

Figure 27 Sex monthly

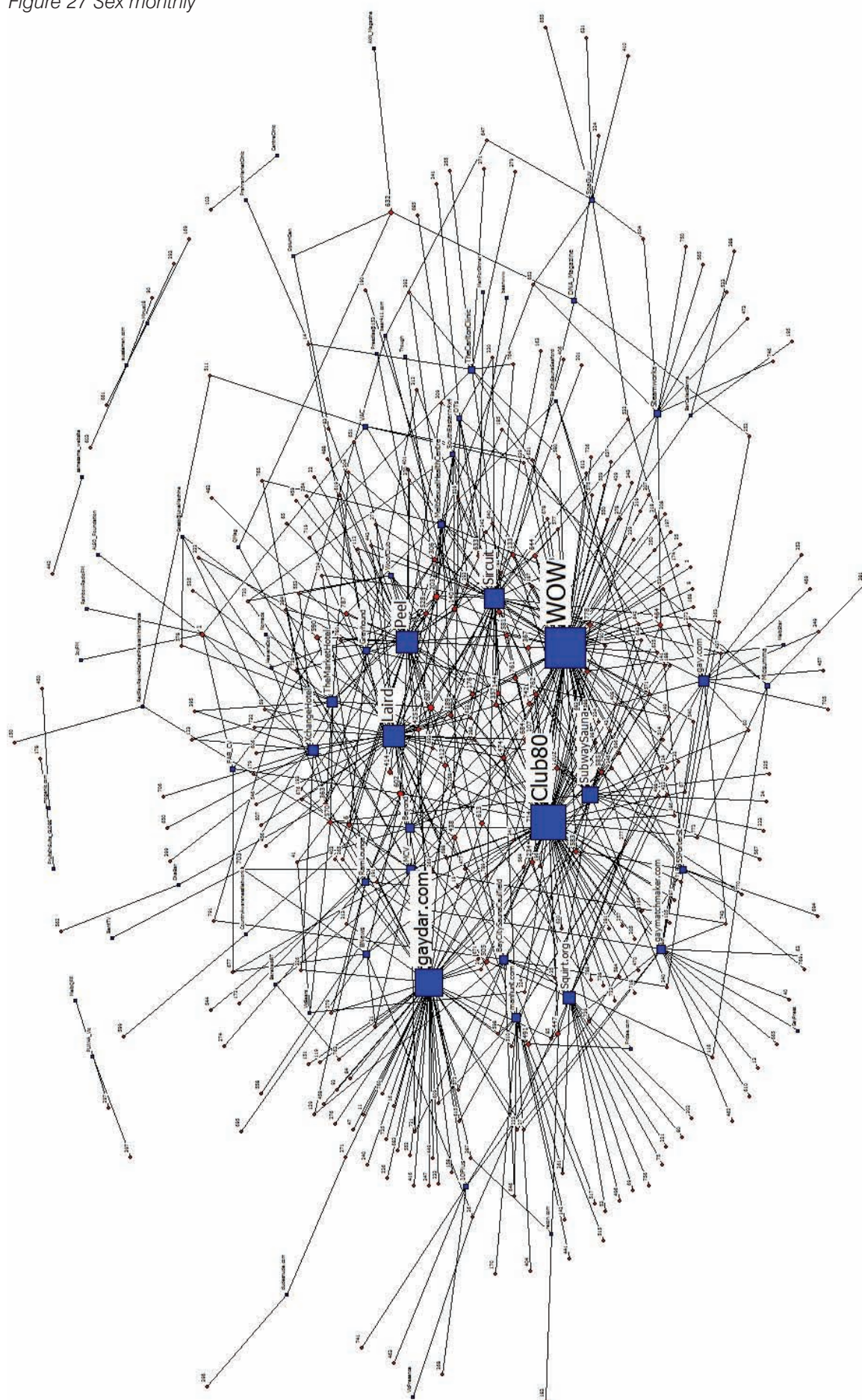


Figure 28 Sex annually

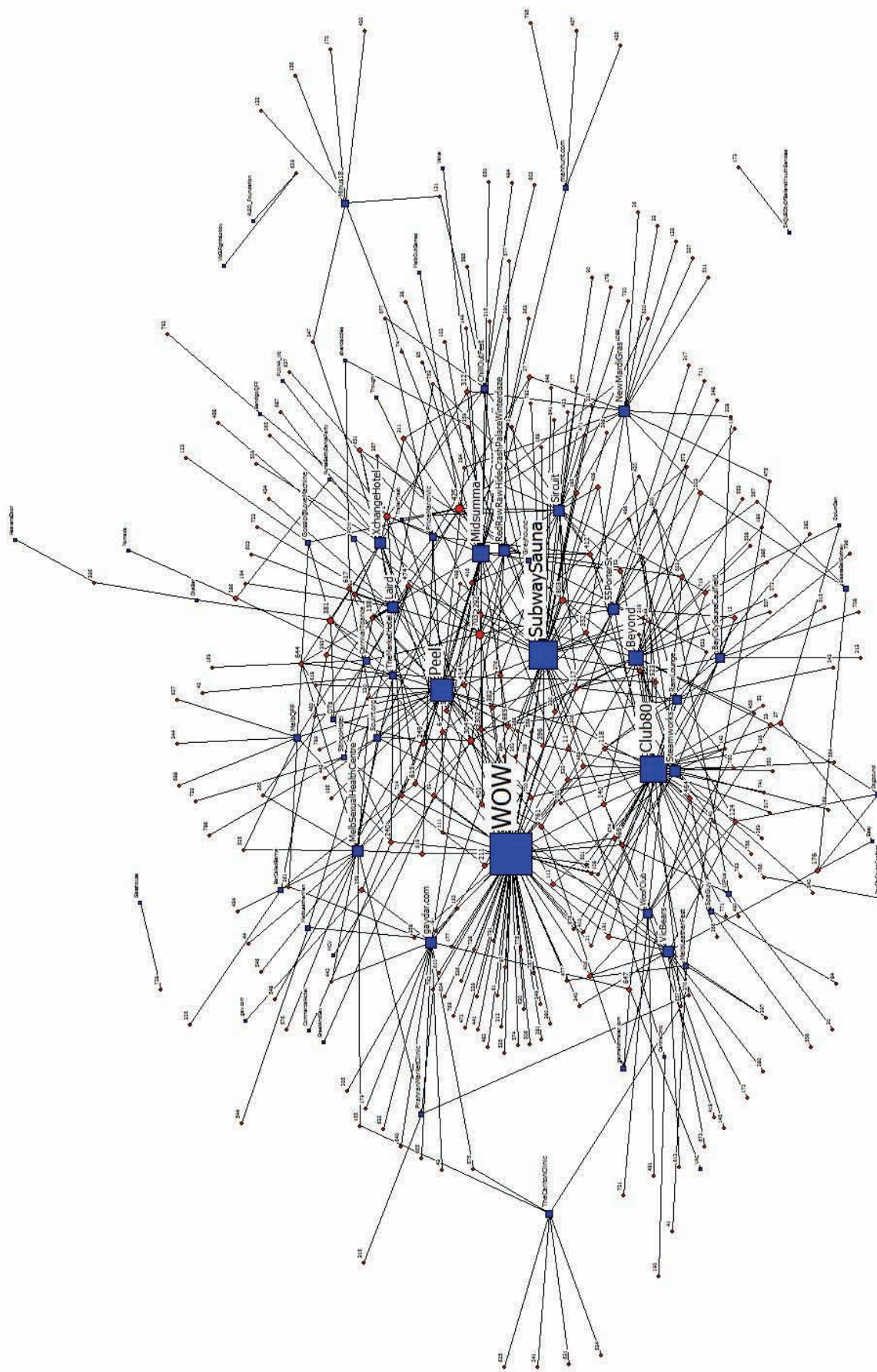


Figure 29 Sex monthly 16-29 age group

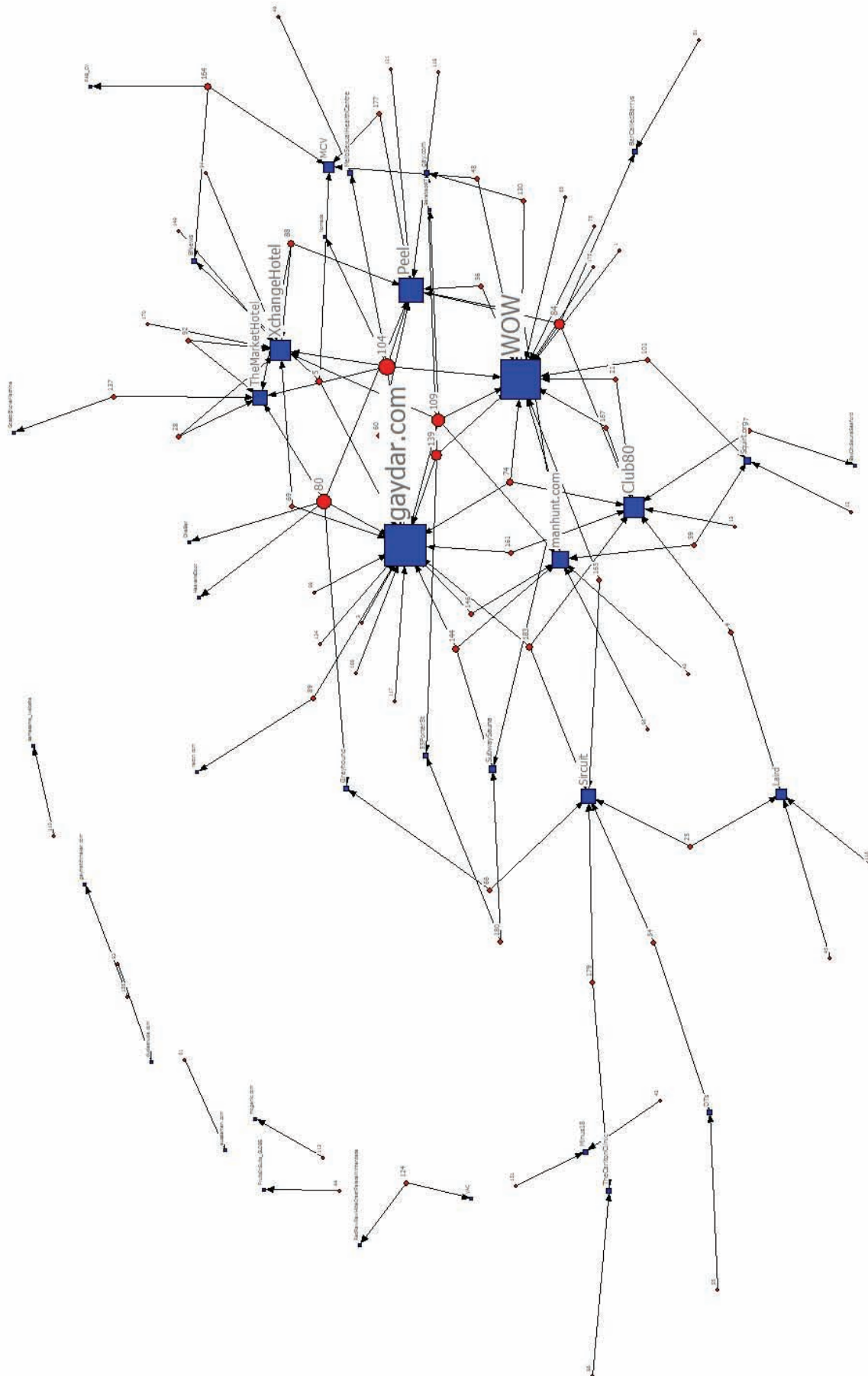


Figure 31 Sex monthly 50+ age group

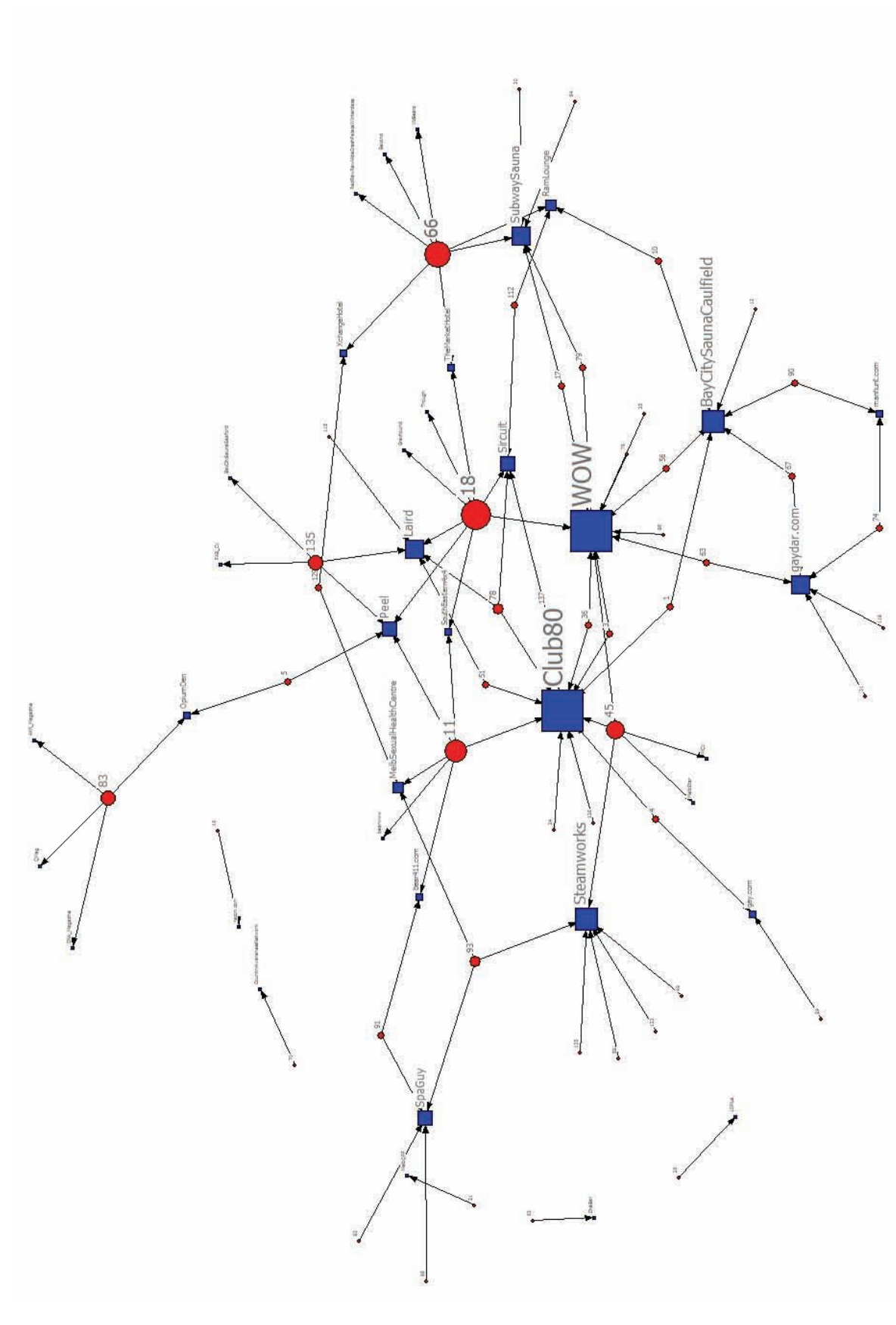


Figure 34 Sex monthly HIV-negative or untested

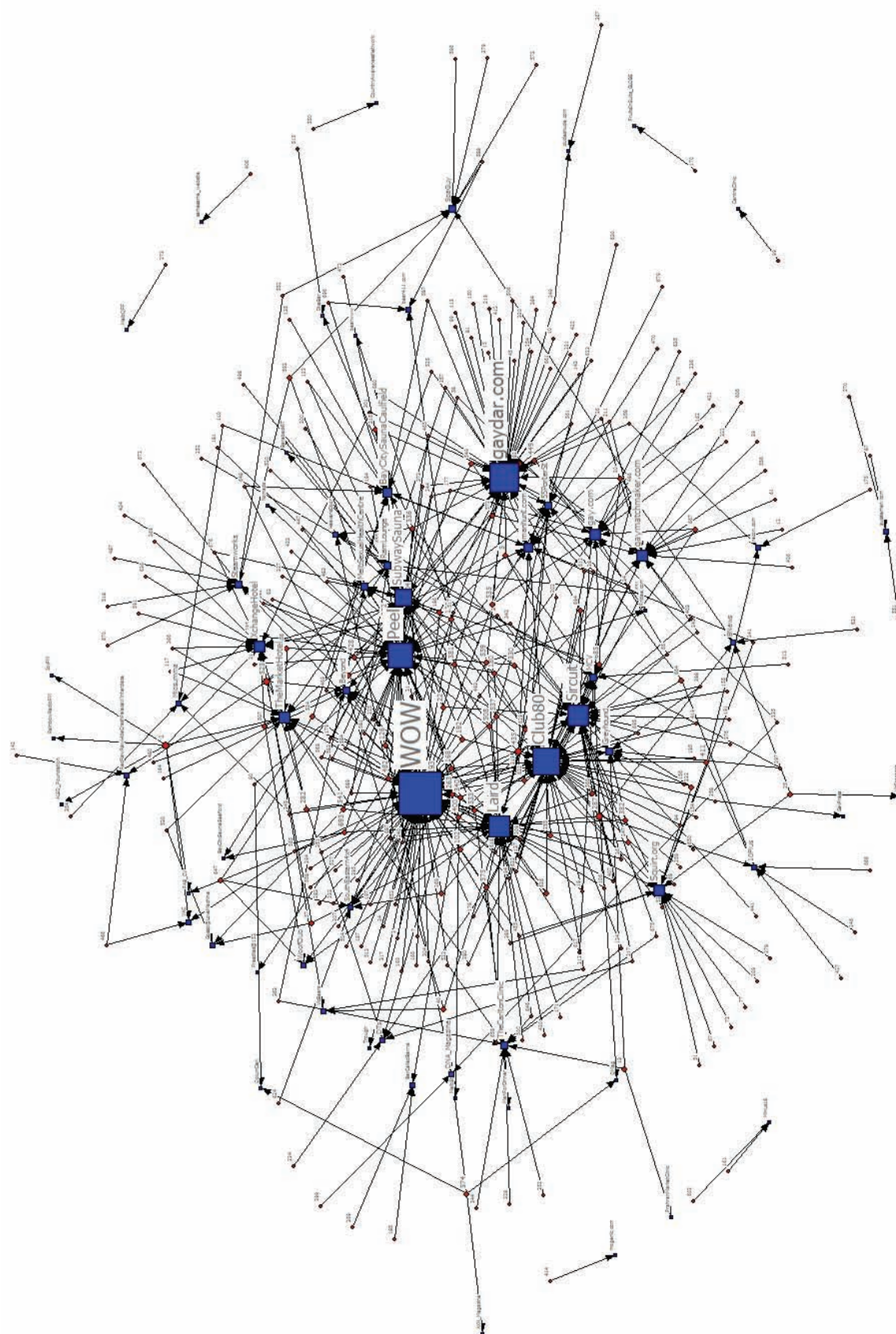
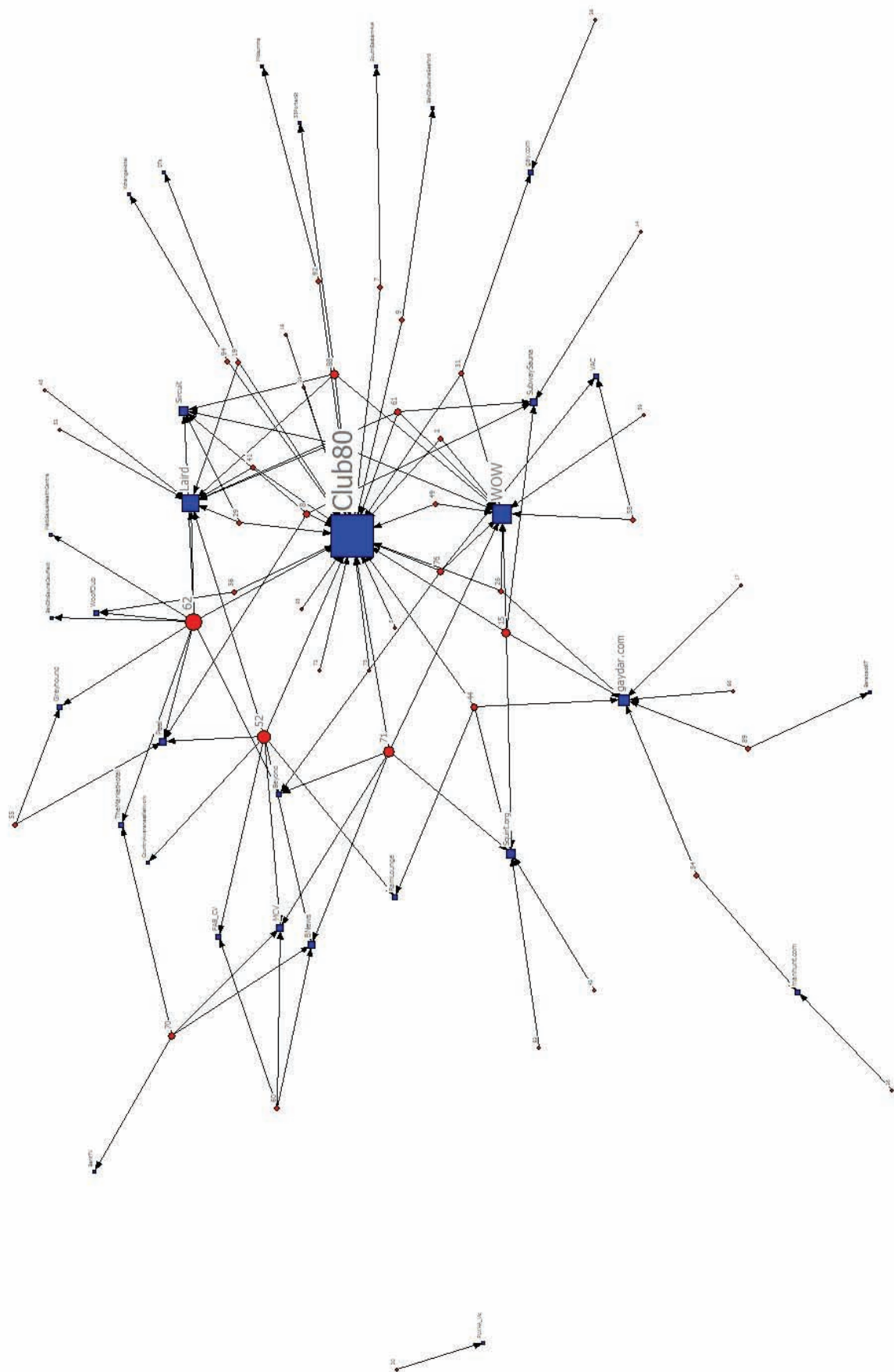


Figure 35 Sex monthly HIV-positive



Social Networks

The daily social network (446) is largely dominated by just two sites: Joy FM and www.gaydar.com. In the weekly social network (832) the relative dominance of Joy FM and www.gaydar.com is reversed and the weekly print media emerge as important. The monthly social network (1279) sees the emergence of physical venues, particularly the Laird and Peel Hotels, and a relative disappearance of online sites although the weekly print media have some prominence. As with other annual networks, the annual social network (1531) is dominated by Midsumma and to a lesser extent the Melbourne Queer Film Festival (Figures 36-39).

Once again Joy FM and www.gaydar.com play crucial roles in the social networks of gay men in Victoria. The social networks are similar in form to the recreational and sexual networks and illustrate how inextricably linked the “sexual” is in the recreational and social lives of some gay men. The reach of Joy FM and www.gaydar.com through the social/sexual/recreational networks mean any discussion of health campaign delivery to gay men in Victoria would usefully involve these two organisations. It is noteworthy that many of the special interest social and recreational groups who participated in this research stated in the organisational interview that sexual health promotion was not a priority in their organisation because it was not part of their charter. This is understandable. The prominence of www.gaydar.com in the social networks however perhaps highlights an opportunity to engage the members of these groups through their dual use of both physical and internet sites.

The similar weekly and monthly patterns of print media and physical venues respectively gaining prominence, again reiterate the necessity of mixed method approaches to sexual health interventions. It is clear that not all men socialise in the same ways and to solely rely on any one marketing or delivery strategy would be a mistake. Nevertheless, there are key bridging events and sites in the social networks which, if utilised strategically, can expand the reach of health promotion messages.

Figure 36 Social daily

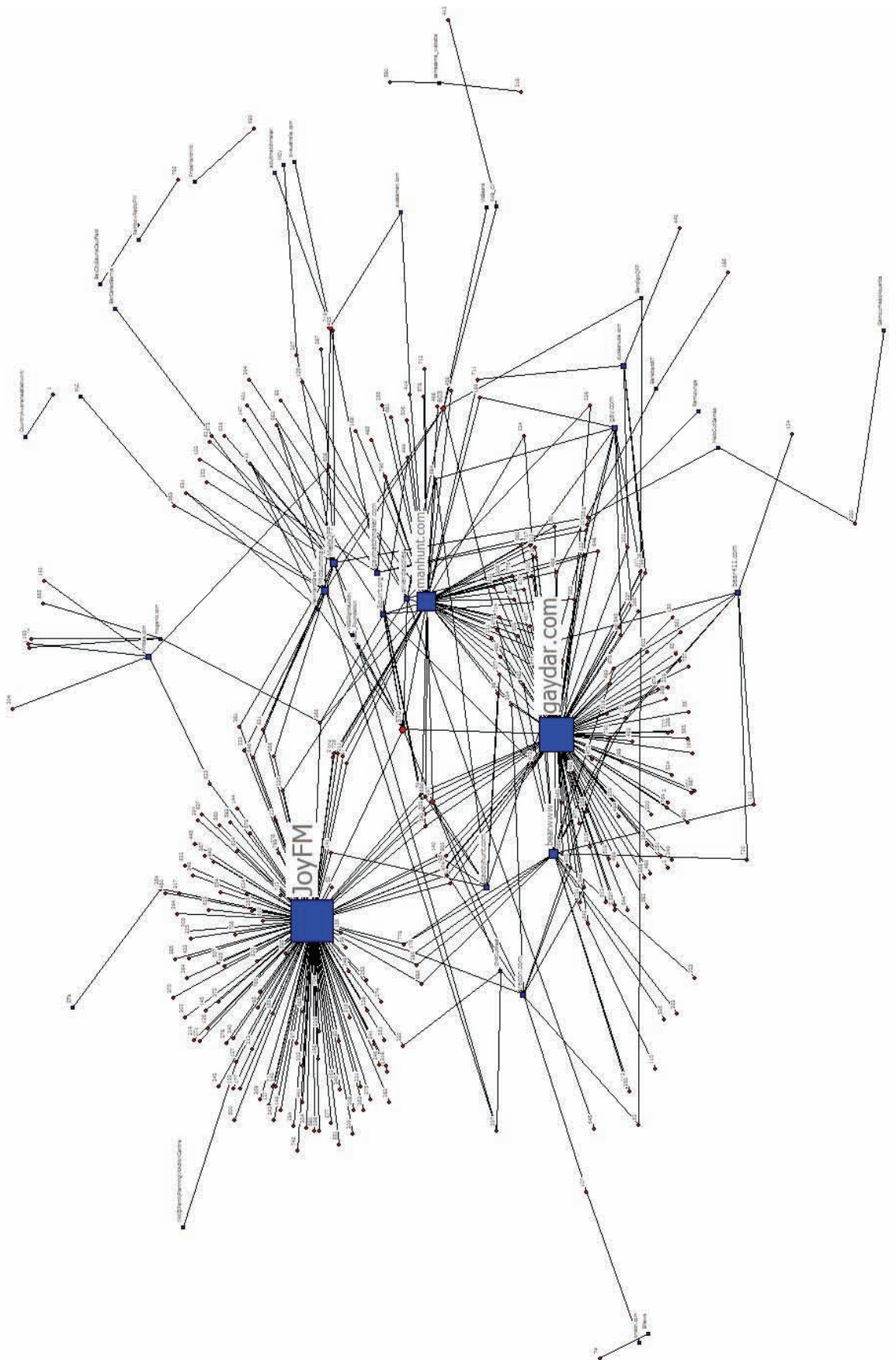


Figure 37 Social weekly

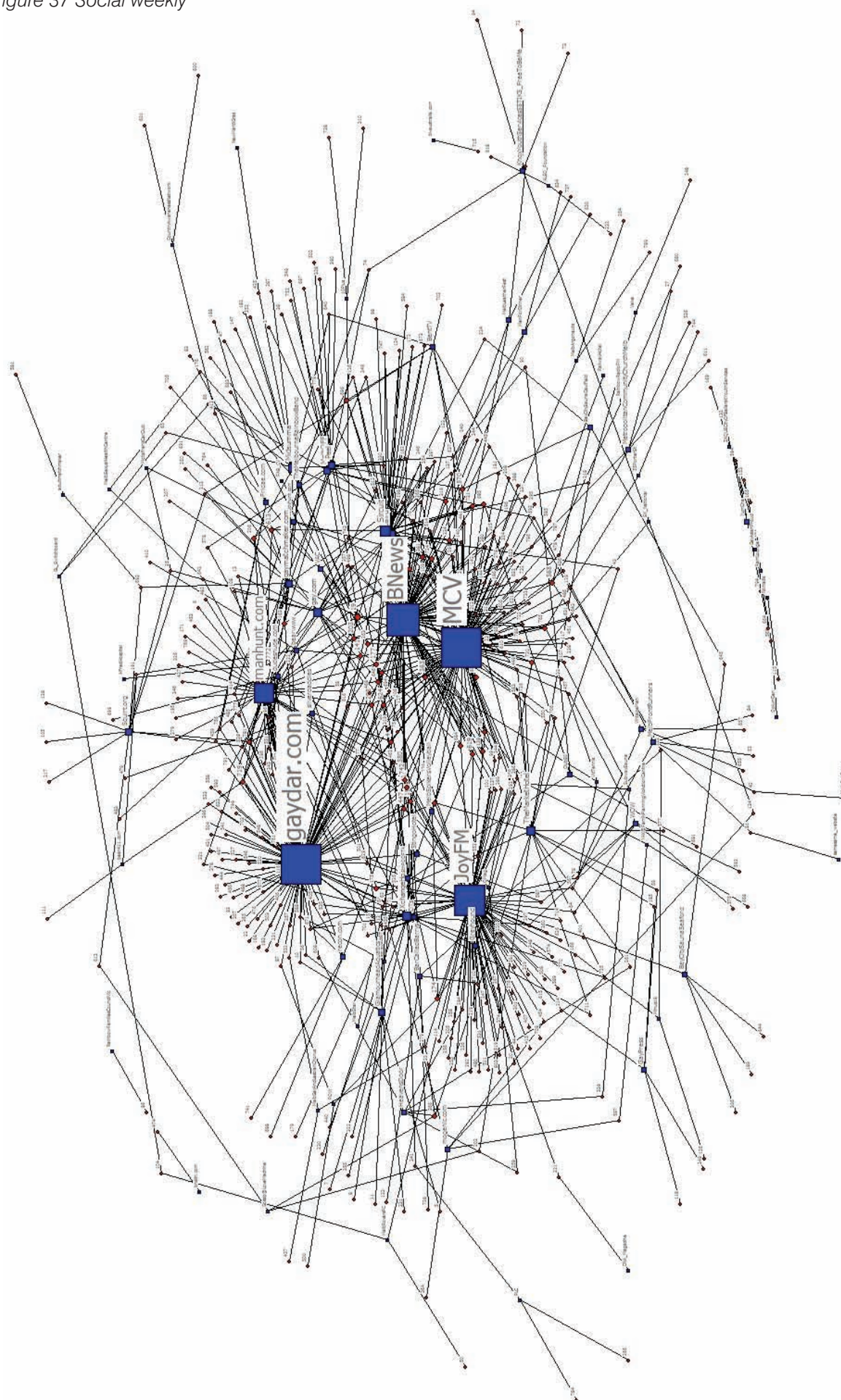


Figure 38 Social monthly

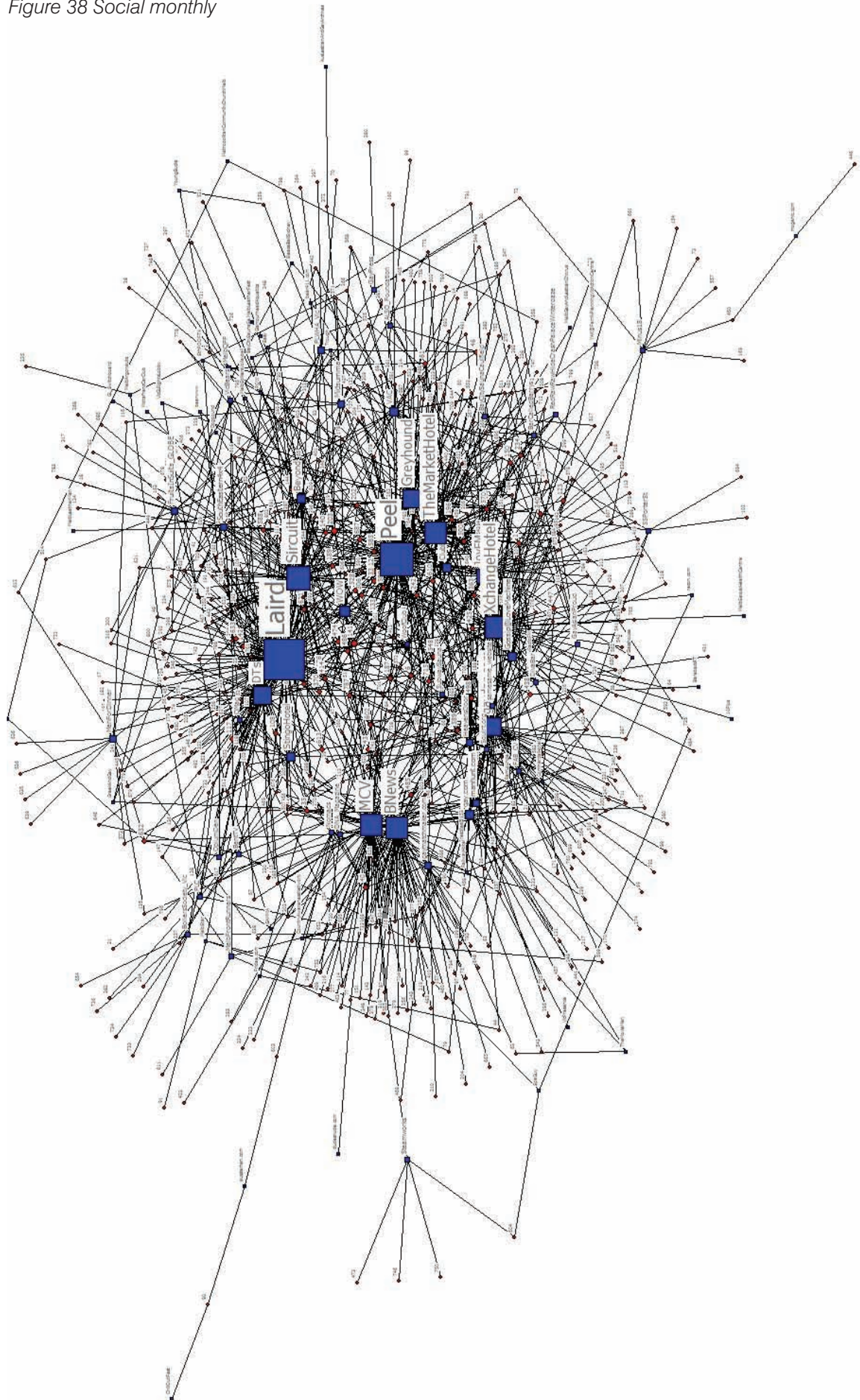
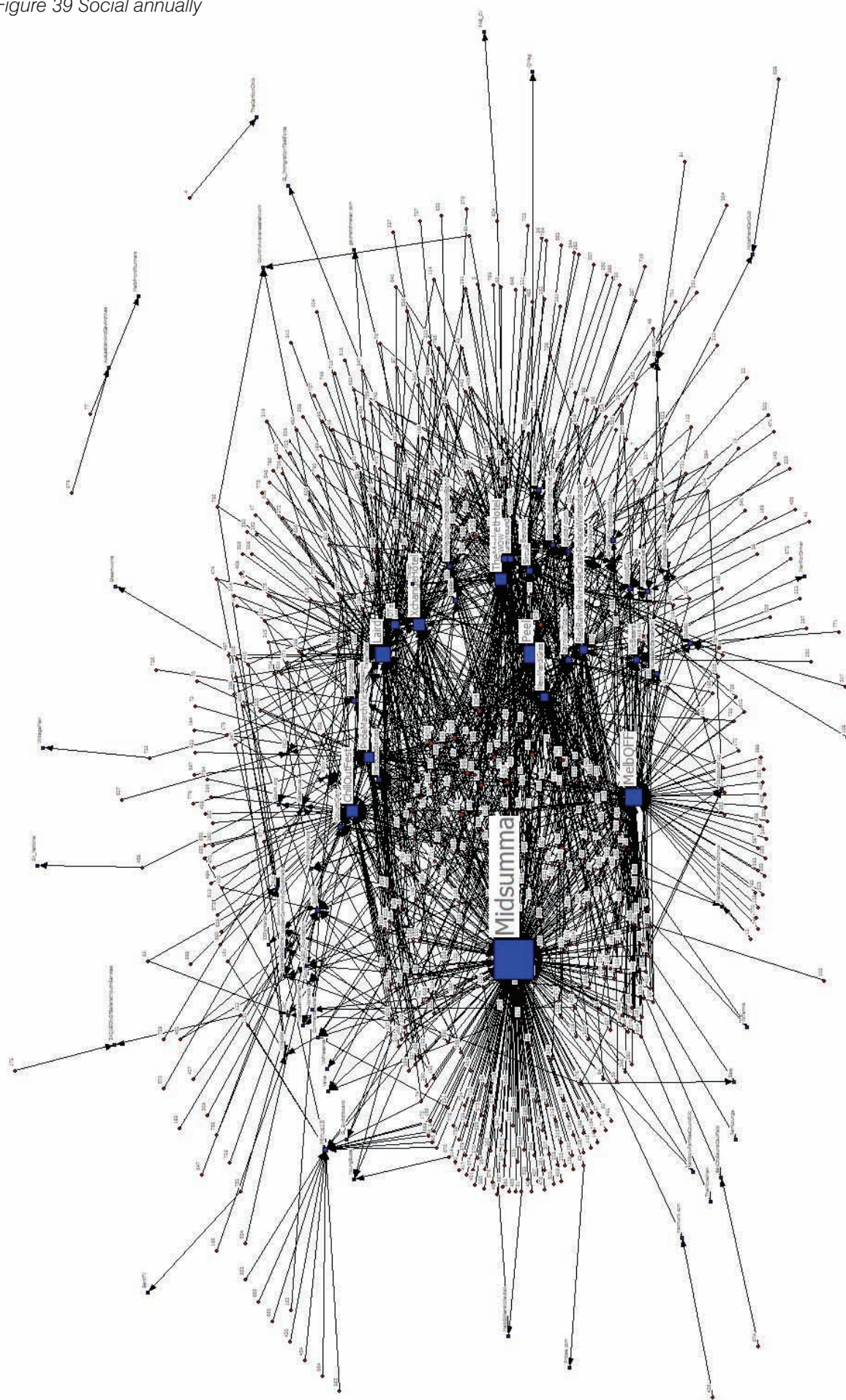


Figure 39 Social annually



Support Networks

The daily support network (142) is dominated by Joy FM and the weekly network (274) by Joy FM and the weekly print media. The monthly support network (266) includes the weekly press, the Laird and Peel Hotels, the Victorian AIDS Council, the Positive Living Centre along with PLWHA Vic. As with the majority other annual networks, the annual support network (403) was dominated by the Midsumma Festival (Figures 40-43).

The dominance of Joy FM in the daily networks, the print media in the weekly networks, the pubs and clubs in the monthly networks, and Midsumma in the annual networks suggests that there is a distinction to be drawn here between seeking support and feeling supported. Many of the organisations named under the rubric of “support” are not organisations that would traditionally be thought of as “support organisations”. This suggests that much of what is being articulated in these maps is a symbolic – rather than a literal – kind of support and that this is probably about ways of being attached to the gay community. In other words, proximity to the central and visible GLBTI organisations can be a measure of support.

Particularly in the weekly maps we also see that there are a few core organisations which link to a large number of smaller organisations used by many men. Melbourne Sexual Health Centre; Peel Hotel; Men for Dinner; Metropolitan Community Church Melbourne; and the Alfred Hospital, just to name a few, are linked to the core community symbols of MCV and Joy FM who no doubt contribute to and foster this sense of symbolic support to clients or group members by being positively affiliated with these large umbrella GLBTI organisations. It says here something about the kind of implicit support the availability of GLBTI print media from organisations, the playing of Joy FM radio at a reception desk, or an ALSO Foundation sticker on the front door of an organisation might offer.

The popularity and necessity of these central symbolic organisations seems to be largely understood by the community and support organisations who stated in the organisational interview that these core GLBTI organisations form some of their key health promotion resources. For example, 69.4% of community and support organisations named ALSO Foundation; 63.9% MCV and 61.1% Joy FM as health promotion resources. Similarly, when asked what the community and support organisations thought were the optimal methods of HIV/STI health promotion, 72.2% said MCV and 50.0% said Joy FM were effective ways of delivering a message.

The network chains that link smaller or less prominent organisations back to these large core GLBTI organisations can be quite long and therefore, while the dissemination of messages can be effectively done through their placement with larger core organisations, the diffusion of messages along extended networks might be quite slow. A mixed method approach to resource delivery which uses the large media and internet organisations and a strategic selection of venues and clinics, for example, is likely to be optimal.

The annual support network map shows how dominant and useful Midsumma is as an annual source of support. The map has an indiscriminate symmetry about it and suggests that if an organisation is to spend a health promotion dollar at an annual community event; maximum coverage will be best achieved if it is spent with Midsumma.

Other areas of dominance are www.gaydar.com and the print media to the weekly visualisations and the Victorian AIDS Council, the Positive Living Centre and PLWHA Vic to the monthly support networks. Both illustrate opportunities to engage with men across different contexts and in different time sequences. The prominence of www.gaydar.com in the support networks suggests that the framing of health promotion around sex and pleasure may have a greater resonance than if it is framed around care and support.

When we looked at the support networks in relation to the three age groups we found that each map had a very different composition from the others (Figures 44-46). The support networks of the 16-29 group (38) are disjointed and rely heavily on Minis 18, Melbourne Sexual Health Centre and Bnews (no longer trading). The links between organisations are shorter in these networks than with the other age groups, suggesting that while Minus 18 is a key site for contacting young men under the age of 18 years, these messages may have slow diffusion possibilities.

The 30-49 (135) in contrast is denser and has longer chains. Here the print media gain prominence. This is true also for the north side venues of Laird and Peel hotels and Sircuit Bar. Again it might be argued here that what is articulated in these maps is a feeling of support rather than literal support and that this is about being connected to the community. This map (Figure 45) illustrates that the men aged between 30-49 who responded to the survey seek support through the special interest groups, the more 'traditional' support organisations, the media and the bars, clubs and SOPVs.

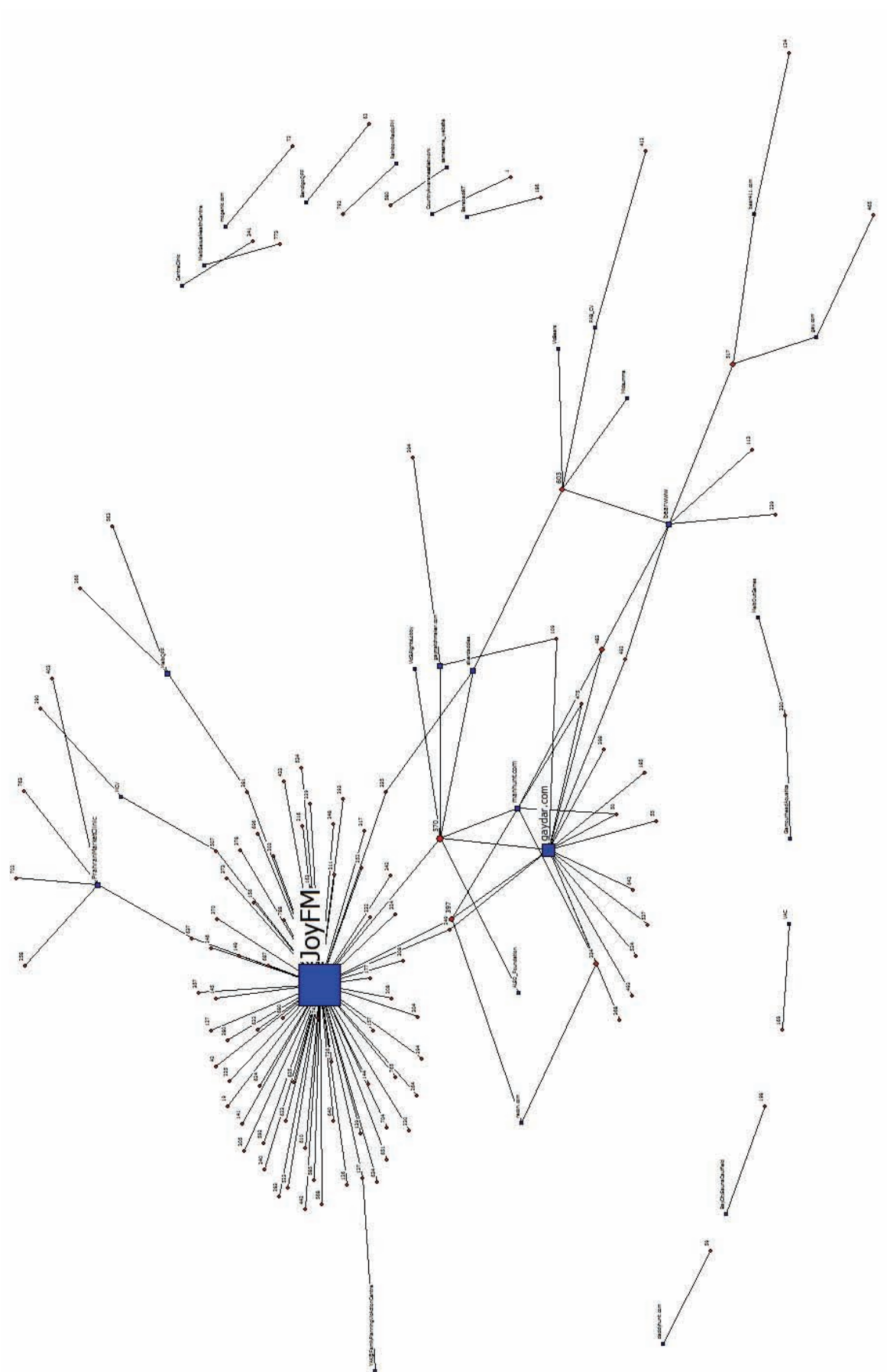
For the 50+ age group (68) Victorian AIDS Council, Laird Hotel, and the print media are prominent. Not surprisingly, the Boilers Society, an organisation for older gay men, features prominently. Another organisation which has not featured in the other age-related networks but which is important here is Stingo Hotel. The political organisations like ALSO Foundation, Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby and PLWHA Vic also feature. It is clear from this visualisation that the Victorian AIDS Council is more widely used by the older men in the community than it is by the 16-29 age group.

The group of men who are less open about their sexuality (165) make greater use of the print media and nominated Laird Hotel equally to MCV for importance to their support networks (Figure 47). In contrast, those men who are more open about their sexuality (101) nominated the Victorian AIDS Council, the Positive Living Centre, PLWHA Vic, the Peel and Laird Hotels and the print media as important sites of support (Figure 48).

Unsurprisingly, the Positive Living Centre and PLWHA Vic dominate the monthly support networks of the HIV-positive men (51) who responded to the survey. The Peel and Laird hotels also feature in these networks (Figure 50).

The support networks of the HIV-negative and untested men (215) are similar in composition to the support networks of the men less open about their sexuality seen in Figure 47 and reflect a less centralised level of gay community attachment by this group (Figure 49).

Figure 40 Support daily



Mapping Gay Men's Communities 89

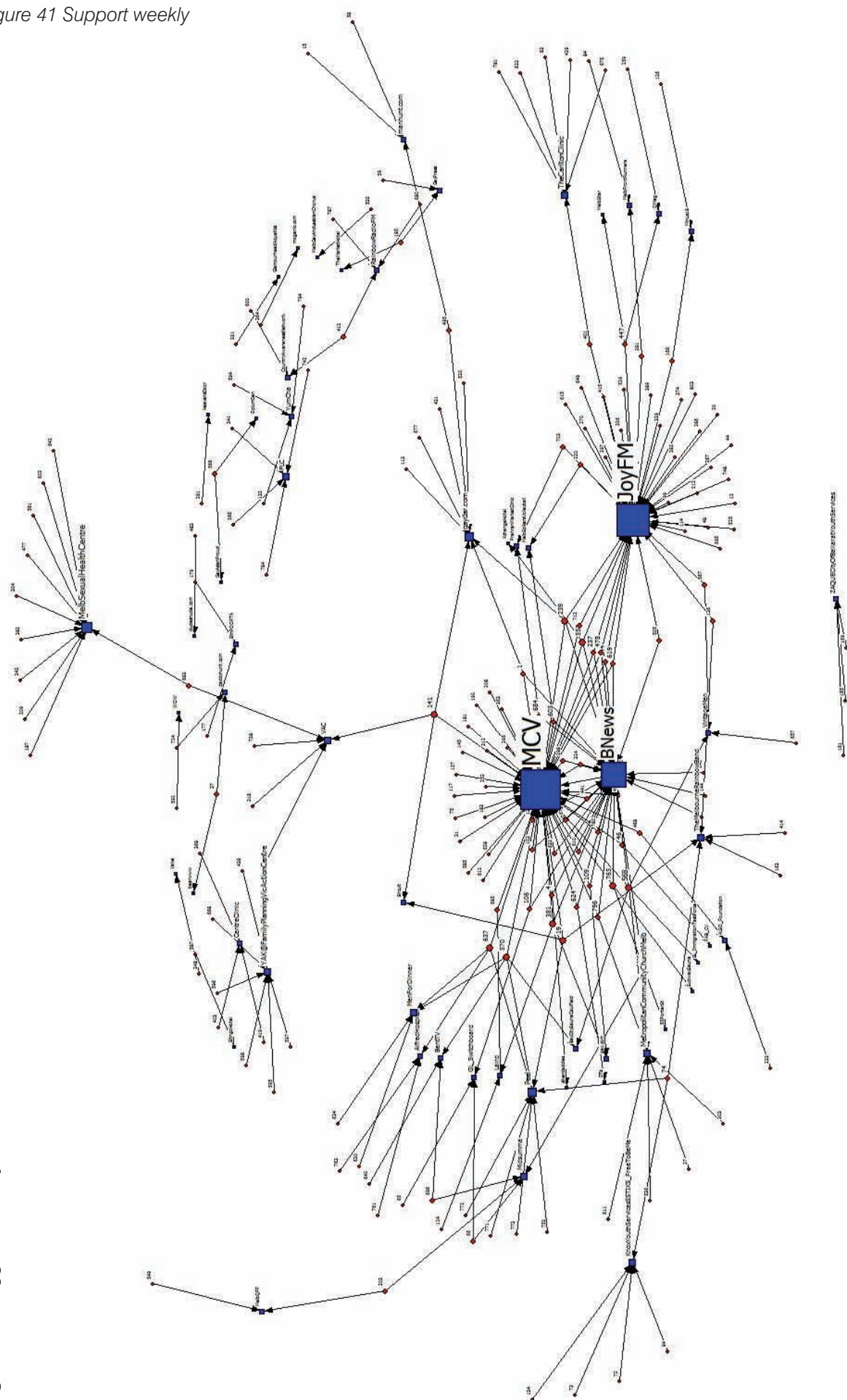
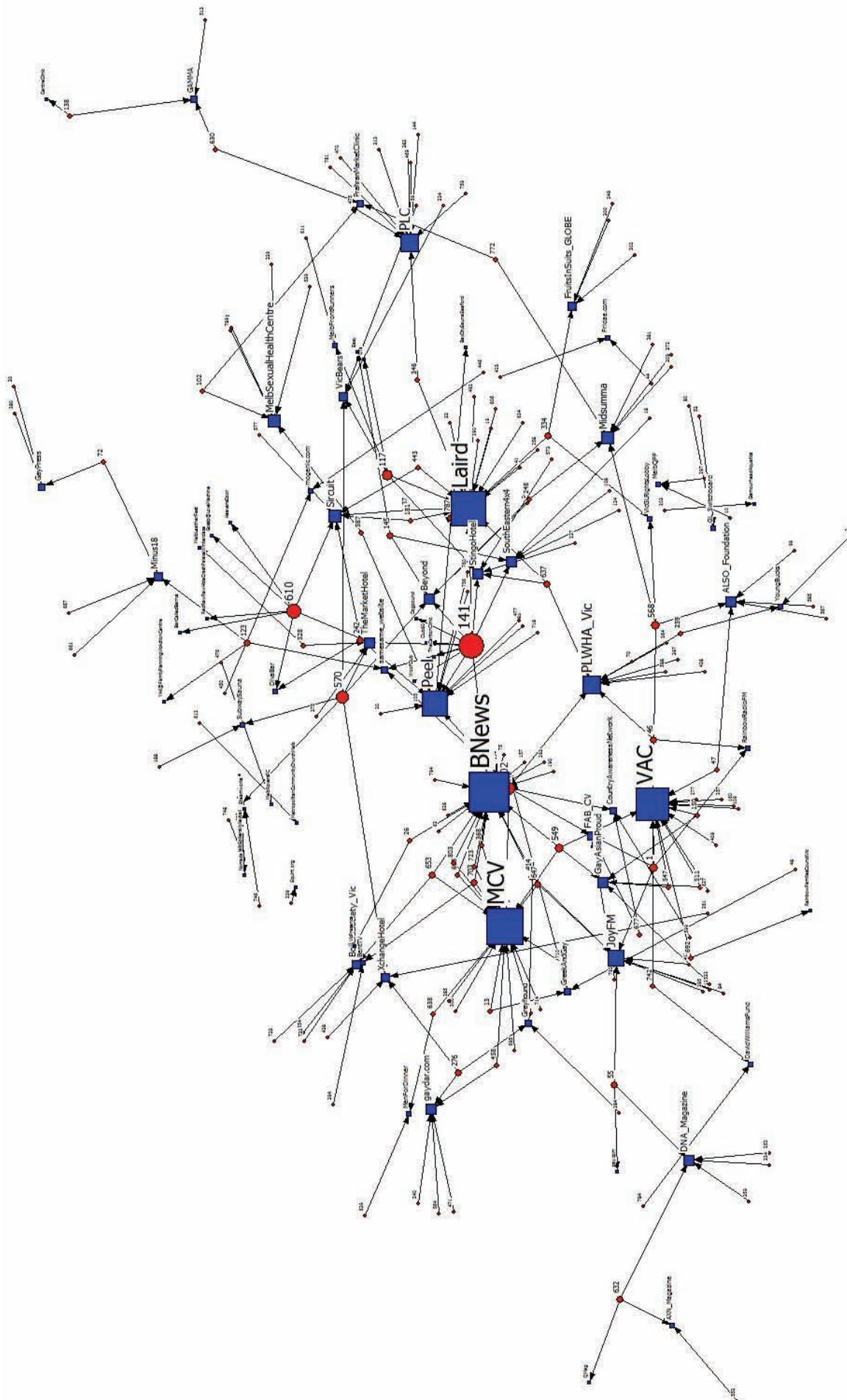


Figure 42 Support monthly



Mapping Gay Men's Communities 91

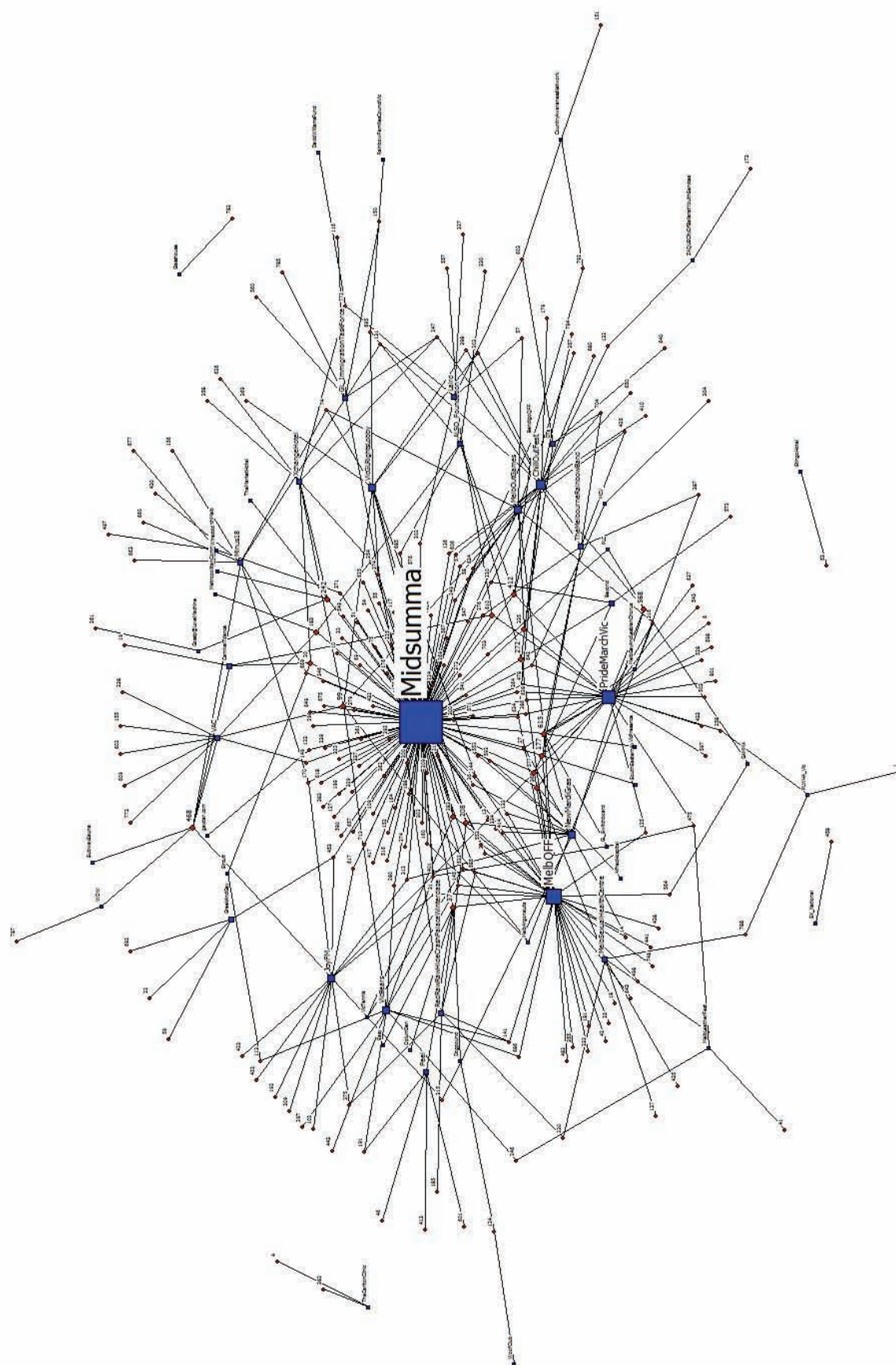


Figure 44 Support monthly 16-29 age group

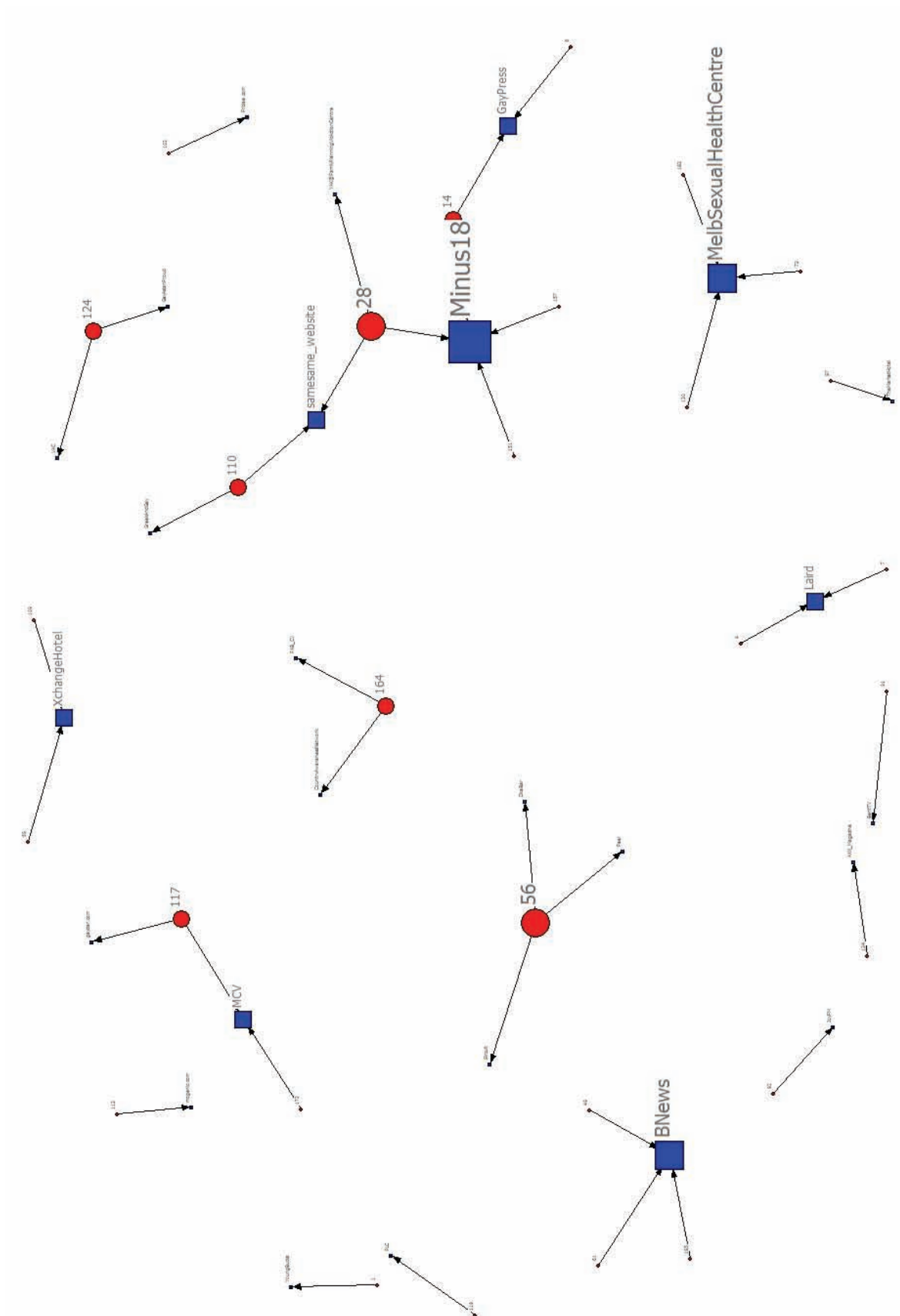


Figure 45 Support monthly 30-49 age group

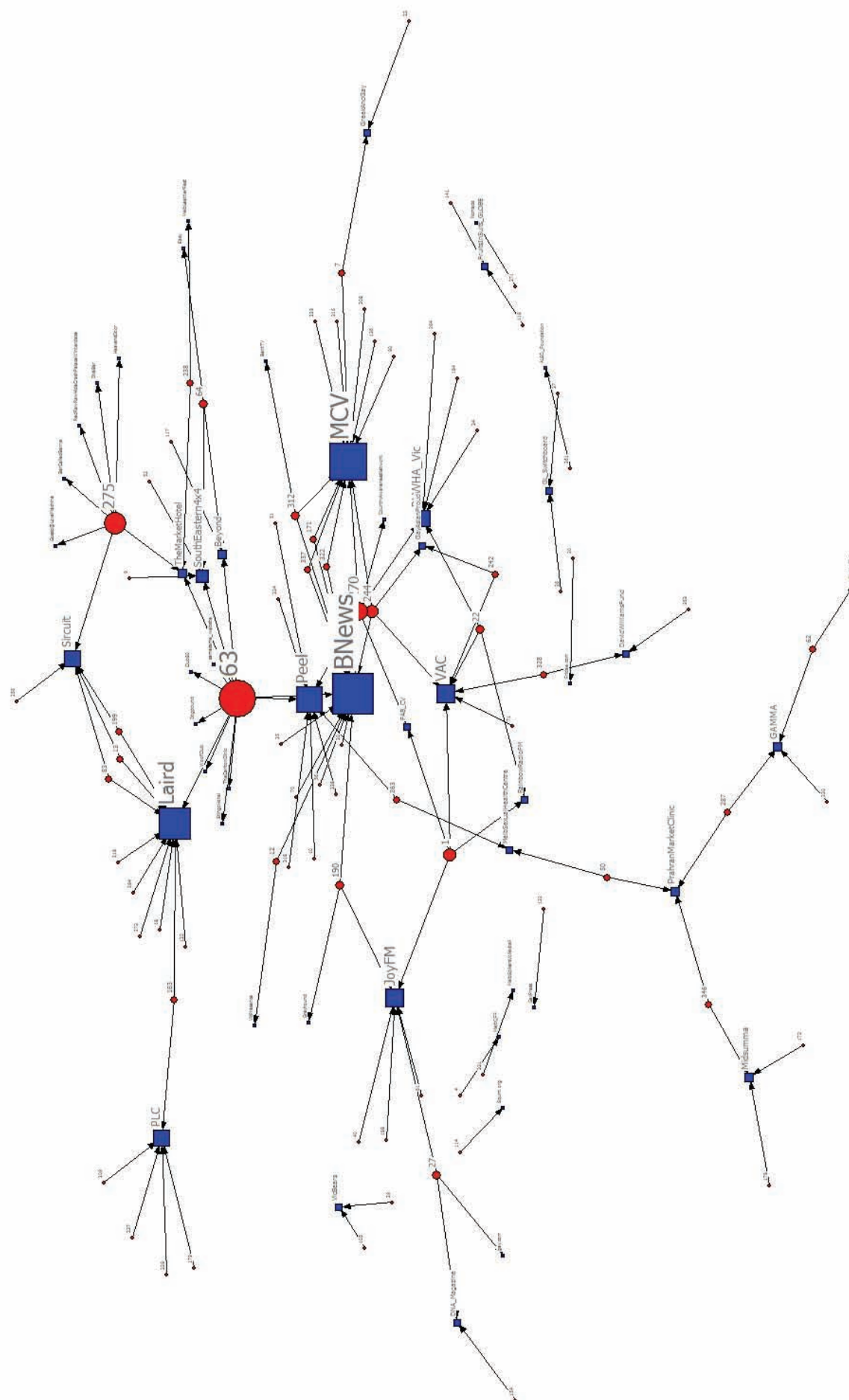


Figure 47 Support monthly less open about sexuality

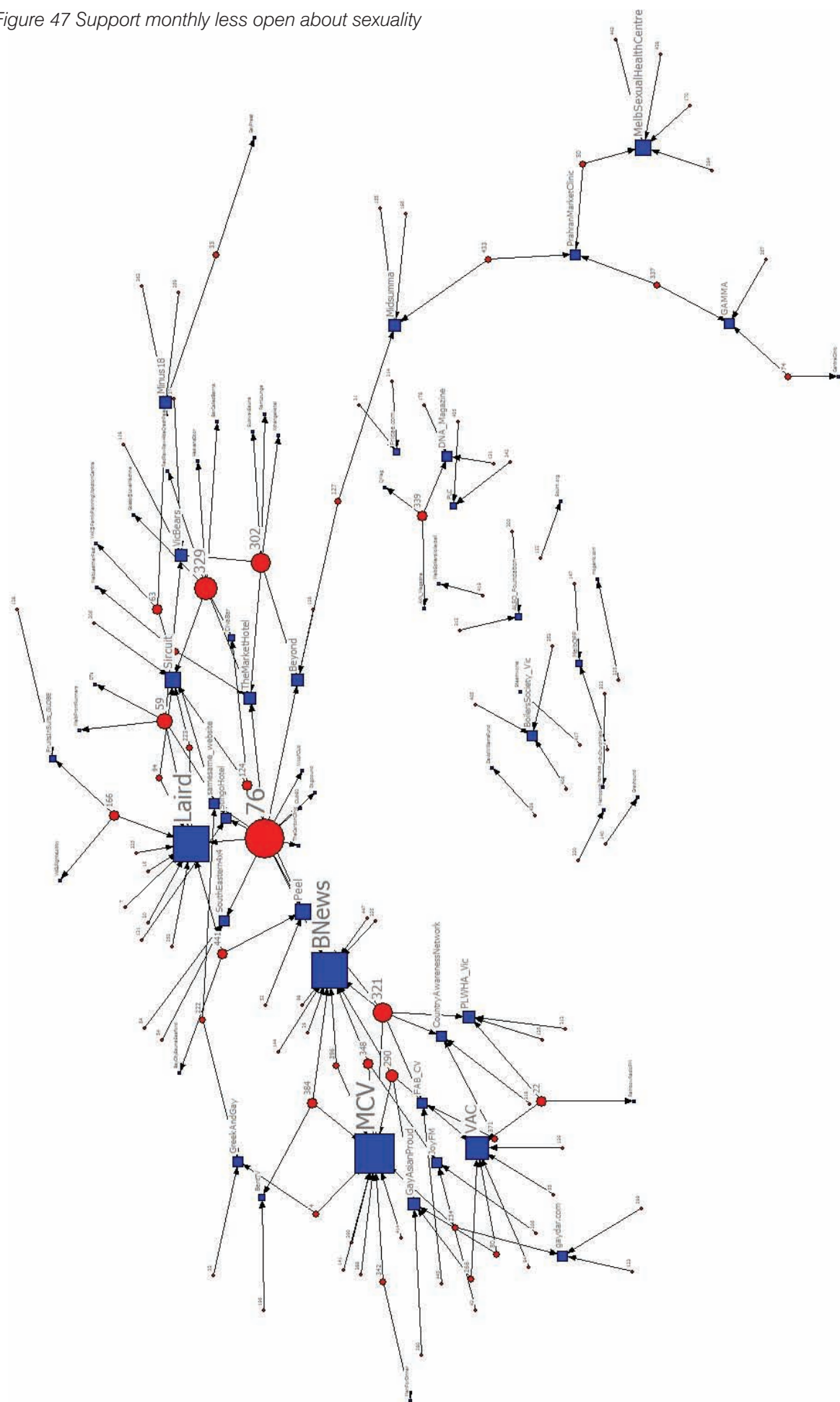


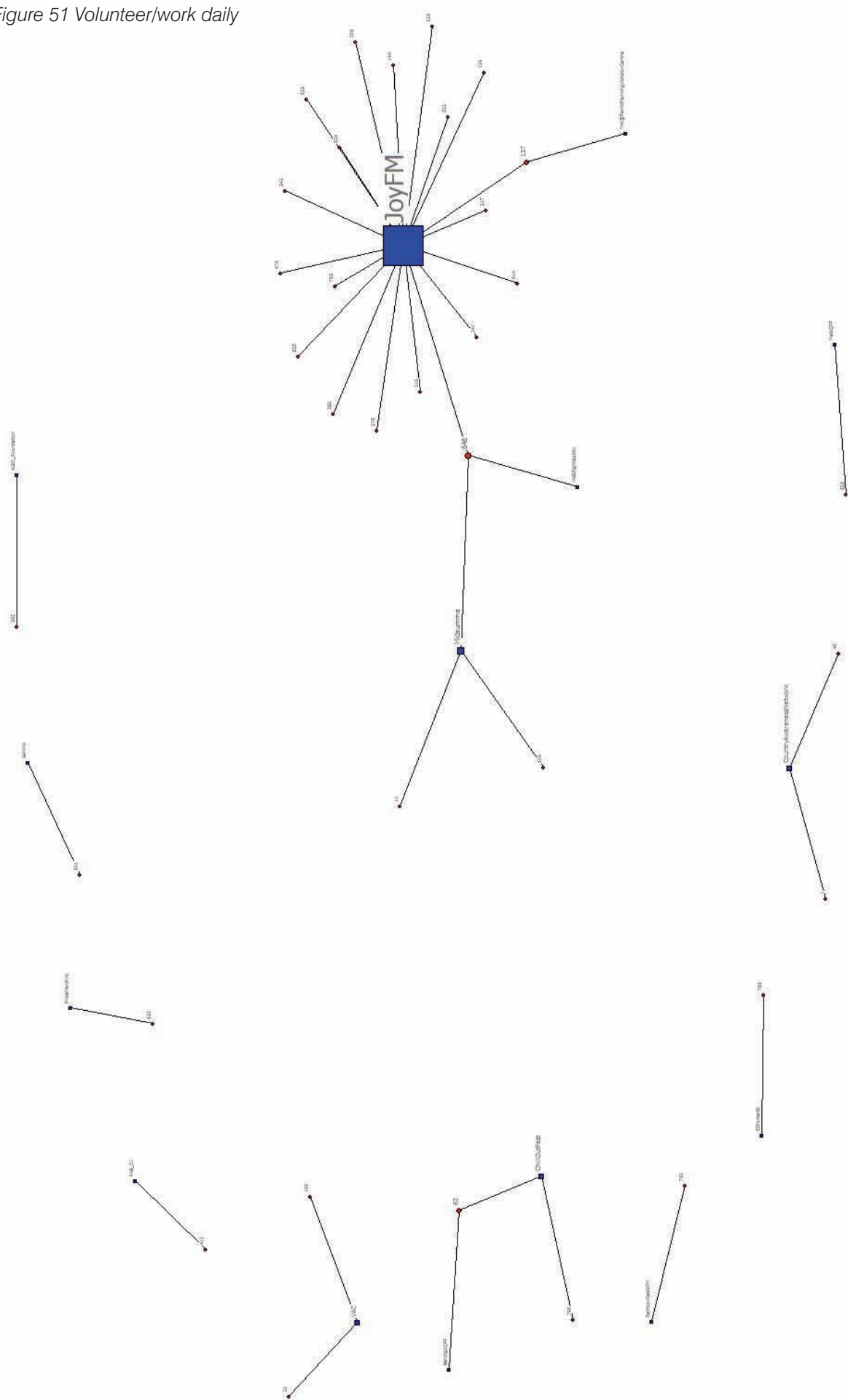
Figure 50 Support monthly HIV-positive

Volunteer Networks

The daily volunteer/work network was entirely dominated by Joy FM. The weekly volunteer/work network (90) was also dominated by Joy FM with significant presence from the Victorian AIDS Council, the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard and the MCV. The monthly network (111) retains a significant presence for Joy FM but the Victorian AIDS Council is now dominant with smaller presences from the ALSO Foundation, PLWHA Vic and the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard. The annual network is dominated by Midsumma with smaller presences from the Pride March, ChillOut Festival and the Melbourne Queer Film Festival (Figures 51-53).

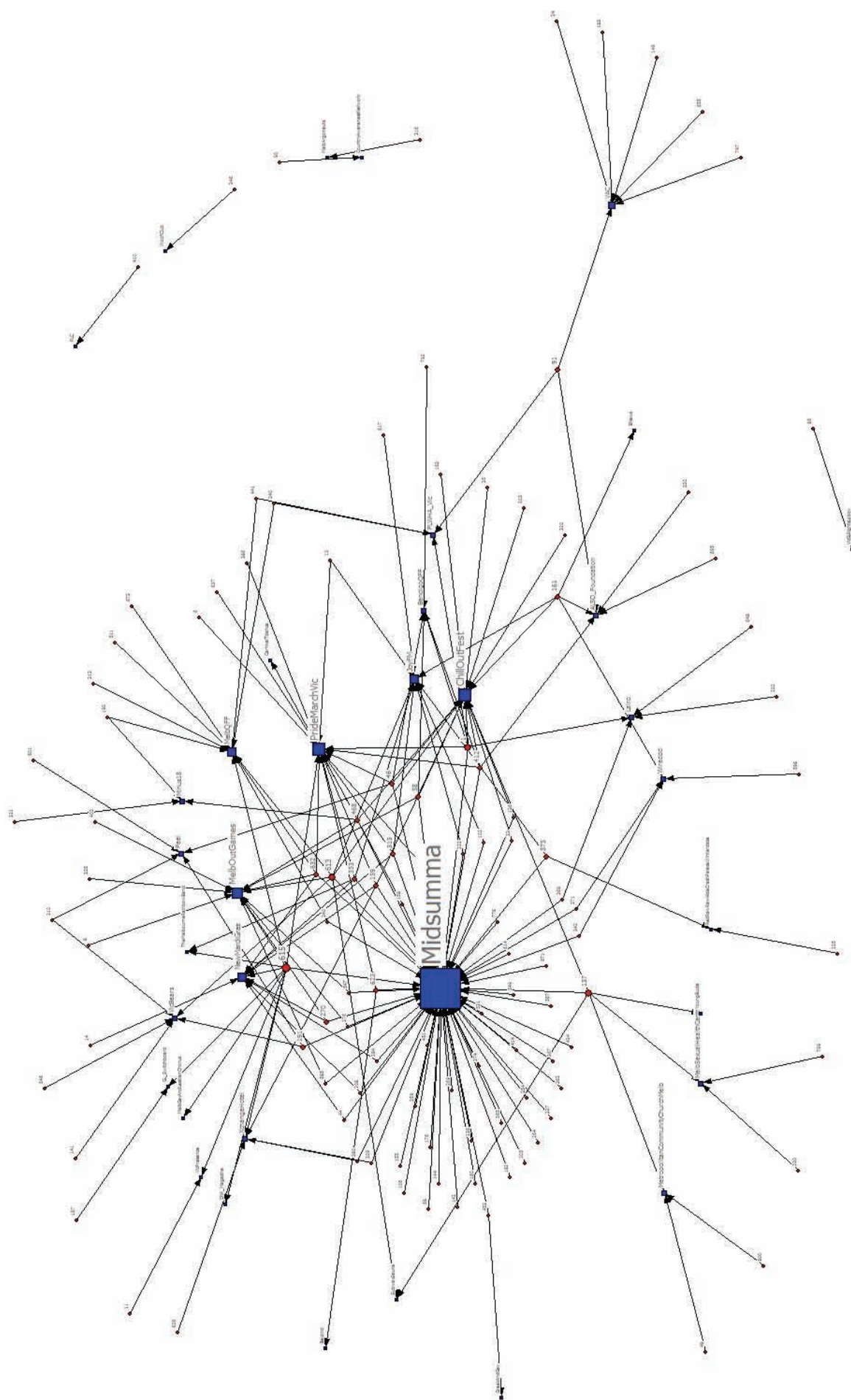
The visualisations show that the ways people engage with the gay communities through work and/or volunteerism are many and varied. It is clear that the people occupying these roles are well connected to both the larger GLBTI organisations and the smaller organisations which might be thought of as those providing more traditional forms of support. For many people volunteerism is a way to be connected to the gay community and it is not surprising then that the annual Support maps and the annual Volunteer maps have a similar composition. Again it is obvious that Midsumma not only offers a unique opportunity to connect with the individuals who make up the volunteer sector, but also that volunteers in turn are an important link between organisations and the people who use them.

Figure 51 Volunteer/work daily



[illegible]

Mapping Gay Men's Communities 103



Concluding Comments

This report represents an exciting step forward in contextualising the gay community engagement practices of men in Victoria. When health promotion professionals think about their work, they do not think about individual men isolated from the world making decisions and forming views entirely on their own. They think about these men as part of a community and within multiple social networks. They think about the many ways men engage with each other, with organisations, places and sites and the many reasons they do this. In health promotion practice, from the simplest information campaign to the most complex social marketing exercise, understanding the system in which this work happens is critical to the decisions made in designing the work and the choices about where to place materials, which groups to work with and which populations to focus on. The wealth of experience and expertise in HIV health promotion has ensured that these considerations have been central in planning and conducting this work. Often, however, the information workers have had to draw on in making these decisions has been patchy and incomplete.

What this project and this report offers is a set of additional tools to assist in effective planning of health promotion and other activities. These visualisations of the multiple networks that men engage with suggest ways of targeting activities to reach specific populations efficiently with specific types of information or messages. While we understand that men use networks differently for different reasons, empirically mapping this gives us a great advantage when attempting to diffuse a particular message through a network. These findings also address the vexed question of how to reach the allegedly 'hard-to-reach' gay men. The answer is not simple of course, but understanding that men may be connected to the central health promotion agencies through a chain of other, non-HIV, related sites offers new opportunities for creative work in this area.

This report represents the first step in working with this wealth of data. The information and visualisations here represent starting points for discussions between health promotion professionals, researchers and other agencies around future opportunities to maximise the efficacy of this important work. The second appendix to this document, published separately, provides a valuable sourcebook when planning specific health promotion and advocacy activities. Additional analyses will follow, both those conducted in partnership with our colleagues in the HIV sector and those prepared for academic publication. We trust that this work stimulates your imagination and that it raises as many questions as it answers. It certainly does for us.

Appendix 1. Correspondence between labels used in network visualisations and site names.

Label	Site
bearwww	www.bearwww.com
MelbQFF	Melbourne Queer Film Festival
SubwaySauna	Subway Sauna
10Plus	TEN Plus
MelbOutGames	Melbourne Out Games
MCV	Melbourne Community Voice
SouthEastern4x4	South Eastern 4x4
bear411.com	www.bear411.com
55PorterSt	55 Porter Street
Club80	Club 80
JoyFM	Joy FM
BarCalledBarrys	A Bar Called Barrys
YAK@FamilyPlanningVicActionCentre	YAK
adultmatchmaker	www.adultmatchmaker.com
VAC	Victorian AIDS Council
AlfredHospital	Alfred Hospital
AusLesbianAndGayArchives	Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives
VicBears	VicBears
GayPress	Gay Press
ALSO_Foundation	ALSO Foundation
CountryAwarenessNetwork	Country Awareness Network
MelbArgonauts	Melbourne Argonauts
Laird	The Laird
SX_National	SX National
bi-australia.com	www.bi-australia.com
aussiemen.com	www.aussiemen.com
AXN_Magazine	AXN Magazine
BNews	Bnews
BarebackRT	www.barebackrt.com
BayCitySaunaCaulfield	Bay City Sauna - Caulfield
BayCitySaunaSeaford	Bay City Sauna - Seaford
FAB_CV	Friends Alike Bendigo - Central Victoria
BendigoQFF	Bendigo Queer Film Festival
RainbowRadioFM	Rainbow Radio FM
BentTV	Bent TV
Beyond	Beyond
bnskin.com	www.bnskin.com
BoilersSociety_Vic	Boilers Society of Victoria
Circuit	Circuit Bar
Peel	The Peel Hotel

TheCarltonClinic	The Carlton Clinic
MelbGayAndLesbianChorus	Melbourne Gay and Lesbian Chorus
Midsumma	Midsumma
TheMelbourneRainbowBand	The Melbourne Rainbow Band
CentreClinic	Centre Clinic
ChillOutFest	Chill Out Festival
PLC	Positive Living Centre
Valve	Valve
RamLounge	Ram Lounge
CommercialHotel	The Commercial Hotel
MelbStar	Melbourne Star
RedRawRawHideCrashPalaceWinterdaze	Red Raw; Raw Hide; Crash Palace; Winterdaze
DTs	DTs
daddyhunt.com	www.daddyhunt.com
DavidWilliamsFund	David Williams Fund
DivaBar	Diva Bar
DNA_Magazine	DNA Magazine
Dogpound	Dogpound
PLWHA_Vic	People Living With HIV/AIDS Victoria
dudesnude.com	www.dudesnude.com
Easy	Easy
VicGLRightsLobby	Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby
XchangeHotel	The Xchange Hotel
StingoHotel	Stingos Hotel
Fridae.com	www.fridae.com
KnoxYouthServicesSSTIKS_FreeToBeMe	Knox Youth Services
MelbFrontRunners	Melbourne Front Runners
FruitsInSuits_GLOBE	Fruits In Suits
GL_ImmigrationTaskForce	Gay & Lesbian Immigration Task Force
GL_Switchboard	Gay & Lesbian Switchboard
GAMMA	Gay and Married Mens Association
GayAsianProud	Gay, Asian and Proud
MelbRoversFC	Melbourne Rovers Football Club
PrahranMarketClinic	Prahran Market Clinic
gay.com	www.gay.com
gaydar.com	www.gaydar.com
gaymatchmaker.com	www.gaymatchmaker.com
PrideMarchVic	Pride March Victoria
SthPOOFTA	SthPOOFTA
VicTennis	VicTennis
POW	Prince of Wales
GlamourheadAquatics	Glamourhead Aquatics
Glasshouse	Glasshouse
Greyhound	The Greyhound Hotel

GreekAndGay	Greek and Gay
HeavensDoor	Heavens Door
manhunt.com	www.manhunt.com
Squirt.org	www.squirt.org
MelbLeatherMen	Melbourne Leather Men
MelbLeatherFest	Melbourne Leather Festival
Gossip@LoveMachine	Love Machine
NewMardiGras	New Mardi Gras
TheMarketHotel	The Market Hotel
MetropolitanCommunityChurchMelb	Metropolitan Community Church of Melbourne
MelbSexualHealthCentre	Melbourne Sexual Health Centre
MelbSpikersVolleyball	Melbourne Spikers Volleyball
VicPresence	Vic Presence
MenForDinner	Men for Dinner
Minus18	Minus18
mogenic.com	www.mogenic.com
MotafrenzCarClub	Motafrenz Car Club
TheMovieMen	The Movie Men
Nomads	Nomads
NurseBettyDanceParty	Nurse Betty Dance Party
OpiumDen	Opium Den
Prescillas@153	Prescillas
QMag	Q Magazine
RailwayHotel	The Railway Hotel
RainbowFamiliesCouncilVic	Rainbow Families Council of Victoria
recon.com	www.recon.com
samesame_website	www.samesame.com.au
WOW	Wet on Wellington
SpaGuy	Spa Guy
silverdaddies	www.silverdaddies.com.au
SleazeBallSydney	Sleaze Ball, Sydney
Steamworks	Steamworks
CarnivalTdance	Carnival T Dance
TrailerTrash	Trailer Trash
Trough	Trough
VintageMen	Vintage Men
Wireddd	Wireddd
WoofClub	Woof Club
YoungBucks	Young Bucks
YumCha	Yum Cha
Zaque	Zaque

Appendix 2 is an electronic document that can be viewed and downloaded at www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs

References

Frankland, A., I. Zablotska, et al. (2008). Gay Community Periodic Survey: Melbourne 2008. GCPs Report 3/2008. Sydney, National Centre in HIV Social Research, The University of New South Wales.

Grierson, J. (2006). Through a dark glass clearly: the employment and aberration of community in AIDS discourse. 18th Annual ASHM Conference. Melbourne, Australia.

Grierson, J., A. Smith, et al. (2007). An Ordinary Night Out. A report of the research project Pivotal, Peripheral or Positional: Understanding SOPVs for Intervention Monograph Number 68. Melbourne, Australia, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.

Hanneman, R. A. and M. Riddle (2005). Introduction to Social Network Methods. Riverside, CA, University of California.

Luke, D. A. and J. K. Harris (2007). "Network Analysis in Public Health: History, Methods and Applications." Annual Review of Public Health 28: 69-93.

Nutland, W. (2006). Exploding Community: Proliferation or Fragmentation. 18th Annual ASHM Conference. Melbourne, Australia.

Pitts, M. and A. Smith, Eds. (2007). Researching The Margins: Strategies for ethical and rigorous research with marginalised communities. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.