

The application of Social Network Analysis in exploring the Subnational Business System

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*To demonstrate the utility of Social Network
Analysis as a mapping tool for the
interaction of subnational governance
systems with MNCs*

Provides a structural perspective of the network as a whole;
Holistic, 'Gestalt' Approach

Identify and quantify linkages between MNCs and subnational
institutional actors

Appropriate Methodological Tool?

1. Relationships, not attributes
2. Systematic Tool
3. One Single Issue
 - Skills, Training and Development for FDI

*“Thinking specifically about **skills, training and development** collaborations with **foreign direct investors** in this region....?”*

Data Collection

1. Semi-Structure Interview (approx. 50mins)
2. Followed by a SNA questionnaire
 - Roster (listing), with free call option
 - » Seventeen Institutions
 - Fixed rating - seven point Likert scale
 - » 0 = absent; 7 = daily
 - Four aspects
 1. frequency of contact
 2. extent of knowledge outflows
 3. extent of knowledge inflows
 4. extent of skills development
3. Sampling
 - Full network method initiated by snowball sampling

Irish experience

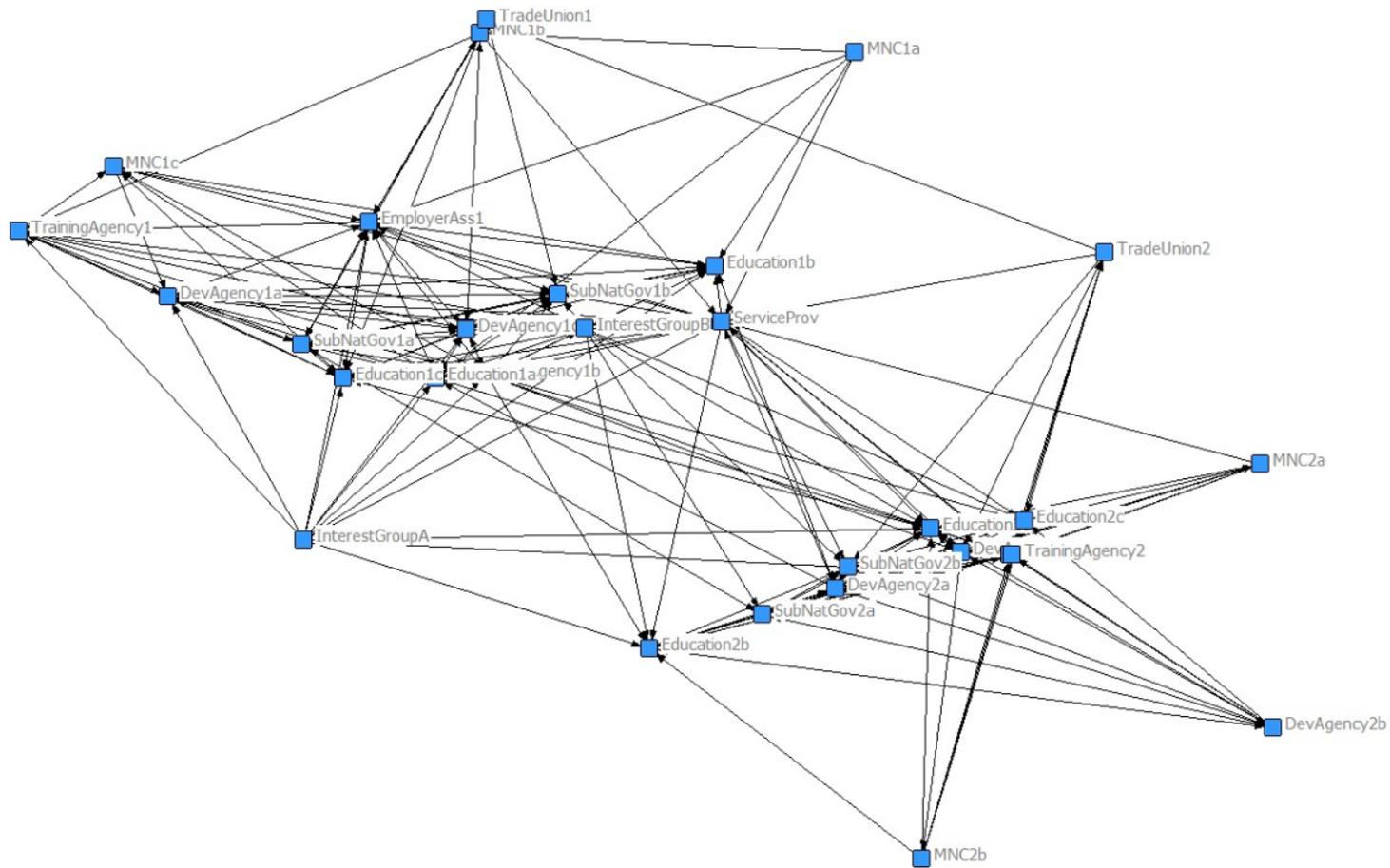
Irish Challenges

- Network Boundary Specification
- Reduction of SNA questionnaire to one element

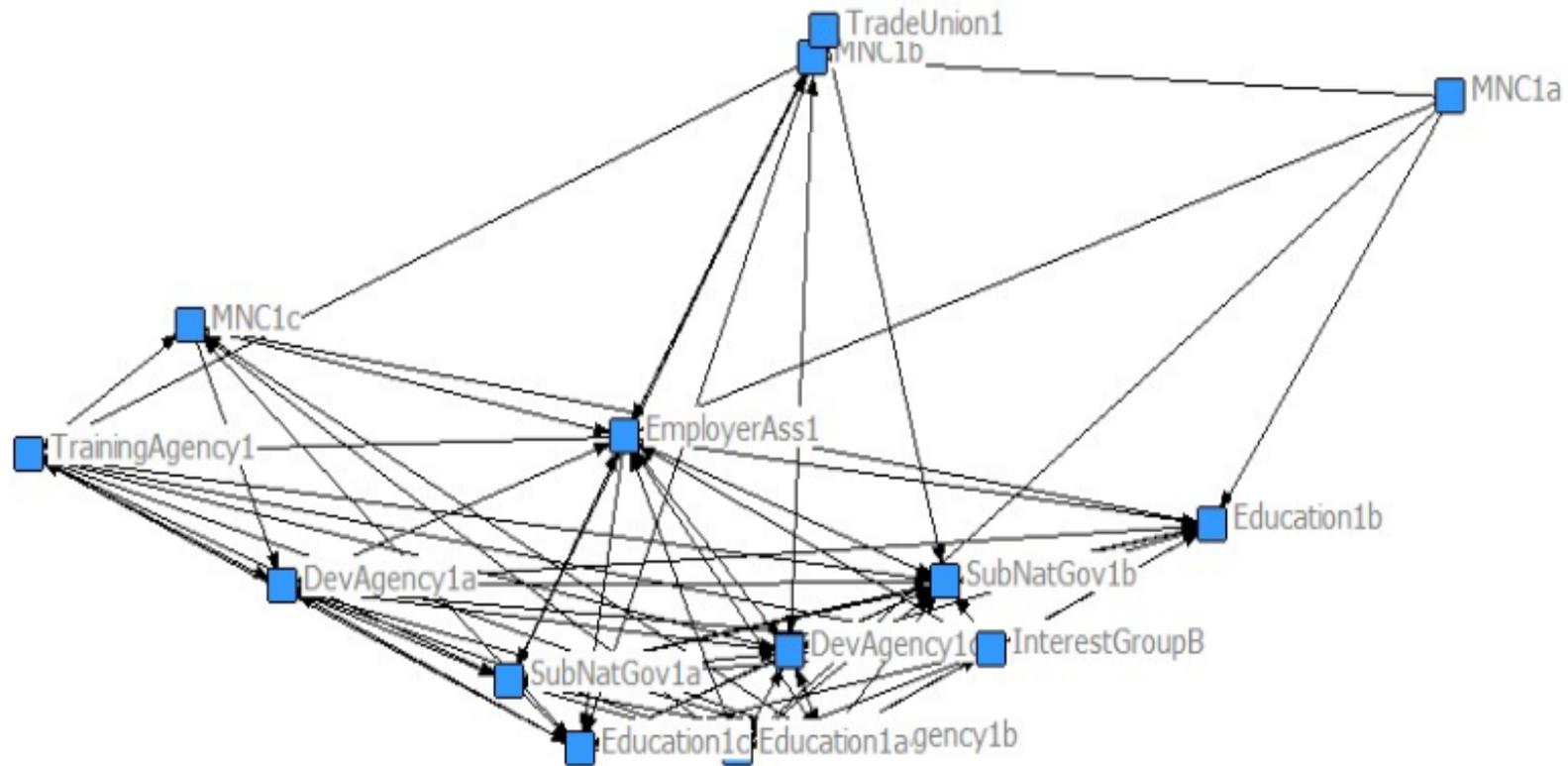
*“Thinking specifically about skills, training and development collaborations with foreign direct investors in this region, approximately how **frequently** on average has your organisation been in contact with each organisation on the list below over the past 12 months?”*

- Construct Validity
 - » Informant Accuracy – inconsistencies in data
(Bernard et al., 1981; 1982)
 - » Multiplexity – influence of personal relationships
(Kilduff and Brass, 2010)
 - » Single issue driven?

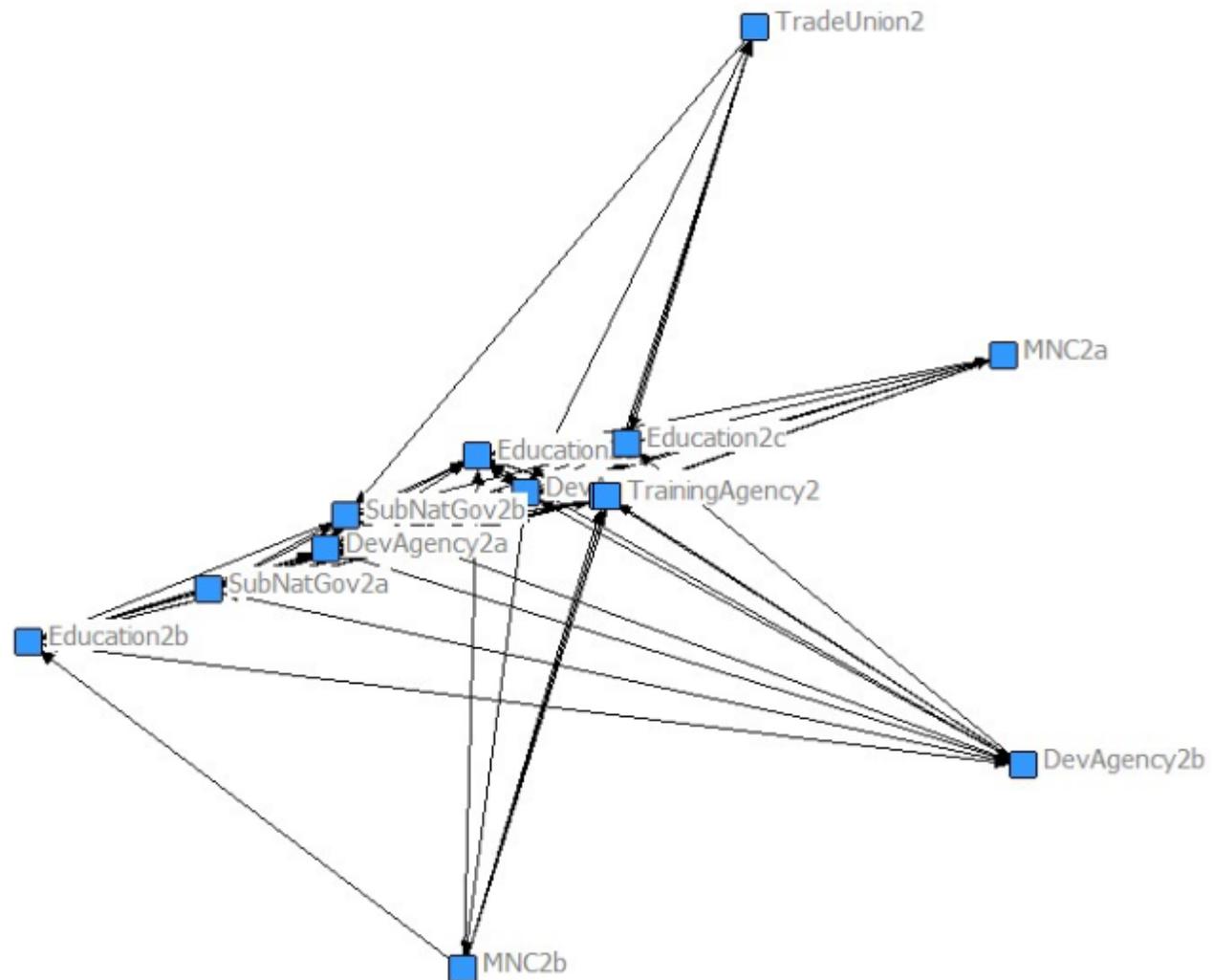
Preliminary Analysis



Shannon Region



Gaeltacht Region



The UK Context

- Network stability
- Network complexity
 - brokerage relations
 - Multi-level nature of network
 - Proliferation of actors
 - Distribution of power
- Significance of personal level relations
 - Internal mobility of individuals within subnational governance systems
 - Trust building – underpins collaborative learning

Conclusions

- Value of context in understanding the structure of relations in networks
 - Young vs established network actors
 - Life cycle of actors within networks
 - Funding and competition structure among actors
- Reveals the tensions in the ‘formal’ network structures and the ‘working’ networks
- Utility as a comparative research tool
 - Is it sufficiently sensitive to contextual variation to yield comparative analytic insights?
 - Draws attention to non-equivalence and challenges the reification of organisations as network collaborators.