, different operational definitions can yield “just meaningful” differences in results (compare, for example, Markovsky, 2000 and Keith, 2000).

There are also differences in methodology across ranking studies. The two most common approaches to producing data for ranking are survey and archival methods. Survey methods are probably better able to capture attitudes and perceptions; such perceptions are critical, for they are the basis on which actors act. The bases for variation in these perceptions of the relative standing of departments may, however, be somewhat fuzzy, even with careful attention to question construction. Surveys, of course, reflect the attitudes and/or knowledge of those surveyed, and need always be carefully examined for sampling and response biases. Archival approaches, such as counting

published articles or citations are probably more reliable, but tend to be rather narrow — capturing only one or a few of the dimensions of performance variation.

This paper proposes an alternative method for ranking the standing of departments. By applying a few simple ideas from social network analysis to data on the flows of faculty among departments, the departments may be ranked as a prestige hierarchy. This approach not only explicitly recognizes that rankings are inherently relational (rather than an attribute of each individual), but allows us to examine some additional qualitative aspects of the structure of this social hierarchy.

A network approach to prestige rankings

Stratification on the basis of honor or prestige is observable in patterns of who defers to whom in interactions. The hiring and retention by members of one institution of a student trained at another may be viewed as such an act of deference. The members of the hiring institution are acknowledging that the sending institution is capable of providing a resource that they value — whatever the basis of this valuation. A status hierarchy is observable, then, if there are consistent asymmetric tendencies in the relative frequencies with which such gestures occur. If PhDs produced by department A are employed by department B, B is showing deference to A. Sometimes these gestures may be reciprocated — A and B mutually acknowledge that they are peers. Sometimes the gestures are not — in which case both parties are acknowledging the higher standing of A.

The presence of individuals trained at institutions on the faculties of others form an exchange network, similar in some ways (and different in others) to trading and kinship tie networks. The patterns of ties in the exchange network need not form a simple hierarchy. Ties might be distributed randomly; there may be bounded status communities or classes; or, there may be multiple orthogonal or oblique hierarchies. The data collection and analytic strategies of survey and archival/attribute studies do not explicitly acknowledge the relational or exchange nature of rankings, and implicitly assume simple hierarchies. Data on the relations between pairs of departments and the use of simple tools for the analysis of exchange networks allow us see patterns of status giving as a result of social exchange, and to recognize that inequality may be structured in more complex ways.

Data for the analyses below were taken from the American Sociological Association *Guide to Graduate Departments* (A.S.A. 1993, 1999) at two years. The earlier date was chosen to allow comparison of the network analysis results to those of the National Research Council (N.R.C., 1995); the latter year was added to examine stability and change. At each year, data were collected on the Ph.D. granting institution of each member of the “full-time regular” faculty of each Ph.D. granting institution. Only United States universities were included, and a small number of faculty at U.S. institutions who received higher degrees abroad are excluded. These data are not perfect. Some institutions list relatively small core faculties and large numbers of affiliated faculty (which are excluded here). Departments no doubt differ in the relationship of these affiliated faculty to the departments. Some departments list “instructors,” “visiting,” and emeritus faculty, which we have excluded. We have no way of verifying the status of those listed as regular faculty. And, of course, there are simple errors of commission, omission, and incorrect or incomplete data on where the Ph.D. was granted.

Departmental rankings by network prominence

If a department places its graduates at many other universities, it achieves visibility and prominence. A department that has many placements is being more widely acknowledged as a worthy exchange partner. The simplest measure of the relative standing of a department then is its outflow in the network of placement exchanges among departments. The first column in Table 1 shows the number of Ph.D.s from each graduate program in sociology that are listed as faculty in other Ph.D. departments (self-placements are excluded from these counts).

Table 1. Rankings of U.S. Ph.D. Sociology Programs, 1993 and 1999

Program	Placement (number)	Adjacency (number)	Centrality 1993	Holes 1993	Centrality 1999	Holes 1999	NRC Fac.*	NRC Train.*
Chicago	1 (155)	2 (62)	1	3	3	3	1	2
Harvard	4 (125)	5 (57)	2	5	4	5	7	12
Wisconsin	2 (137)	1 (72)	3	1	1	1	2	1
Berkeley	3 (134)	2 (62)	4	2	2	2	3	11
Michigan	5 (114)	4 (58)	5	4	5	4	4	3
Stanford	9 (65)	10 (39)	6	14	7	7	8	7
Columbia	6 (78)	6 (47)	7	6	17	6	15	20
Washington	8 (68)	8 (44)	8	8	9	16	10	8
Princeton	17 (36)	21 (24)	9	23	13	18	13	18
Cornell	11 (51)	9 (41)	10	9	11	10	35	25
N. Carolina	7 (71)	6 (47)	11	7	6	9	6	4
Pennsylvania	15 (47)	11 (38)	12	10	8	12	11	9
Yale	11 (51)	12 (37)	13	12	18	19	19	28
Northwestern	13 (50)	17 (31)	14	17	24	17	9	10
Johns Hopkins	22 (26)	22 (23)	15	22	32	25	17	14
Michigan St.	19 (31)	18 (25)	16	19	21	33	42	41
Minnesota	16 (46)	13 (36)	17	13	10	15	24	23
N.Y.U.	25 (23)	24 (19)	18	28	28	27	21	33
Texas	14 (48)	14 (34)	19	15	16	11	16	13
Indiana	10 (52)	16 (32)	20	16	14	8	12	5
Illinois	21 (27)	22 (23)	21	21	35	35	29	26
U.C.L.A.	18 (32)	18 (25)	22	20	23	13	5	6
Albany	38 (15)	34 (15)	23	35	74	41	30	24
Vanderbilt	34 (17)	31 (16)	24	34	33	34	27	35
Washington St.	27 (21)	26 (18)	25	26	19	20	32	28
Penn. State	24 (24)	24 (19)	26	31	15	21	18	15
Arizona	30 (19)	31 (16)	27	33	25	22	14	17
Duke	22 (26)	18 (25)	28	18	22	24	20	16
Brandeis	42 (13)	40 (11)	29	44	44	32	60	59
Stony Brook	30 (19)	34 (15)	30	36	27	26	25	18
U.C.S.B.	30 (19)	34 (15)	31	32	37	29	23	27
Brown	27 (21)	30 (17)	32	29	30	23	38	22
Binghamton	61 (6)	58 (6)	33	59	47	49	34	39
Boston U.	44 (12)	44 (10)	34	45	54	50	44	45
Iowa	26 (22)	26 (18)	35	27	46	37	40	34
Tennessee	48 (10)	47 (9)	36	52	69	67	79	87
Florida	46 (11)	40 (11)	37	42	34	46	43	43
Massachusetts	30 (19)	26 (18)	38	24	52	30	39	37
Boston Col.	78 (2)	78 (2)	39	85	98	83	55	53
Ohio St.	20 (49)	14 (34)	40	11	12	14	25	21
Oregon	34 (17)	31 (16)	41	30	36	36	56	64
Connecticut	57 (7)	58 (6)	42	58	73	60	49	61
U.C.S.D.	54 (8)	49 (8)	43	50	43	39	22	30
U.C.S.C.	62 (5)	60 (5)	44	61	48	44	53	55
Florida St.	38 (15)	40 (11)	45	40	26	31	36	32
Wayne St.	67 (4)	66 (4)	46	66	84	74	---	---
Missouri	34 (17)	37 (13)	47	38	29	47	63	65
Iowa St.	37 (16)	44 (10)	48	47	53	48	61	38
Kentucky	29 (20)	26 (18)	49	25	20	28	54	57
Kansas	40 (14)	39 (12)	50	39	39	40	66	65
Notre Dame	67 (4)	66 (4)	51	66	72	66	46	50
Purdue	42 (13)	37 (13)	52	37	40	38	52	54
Virginia	62 (5)	60 (5)	53	61	59	57	47	52
Emory	69 (3)	69 (3)	54	74	79	53	---	---
U.W. Mil.	88 (1)	87 (1)	55	85	---	---	---	---
Tulane	51 (9)	53 (7)	56	53	109	80	72	75
Nebraska	40 (14)	49 (8)	57	57	41	65	67	49

Program	Placement (number)	Adjacency (number)	Centrality 1993	Holes 1993	Centrality 1999	Holes 1999	NRC Fac.*	NRC Train.*
U.C.S.F.	78 (2)	78 (2)	58	78	87	72	50	48
U.C.I.	54 (8)	53 (7)	59	51	55	53	---	---
Hawaii	78 (2)	78 (2)	60	78	93	80	76	86
U.C.D.	62 (5)	60 (5)	61	63	61	60	---	---
Buffalo	51 (9)	47 (9)	62	46	50	55	74	74
Syracuse	62 (5)	60 (5)	63	63	70	68	58	51
U.C.R.	62 (5)	60 (5)	64	59	67	60	27	35
U.S.C.	48 (10)	49 (8)	65	48	65	50	40	44
American	78 (2)	78 (2)	66	85	78	83	80	82
Pittsburgh	54 (8)	49 (8)	67	48	56	53	59	62
New School	57 (7)	53 (7)	68	54	51	42	---	---
Colorado	46 (11)	40 (11)	69	40	45	55	56	60
Temple	69 (3)	69 (3)	70	74	64	59	61	68
Cincinnati	69 (3)	69 (3)	71	69	104	74	87	94
Maryland	69 (3)	69 (3)	72	74	58	44	33	31
Illinois - Chic.	69 (3)	69 (3)	73	78	68	88	45	58
S. Illinois	57 (7)	53 (7)	74	54	75	73	78	83
L.S.U.	48 (10)	53 (7)	75	56	38	57	65	63
Utah	51 (9)	60 (5)	76	63	57	70	83	78
C.U.N.Y.	69 (3)	69 (3)	77	69	63	60	37	46
Nevada-Reno	88 (1)	87 (1)	78	85	---	---	---	---
U.N.L.V.	88 (1)	87 (1)	79	85	90	100	---	---
Texas A&M	69 (3)	69 (3)	80	74	49	60	50	42
Oklahoma St.	88 (1)	87 (1)	81	85	77	74	95	95
Case Western	57 (7)	66 (4)	82	66	82	80	---	---
Utah St.	78 (2)	87 (1)	83	85	92	88	92	84
Akron	88 (1)	87 (1)	84	85	105	88	84	77
Rutgers	78 (2)	78 (2)	85	78	66	70	31	40
Delaware	78 (2)	78 (2)	86	78	103	88	69	71
Mississippi St.	88 (1)	87 (1)	87	85	94	88	86	80
Georgia	44 (12)	44 (10)	88	43	42	43	47	46
Colorado St.	78 (2)	78 (2)	89	78	60	83	81	80
New Mexico	69 (3)	69 (3)	90	69	86	83	---	---
Bowling Green	69 (3)	69 (3)	91	69	80	74	76	76
N. Carolina St.	88 (1)	87 (1)	93	85	31	69	64	56
W. Michigan	78 (2)	78 (2)	93	78	83	74	85	79
Oklahoma	88 (1)	87 (1)	93	85	101	100	89	89
Montana	88 (1)	87 (1)	94	85	---	---	---	---
Denver	88 (1)	87 (1)	94	85	88	88	90	91
Northeastern	88 (1)	87 (1)	96	85	108	88	71	67
Arizona St.	88 (1)	87 (1)	96	85	106	88	73	73
Kansas St.	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	112	100	---	---
Virginia Poly.	88 (1)	87 (1)	96	85	62	83	---	---
S. Carolina	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	95	100	---	---
Georgia St.	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	71	88	94	92
Kent St.	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	96	88	88	90
New Hampshire	88 (1)	87 (1)	96	85	76	74	70	69
Rennsaler	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	---	---	---	---
North Texas	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	97	100	92	85
Portland St.	78 (2)	78 (2)	96	78	116	100	---	---
Fordham	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	107	100	82	87
Carnegie Mellon	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	91	100	---	---
Texas Women's	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	102	88	---	---
Miami	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	100	88	---	---
S. Dakota St.	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	99	100	---	---
Catholic	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	111	100	92	92
Loyola	102 (0)	102 (0)	96	103	89	100	68	70

* National Research Council (1995) rankings of "faculty quality" and "effectiveness of graduate training."

Not surprisingly, there is considerable inequality of the distribution of placements. If we include self-placements, the top four institutions (i.e. Chicago, Wisconsin, Berkeley, and Harvard) account for about one-quarter (25.8%) of all placements; the top twelve institutions account for more than half (51.6%). The gini concentration ratio for the distribution is .681 — more similar to the distribution of wealth in the United States than to the distribution of income.

Large numbers of placements certainly increase visibility, and indicate that an institution has a “product” that is valued by others. But, some adjustments to these figures can provide some additional insights. In the next column of table one, we show the number of institutions to which each institution is adjacent (excluding self-ties). That is, we pay no attention to how many placements there may be at another institution, only the presence or absence of a placement tie. This adjustment is consistent with the idea that status is accorded “qualitatively,” and that a second, third, or more placements on the same faculty add little to the prestige of the sending institution — ties are simply present or absent. This adjustment “penalizes” institutions that have a pattern of placing many students at few schools and favors those that place more broadly. We would argue that a broader placement pattern promotes visibility and signals more widespread acceptance of the standing of a department in the community.

Among schools with similar levels of total placements, there are some notable differences in “efficiency” (e.g. the ratio of adjacencies to total placements). Among the schools that are highly ranked by total placements, Pennsylvania and Minnesota move up noticeably when efficiency is taken into account; Indiana, Princeton, and Northwestern fall. The rank ordering of departments by placement and by adjacency are quite similar, overall. However, the differences can highlight a qualitative dimension of difference among institutions that are of the same general rank.

Not all placements or adjacencies are equal in the status they confer on the sending school. Adding a “low prestige” institution to one’s placement network does not contribute to one’s own standing as much as adding a tie to a “high prestige” institution. In the third column of figures in the table above, we make a further adjustment by considering the networks of the schools to which each school sends its students. The procedure used follows Bonacich (1972; Philip Bonacich also assisted the author in calculating the values used here). Eigenvectors are extracted from the directed adjacency matrix, and prominence weights assigned to each case by their loadings on the first “factor.” The rank of each department is then constructed as the sum of its adjacencies weighted by the loadings of the programs to which it is adjacent. The loadings on the first eigenvector rank departments according to their standing on the first dimension of what may be a multi-dimensional status structure. The weighted scores then rank departments according to the degree to which they have sent graduates to other departments that rank highly along the first dimension of status. Departments may achieve high rank by being tied to the “right” other departments; they may have less prestige, despite many placements, if they do not place at the “right” other institutions.

The overall rank ordering by this “centrality” approach is, again, similar. But, local differences can be quite revealing qualitatively. By comparing simple adjacency to centrality ranks among schools near the top of our list, we see that some schools show a marked propensity to have ties to the “in” crowd: Princeton, Johns Hopkins, N.Y.U., Stanford, and Harvard. In contrast, there are a number of other top schools that have fewer ties to “in” schools than we would expect on the basis of their high overall adjacency: North Carolina, Texas, Indiana, and Minnesota.

Another aspect of the location of institutions within the exchange network is indexed in the column of the table labeled “holes.” Suppose that institution “A” has three placements, and sends graduates to schools that also send graduates to one another. Clearly, its three peers are recognizing institution “A” as worthy — but its position relative to all other schools is somewhat ambiguous. Compare this case to institution “B” which also has three placements. Institution “B’s” graduates, however, go to three schools that do not send graduates to one another. We might say that the local

placement network of “B” is more efficient and provides more direct evidence of ranking relative to a larger part of the community than does the local placement network of “A.” Ron Burt (1992), would characterize the network of institution “A” as lacking “structural holes” (i.e. empty spaces or non-connections among neighbors of the focal node), and would see institution “A’s” network as less efficient. Actor “B’s” network, in contrast, has many structural holes, and this results in a network with greater autonomy and potentially wider reach. The “holes” index in the table adjusts the adjacencies of institutions to “penalize” those that lack structural holes (Borgatti, et al., 1999).

The overall rankings on the basis of Burt’s efficient network size (“holes”) are strongly correlated with the other approaches. Local differences among top schools, however, are quite interesting. Princeton, Stanford, N.Y.U, and Johns Hopkins rank much lower in efficient network size than we would expect on the basis of adjacency. These institutions (identified earlier among as having ties to the “in crowd”) are rather deeply “embedded” in a community of institutions that have a substantial volume of reciprocated ties. In contrast, North Carolina, Minnesota, Texas, and Indiana have networks that have more structural holes than we would otherwise expect – that is, they are relatively less embedded.

The stability of rankings

So far, we have been examining the status hierarchy of departments at 1993. Table 1 also shows the results of ranking institutions by centrality, and efficient size (holes) in 1999. Table 2 shows correlations of the centrality and holes measures for both years, as well as correlations with the 1993 National Research Council rankings.

Table 2. Correlations of Rankings

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Placement 1993	1.000						
2. Adjacency 1993	.995	1.000					
3. Centrality 1993	.927	.930	1.000				
4. Holes 1993	.990	.997	.915	1.000			
5. Centrality 1999	.909	.909	.830	.903	1.000		
6. Holes 1999	.956	.961	.908	.960	.943	1.000	
7. NRC faculty 1993	.840	.846	.852	.839	.825	.889	1.000
8. NRC training 1993	.852	.849	.843	.842	.840	.897	.974

Spearman correlations of ranks, all significant at $p < .01$, one-tail, $n=94$

The correlations among various rankings are high, but far from perfect. If we assume that the data are quite reliable, then the true “stability” of the centrality ranking is only .83 over a six-year period. This figure suggests rather substantial mobility over a fairly short period of time. Among the top twenty schools at 1993, several experienced substantial upward mobility (e.g. Indiana, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas); several suffered rather sharp declines in network centrality rank (e.g. Johns Hopkins, N.Y.U., Columbia, Northwestern). Rapid changes are perhaps somewhat surprising, as our method is based on the training institutions of all faculty at a given institution (rather than recent hires), and a very large proportion of all faculty are “stayers.”

Rankings by network methods are also fairly strongly correlated, overall, with attitude survey results. But, again, the association is far from perfect. Indeed, comparing rank-orderings at 1993 by the centrality and survey methods, there are some quite striking individual differences among top schools. A number of top schools are somewhat more highly ranked in the survey (effectiveness of training dimension) than their centrality in placement networks would suggest (e.g. Indiana, Texas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Northwestern). A number of other top schools have much

higher placement centrality than one would predict on the basis of attitudes about the quality of the training they provide (e.g. Michigan State, N.Y.U., Cornell, Yale, Columbia).

Is there a prestige elite?

The various rankings in table one suggest considerable inequality in the distribution of prestige, and a fairly clear rank ordering and hierarchy. But, are the differences among the schools simply matters of degree, or is there a “class structure” of bounded status communities?

One simple approach (but note that others might yield somewhat different pictures) is to examine the distribution of reciprocated ties. The presence of a reciprocated tie (e.g. there are faculty with Berkeley Ph.D.s at Wisconsin and *vice versa*), signals that there is recognition of equal standing. A “status community” might be defined as a group of institutions that have reciprocated placements. There are a number of ways to identify such groupings. We will use the “strongest” definition of a community — a maximal clique. Our choice of method here may draw sharper bounds between the elite and the masses than other methods might. Nonetheless, the results do suggest a “community” of elite institutions that has some degree of closure and separation from the masses at both 1993 and 1999. The results also suggest considerable mobility and change within the elite.

In 1993 there were twenty-one cliques of size three or more (i.e. sets of schools each of which had faculty from each other school), involving twenty-one institutions – all highly ranked. Five of these cliques contained four schools, the remaining sixteen cliques contained only three. There was a similar pattern at 1999. In this year, there were also twenty-one cliques (sixteen of size three and five of size four), involving sixteen institutions. Again, all of the schools involved in cliques of reciprocated hiring were among those highly ranked in table one.

All of the cliques identified in both years have some degree of overlap with other cliques (e.g. one clique at 1999 is UCLA, Berkeley, and Northwestern; another is UCLA, Berkeley, and Stanford. These two cliques overlap because they have two members in common). We may index the “close-

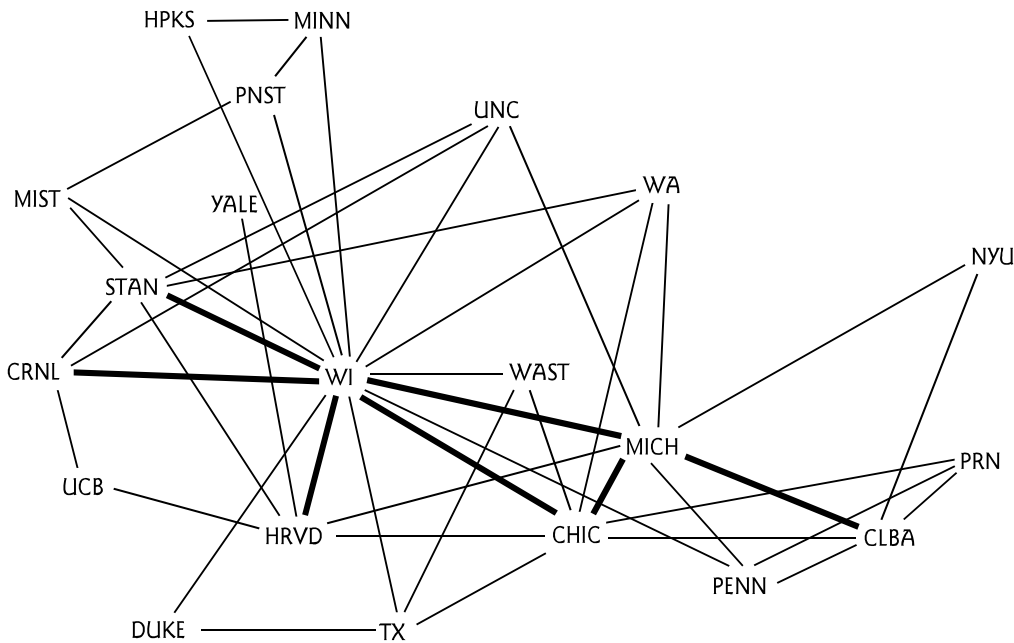


Figure 1. Clique structures based on reciprocal placements 1993

ness” or similarity of institution’s positions within the elite by how many times each pair are members of the same cliques. These patterns of closeness are visualized in Figures 1 and 2, below.

In both 1993 and in 1999, all the cliques of reciprocated placement are among highly ranked institutions, and all cliques are joined by one or more overlapping memberships. The overall stratification structure could be described as having a bounded elite community and “masses,” members of which have limited connection to one another. Three considerations soften this conclusion somewhat. First, the prestige elites in the two years are fairly large (21 and 16 institutions) relative to the size of the population (113 and 109). Second, there are a very substantial number of faculty at elite schools who received their degrees outside of this group. Third, there is a substantial amount of mobility into (and out of) the elite over a relatively short (6 year) period.

There are some rather remarkable differences in the structure of the elite networks at 1993 and 1999. The number of schools in the elite community declined substantially (from 21 to 16), suggesting, perhaps, wider inequality in the recruiting patterns in the discipline as a whole. At the same time, however, the structure of the elite community became both denser and less centralized. The 1993 structure has a fairly clear star (Wisconsin) and inner circle (Including Michigan, Chicago, and Columbia). At 1999, three schools are almost equally central to the network (Wisconsin, Michigan, and Berkeley), and a number of others are more tightly tied to the center than was typical in 1993 (Chicago, Harvard, UCLA, Princeton). The densities of the graphs above are .236 at 1993

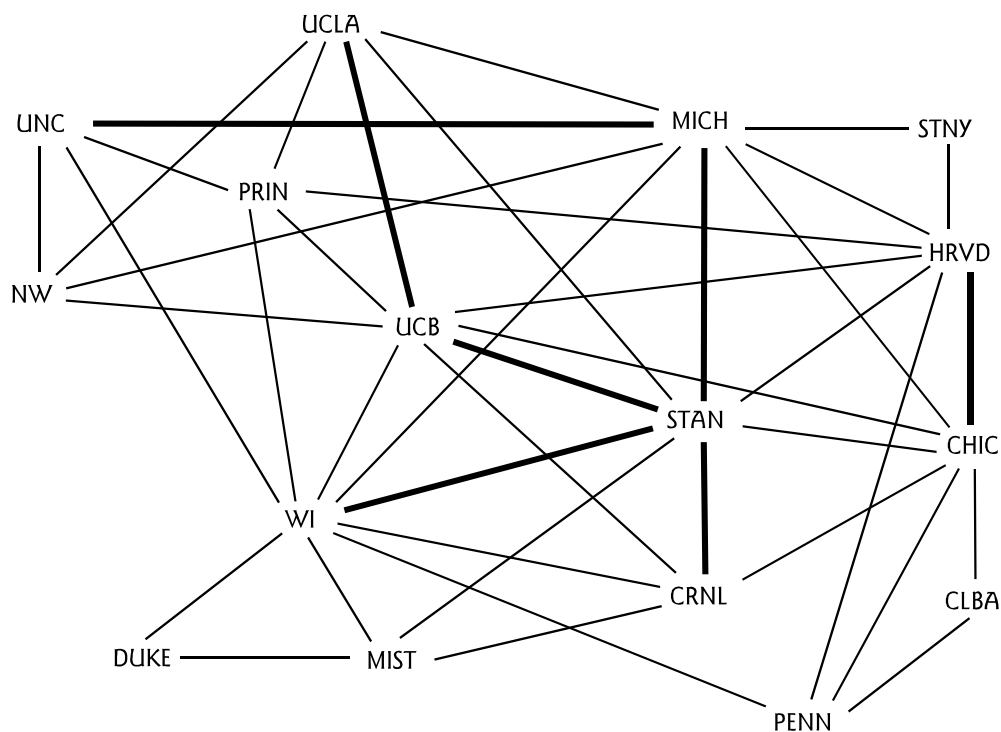


Figure 2. Clique structures based on reciprocal placements 1999

Note: One or two co-memberships in cliques indicated with a thin line; three or more co-memberships in cliques indicated by a heavy line. Directions and distances are arbitrary, and should not be interpreted. HPKS: John’s Hopkins; MINN: Minnesota; PNST: Pennsylvania State; MIST: Michigan State; UNC: University of North Carolina; WA: University of Washington; STAN: Stanford; WI: Wisconsin; CRNL: Cornell; UCB: University of California, Berkeley; HRVD: Harvard; TX: Texas; WAST: Washington State; CHIC: Chicago; MICH: Michigan; PENN: University of Pennsylvania; CLBA: Columbia; PRIN: Princeton; STNY: SUNY Stony Brook; NW: Northwestern.

and .358 at 1999. This suggests the elites are becoming more closely connected (i.e. the composition of the origins of their faculties are becoming more similar). Over the same period the graphs became less centralized. Freeman graph centralization based on in-degree is 67.6% at 1993 and 27.6% at 1999 (Borgatti, *et al.*, 1999). That is, the elite community has become more of an oligarchy and less a transitive hierarchy.

The changes in the structure of the elite community between 1993 and 1999 reflect a rather remarkable amount of upward and downward mobility. Wisconsin and Columbia big “losers” in terms of their centrality within the elite (number of overlapping clique memberships). Eight institutions that were in the elite at 1993 fell out of it by 1999 (Washington, Texas, Minnesota, Penn. State, Washington State, Johns Hopkins, Yale, and N.Y.U.). Stanford and Berkeley (members at 1993) and UCLA (not a member at 1993) experienced the most dramatic increases in their centrality within the elite; several other institutions moved up somewhat (Cornell, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Duke). Two schools were upwardly mobile into the elite: Northwestern and Stony Brook.

Conclusions

The application of some basic ideas from social networks to the problem of the prestige of graduate programs of sociology generates rankings that differ somewhat from other methodologies. Rankings based on networks of personnel exchange have some appeal relative to attitude survey or productivity counts approaches. The act of inviting a person from another “tribe” to join one’s own “tribe” involves rational and irrational motives, and may be tied both to attributes of the individual and attributions about the individual because of their origin. The results here should not be read to invalidate those of other approaches. Our approach, however, is explicit in recognizing prestige ranking as the behavioral realization of processes of social exchange — positions with strong theoretical priors in our discipline.

The network approach clearly offers more, not just “different” insights is in describing the shape of the social hierarchy. As they have been applied in this area of study, survey and productivity counts approaches tend to treat social hierarchies as gradational. Exchange network approaches also allow ranking of individuals and can be used to describe the degree of inequality, as we have done in Table 1. They can also be used to describe more qualitative aspects of the structure of inequality. The existence of a bounded elite, and the changes in its structure between 1993 and 1999 are insights not available from other approaches.

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