

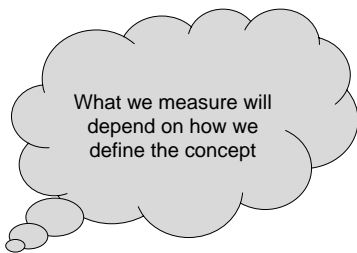
Longitudinal data analysis for social science researchers

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Longitudinal research on social capital:
Current developments and future potential



A definition

“Social capital” refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit.

Robert Putnam, 1995

Difficulties of operationalisation

- Competing definitions
- Lack of precision and rigour
- A back door for neo-classical economics?

Difficulties of operationalisation

"Measurement of social capital is difficult . . . Much of what is relevant to social capital is tacit and relational, defying easy measurement or classification".

OECD 2001, 43

In practice, most studies use cross sectional survey data or qualitative data

- Putnam uses wide variety of survey data and epidemiological data (including analyses of electoral behaviour)
- GSS (particularly on civic engagement)

The question of measurement is widely debated

- Canada – Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool (Policy Research Initiative – www.policyresearch.gc.ca)
- UK – cross-cutting interdepartmental initiative, led by David Halpern

The question of measurement is widely debated

- Levels of trust in society and its institutions
- Levels of participation in formal and informal networks
- Information on social norms promoting collective action
- Information on social capital and 'social governance' as an element in economic performance
- Information on social capital and 'social governance' as an element in social performance
- Social capital and 'social governance' as a potential facilitator of policy implementation

European Commission 2005

The current position

- Widespread agreement that SC is an important independent influence
- The mechanisms by which it works are "over-general and under-specified" (Li, Pickles & Savage)
- Causality is still very unclear

A growing number of studies use longitudinal data

- Malmö studies of health and education show positive association between social participation and health-related behaviour in 1990s
- Wisconsin study of National Educational Longitudinal Survey data shows that social capital affects education through the quality of social relationships and assistance (also shows money can be used to invest in social capital)
- Chimera (Essex) shows that acquiring new IT communications makes little difference to friendship patterns over 12 months

Longitudinal data sources for social capital in the UK

- British Cohort Study
- BHPS
- National Child Development Survey

Longitudinal data sources for social capital in the UK

British Cohort Study

Birth cohort from 5-11 April 1970

Followed up in 1975, 1980, 1986, 1992, 1996, 1999

Covers civic engagement, participation, citizenship, values

Longitudinal data sources for social capital in the UK

BHPS

5,500 households interviewed first in 1991

Followed up annually

Covers participation, neighbourhood, reciprocity

Longitudinal data sources for social capital in the UK

NCDS

Birth cohort from 3-9 March 1958

Followed up 1965, 1969, 1974, 1981, 1991, 1999/2000

Covers participation, voting, political trust, social activities

Time series data sources for social capital in the UK

- British Crime Survey
- British Election Survey
- British Social Attitudes Survey/NILTS
- Home Office Citizenship Survey
- Scottish Household Survey

International longitudinal data sources for social capital

- EC Household Panel Survey

Carried out 1994-2001

Covers association membership, neighbours, networks

International time series data sources for social capital

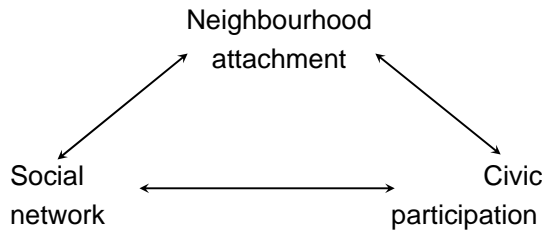
- Adult Literacy & Life Skills Survey (IALS)
- Eurobarometer
- European Values Survey
- Multinational Time Use Survey
- World Values Survey

An example: BHPS

Yaojun Li, Andrew Pickles and Mike Savage,
“Conceptualising and measuring social
capital: a new approach”, BHPS, 2003

Composite approach from Waves 7 and 8
(1997 + 1998)

The three dimensions of social capital



Li, Pickles & Savage 2003

Neighbourhood attachment

- I belong to this neighbourhood*
- Friends in my neighbourhood mean a lot*
- Advice is available from my neighbourhood*
- I borrow and exchange favours with neighbours*
- Would work to improve my neighbourhood*
- Would remain in the neighbourhood*
- I am similar to others in the neighbourhood*
- I regularly stop and talk with neighbourhood*

Li, Pickles & Savage 2003

Social networks

- Anyone to listen to you when you need to talk?*
- Anyone to help you out in a crisis?*
- Anyone to be totally yourself with?*
- Anyone really appreciates you as a person?*
- Anyone to comfort you when you are very upset?*
- Anyone outside h/h to help you if depressed?*
- Anyone outside h/h to help you get job?*
- Anyone outside h/h to lend you money?*

Li, Pickles & Savage 2003

Civic participation

Pooled items (including WIs, parents association, etc)
Political or environmental groups
Trade unions
Tenants'/residents' group
Religious group
Social group
Sports club
Professional organisations

Li, Pickles & Savage 2003

Headline findings

- Clear evidence of social stratification, strongest for credentials but also marked for socio-economic class
- The three dimensions involve different kinds of process
- Civic participation is most strongly associated with trust
- Informal social capital seems to have the greatest explanatory potential
