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This paper discusses the application of Social Network Analysis (SNA) to corporate networks in a long-term and historical perspective. Starting with the basic concepts of corporate networks and the main research themes it has addressed in business history, the paper then introduces how historical quantitative archival data can be played with and turned into excel data suitable for the study of social networks by using software such as UCINET. The paper then provides some examples of how this methodology has been used at both the macro and the micro levels: national corporate networks in Argentina, Chile and Italy from 1900 to 2017 and the social club memberships, partnership ties, and interlocking directorates of J.P. Morgan & Co. in the early twentieth century. Finally, the paper discusses new perspectives for the application of SNA in business history, including the study of other networks than those of directors, i.e., shareholders' networks, networks that are created by joint membership of think-tanks, syndics, policy-planning group, university board, employers' associations, philanthropic associations.

Keywords

Network analysis, interlocking directorates, databases, business history

Topics

- Economic and geographic networks

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