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Author:
Patulny, Roger

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SOCIAL CAPITAL NORMS, NETWORKS AND PRACTICES – A CRITICAL EVALUATION

By Roger Patulny

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Bruce Bradbury, Peter Saunders and Kylie Valentine
Editors

About the Author:
Roger Patulny is a research scholar of the Social Policy Research Centre. For a detailed description of his thesis visit the Centre's website.

Correspondence to: Roger Patulny
Email: r.patulny@unsw.edu.au

Abstract

Social capital is a theoretically confusing concept, but one which nonetheless has much to offer as a potential measure of the strength of societies. It is in need of theoretical examination. This paper will outline the major theoretical aspects of social capital in relation to its three main component parts – values (such as trust), the networks such values are relevant to, and the practices (such as volunteering) related to those values and networks. It will also outline the major problems with the concept identified in the literature so far, including conceptual issues such as tautology and outcomes, the issue of who owns social capital, the possibility of different types or ‘axes’ of social capital – bonding and bridging – crowding each other out, and the existence of negative social capital (which incorporates issues of ‘victim blaming’). In addition, two more uncommon problems specific to measurement are identified. The first is the predominance of analysing only the micro-individual demographic influences upon social capital – or the bias towards agency. Social capital is seen as shaped by individuals through their personal characteristics. However, large macro-social forces shape social capital as well. Such forces are more structural in nature, and are embedded within material reality. Four macro-social forces stand out in particular – materialism, inequality, gender-family dynamics, and cultural clashes – and their impacts are in need of measurement. This leads onto the final problem with social capital; choosing the appropriate level at which to analyse trends. International comparison to identify ‘emergent properties’ and policies peculiar to countries or clusters of countries that influence social capital is needed, particularly in relation to the influence of macro-social forces. Analysing clusters of countries by welfare regime is suggested here to these ends. In the final section of the paper, hypothetical connections are drawn between established social capital concepts and welfare regimes. Suggestions for empirical research are presented in conclusion.

1 Introduction

The concept of social capital is an interdisciplinary construct, with strengths and weaknesses in accordance. Its great weakness is in its measurement. Social capitalists are a long way off producing groundbreaking, policy-shaking statistics, with clear separation of concepts and lines of causality. By comparison, economists have assembled a strong 'team' of statistics, focussed upon individuals, which form the backbone of policy-making. Economic statistics are not scientific in the 'hard' science sense of physics or chemistry, yet they seem compelling enough to capture the public's near-complete attention. Policy decisions have consequentially become oriented toward satisfying individuals, not communities; society becomes reduced to a rational-choice landscape without structure or agency. A classic example of the blindness such economic reductionism promotes is found in the 'fetish' with economic growth, still prevalent in materially rich western worlds (Hamilton 2003b). Growth is depicted as the long-term panacea for individual ills (ie. a lack of income or employment), the healing of which will cure all social ills. This train of thinking is cemented into policy-making, despite mounting statistical evidence showing that increased growth in employment and incomes past reasonably modest levels does not induce greater levels of happiness within individuals (Helliwell 2002; Veenhoven 1996) let alone society, whereas social cohesion does for both. This is the great potential strength of social capital. None of the major measures derived from previous social research – class, status, social trust, volunteering – has succeeded in isolate in influencing policy makers to the same degree as economic statistics. Social capital is a step towards assembling a 'team' of social indicators to compete with those from economics, to engage with society in a non-reductive manner and give policy-makers an alternative set of measures with which to plan. Such measures are likely to be imperfect; but the lack of a compiled measure of any kind (and the ascription to rational-choice economics by default, as a consequence) is worse.

It is thus important to continue with the efforts to develop the social capital concept, and this requires substantial theoretical engagement. It is important to acknowledge the conceptual difficulties in social capital. Causality is probably the greatest problem, and will require extensive panel data in the future to become untangled. However, large theoretical and conceptual ground has been covered in terms of identifying social capital measures and outcomes within the literature. A few broad indicators have been generally agreed upon as appropriate to the concept, most particularly norms of generalised trust, and networks of voluntary association. These are in need of comparison, a task that has been undertaken by Uslaner utilising the World Values Survey (Uslaner 2002). However, Uslaner's approach relies largely on recall of membership and most particularly, values data rather than measures of actual activity. It is important to note that economic indicators have credence largely because they measure economic *activity or practice*, in terms of actual choices made, and 'revealed preference', instead of relying upon idealised preferences in the form of values and assuming they will flow onto relevant actions. It is important to measure practices, and social science too often relies only upon value-survey data alone. On the other hand, the failure to measure values within economics only compounds its inadequate reduction of society into monetary units. Economic modelling typically includes only that for which we have evidently paid, with large assumptions concerning opportunity costs; or what we gave up in order to get it. Such an approach is not ideal for capturing actions we wouldn't pay for, such as philanthropic volunteering. Nor is it suitable for capturing our future ambitions and directions, which are based on ideals and values rather than our present constrained choices. Unpaid activity and future directions are exogenous to economics, but fundamental to society.

Ideally, both values and practices need to be understood and contrasted. Their theoretical relationship to social capital therefore needs to be examined. This paper will outline the major theoretical aspects of social capital in relation to its three main component parts – values (such as trust), the networks such values are relevant to, and the practices (such as volunteering) related to those values and networks. It will also outline the major problems with the concept identified in the literature so far, including tautology, ownership, dimensions and negative effects. It will further identify important additional problems, mainly related to macro-social material rather than micro-individual demographic influences upon social capital. In the final section, it will briefly describe links between social capital and the devices used to mediate the effects of macro-social influences – welfare regimes. Suggestions for empirical research are presented in conclusion.

2 The Social Capital Concept

A common problem with defining social capital is uncertainty over whether social capital is a value held, such as trust, or a network that facilitates action, such as a voluntary association. Most definitions now appear to incorporate both aspects. The official OECD definition is a good example of this consolidation, and will serve here as a working definition of social capital when conceived this way:

> Social Capital is networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups (Cote and Healy 2001).

A third possibility however, is that social capital is in fact comprised of participatory actions or practices in themselves. Putnam (2000) included a raft of various measurements of social capital involving not just cultural norms (such as trust) and associational networks (membership), but measurements of actions such as volunteering. He justifies such proliferation on the basis of checking multiple sources in the face of inadequacy:

> My primary strategy … has been to triangulate among as many independent sources of evidence as possible … No single source of data is flawless, but the more numerous and diverse the sources, the less likely that they could all be influenced by the same flaw. (Putnam, 2000, 415)

He notes that value surveys are good for opinions and behaviour, but have the problem (amongst others) of comprehensiveness, in that they should but often do not cover a wide range of activities. To redress this, Putnam has gathered detailed information on practices, such as volunteering and active membership. Putnam makes use of the American Use of Time Survey (John Robinson, University of Maryland) and supports the use of time diaries in general. Time-use data has become an increasingly popular source of information with which to measure volunteering and social capital. Authors such as Robinson and Godbey (1997), Ruston (2003), Urwin et al (2002) and Wilkinson and Bittman (Wilkinson and Bittman 2002) have each attempted to measure social capital using time-diary data. It provides extensive information concerning practices that can be used in comparison with values questions and recall-data on activities.

The idea of dividing social capital into norms, networks and practices gains some validity from other measurement instruments. The most theoretically informed specific survey on social capital within Australia to date (Commission 2003), the Australian Institute of Family Studies' 'Social Capital and Citizenship Project' focuses solidly upon networks and norms, though does not encompass volunteering practices. The pending ABS social capital and Time Use surveys are interested in all three aspects. The World Bank social capital measurement tool SOCAT (Grootaert et al. 2002) includes items along six dimensions: 1) groups and networks (structure), 2) trust (cognitive), 3) collective action (operations), 4) information and communication access (operations), 5) social cohesion and inclusion (outcomes) 6) empowerment and outcomes (outcomes). These are certainly compatible with the present approach: item two is synonymous with norms, items one and four with networks, and item three with practices. Only items five and six are not compatible with the present social capital measurement approach. However, each of these items is more appropriately defined as outcomes rather than indicators of social capital.

Putnam's approach has been criticised for a potentially similar tautological fallacy, in that he confuses definition and measurement; this will be discussed further below. It is important then to theoretically examine the appropriate conceptual parts to social capital – values, networks and practices – before attempting any kind of conceptual consensus.

2.1 Norms - Trust

Inquiries into the nature of social capital have produced the broad consensus that trust is one of its most essential components. If we grant that social capital can be defined mostly as networks of mutual trust, it leads onto the question of what actually is trust? Trust has been studied theoretically and empirically for decades. Its origins and status as a concept are somewhat confused, changing as economists, sociologists, and political scientists have used it in turn (Anhier and Kendall 2000). Its profile has been consolidated and improved of late, thanks largely to the popular interest in social capital. Besides Putnam, the major contributor in raising the profile of trust from political science is Francis Fukuyama (1995). He sees that a healthy civil society is needed to back up political and economic institutions, and that the most important cultural element, to social life and the economy, is trust. He notes that communities of trust are formed:

> not on the basis of explicit rules and regulations but out of a set of ethical habits and reciprocal moral obligations internalised by each of the community's members … traditional culture contains embedded rules of behaviour that are rational for that culture … but while habits

> can be economically rational or may have once have had rational causes, many are not, or else take on a life of their own in situations when they are no longer appropriate. (Fukuyama 1995, 9 and 20)

Whilst suggesting that trust is important and related to volunteering, neither Putnam nor Fukuyama tests the interrelation empirically. Nor do they explain it substantially in a theoretical sense. How does trust decline, if trust and social capital are rooted so strongly in history? Political science, steeped in normative conceptions, offers little clarity to the question of trust formation.

Economists have made headway into aspects of trust-formation among individuals through research into decision-making and rational choice theory (Dasgupta 1988; Gambetta 1988; Good 1988). The problem is that more often than not, it is rational not to trust. The economists' rational-choice perspective is that a lack of information concerning other people undermines trust. This is the subject of the famous Prisoner's Dilemma scenario, a trust game where two prisoners are separated and asked to confess their mutual crime. If they do so and their partner does not, they receive a bigger sentence than if both confess (they share the same sentence) or neither confess (both get off free). It is therefore rational to distrust (confess), as the risk (cost) of getting sold out by the other person is too great to risk trusting. This 'one-shot' prisoner's dilemma assumes a lack of prior familiarity exiting between the prisoners, however, and that the whole episode of imprisonment and confession is a once only affair; that the two prisoners will have nothing to do with each other afterwards. Such assumptions ignore the prospects of additional punishment or expectation developing through repeated interaction, which Dasgupta (1988) asserts is important to trust-building.

Dasgupta describes the difference between a one-shot and 'reiterated' Prisoner's Dilemma. A 'one-shot' Prisoner's dilemma game sees trust as irrational, as the costs of defection are low (the prisoner's are unable to sufficiently sanction each other for defecting) and the long-term rewards are likewise too low (there is insufficient information concerning the gains from potential future interaction with the other prisoner). However, she notes from Axelrod (1984), that a Prisoner's Dilemma game can be reiterated. A reiterated prisoner's dilemma develops into a cooperative equilibrium. The idea behind the reiterated prisoner's dilemma is that with additional association and information sharing, avenues of sanction and reward appear, and there is suddenly more to gain by cooperating than defecting. This is true at least up until the final iteration, where it become rational to defect. Glaeser et al. (1999) note that a group's behaviour is a product of rational individual decision-making, and anticipating specific individual characteristics – such as another's trustworthiness – through awareness of penalties and rewards:

In general, trustworthiness is the product of the calculation where the benefits of short-run financial gain are outweighed by psychic costs from cheating and long run penalties imposed on cheaters. (Glaesar et al, 1999, 7)

Thus it is rational to trust those with whom we have long-term repeated interactions, and share punishments and rewards. However, whilst the rational choice perspective may be applicable to two persons, or even small groups, sociologists point out its limitations when applied to general society. Trust is primary to social interaction for sociologists such as Luhman (1979), Coleman (1990) and Giddens (1994). Luhman in particular notes that as society gets more complex, and we lose information, we lose trust. However, paradoxically, Luhman also seems to suggest that trust's primary 'function' is to cope with the increasing social complexity and uncertainty characteristic of post-industrial/modern society. If we lack information – as we most certainly do in complex society – we must trust, or else any kind of action would be impossible. We would, for example, become paralysed each morning before we reach the front door, trying to gather the information and calculate the chances of being hit by a car if we step outside. Paradoxically, therefore, it seems that trust is mandatory under conditions of complete uncertainty, and yet at the same time is positively related to information and certainty. If one knew another completely, one would not need to trust; at the same time, it is easier to trust those we know well (it is perhaps just that we can never know them completely). This suggests that there may be two types of trust, one linked positively (through rising faith) and the other negatively (through declining information) to uncertainty. Uslaner speculates that this is exactly the case (Uslaner 1999a; Uslaner 1999b). He makes a distinction between generalised and particularised trust. Having a sense of generalised trust means having faith in people we do not know who may be very different from ourselves. Experience, says Uslaner and Brown, only builds particularised trust:

Generalised trust tends to be resistant to most forms of experience … the theoretical difficulty is that experience can only build confidence in people we know – and this type of trust does not translate into faith in strangers. There is no straightforward linkage either theoretical or empirical, between trust in people we know and faith in people we do not know. (Uslaner 2002, 8-9)

This generalised/ particularised distinction is important in that it enables us to resolve the paradox between Luhman's idea and those of rational-choice economists. It suggests there are indeed two types of trust, one of which is based on experience, information and rational-choice (particularised trust), the other upon norms and faith (generalised trust). These generalised and particularised types of trust can either support or undermine each other, as we will now examine.

Generalised and particularised trust – norms and rational-choice – are likely to mutually support each other when uncertainty is relatively minor and society stable. This is the scenario described by Coleman (1990), who notes, much the same as Dasgupta, that the rewards and sanctions involved in rational choice are steeped in social norms. He conceives of trust as a conscious rational process that incorporates uncertainty through limitations in time and information producing risk; we calculate trustworthiness when we have the time and knowledge, we gamble and risk when we don't. To aid in our calculations and gambling, both sanctions and rewards ('intermediary' connections and networks between would-be trusters that cooperate and share information) are required. For Coleman, sanctions and rewards work through a normative structure to facilitate trusting decisions, which in turn reinforce the normative structure. This can be interpreted, using Uslaner's constructs, as a case of normative generalised trust facilitating particularised trust, which in turn reinforces generalised trust.

However, Coleman's structuralist approach, like most other structuralist approaches, runs into the problem of conflict and change. As uncertainty increases, or historical events cause a rupture in the normative structure of a society (through war, disaster, or colonisation, for example) it is likely that the two kinds of trust will become incongruous. Normative confusion undermines expectations, reducing the value of sanctions and rewards and making generalised trusting a risky business. Change, in the form of decreasing certainty, is likely to encourage the erosion of the more risky generalised form of trust in favour of safer particularised trust – watching the company we keep. A number of authors testify to the resilience of generalised trust however (Mansbridge 1999; Uslaner 1999b; Uslaner 2002). There is some wisdom in this. Rewards are typically greater in trusting generally, in terms of greater social activity and information sharing. Also, whilst generalised and particularised trust may be mutually supportive under stable or fairly certain conditions, the latter always needs the former. The one-shot prisoner's dilemma reinforces the fact that particularised trust cannot rationally grow or live in a normative vacuum. Particularised trust requires a normative structure to encourage reiterated interaction, and such a structure requires a minimum of basic generalised trust – that cars will not drive on the footpath, for example (which helps us get out the front door in the mornings). Particularised trust is premised to at least some degree on norms, and therefore (to some degree) on generalised trust. Generalised trust norms need only themselves to exist, on the other hand.

In addition, it can be seen that (except under circumstances where the normative structure has broken down completely) generalised trust can restore itself and subvert particularised trust by overriding the rational-calculation process. This can happen in two ways.

Firstly, a moral decision to trust despite the particularised circumstances may flow from strong generalised norms. Mansbridge (1999) criticises the rational construct of trust, which divides people into timely and 'smart' defectors and 'suckers', as unable to explain altruistic behaviour. She notes that trusting altruistically is to deliberately trust another more than you believe you should for moral reasons - to express respect, express positive concern for the relationship (turn enemy to friend), or to serve as a model for the other person to imitate or reciprocate with. In effect, the particularised trust system is overridden initially, and then instigated later with improved chances of success. Generalised altruism is one way to 'kickstart' particularised trust. Given calculation, altruism is far too risky to be rational; it requires a belief in (and adherence to) generalised norms of trust. Such an approach is akin to a 'leap of faith', whereby rewards (such as freedom and choice in interacting with whomever) rather than sanctions are emphasised.

Secondly, generalised trust may be intertwined with the ability to exercise power, within the normative social structure. Offe (1999) notes that trust usually requires a degree of support from resources and power, so as to make the trusters less vulnerable to breakdowns in trust. For Offe, trust and power are complements as much as substitutes. Luhman notes that power is the ability to reduce the uncertainty in one's life. Those with resources and power are better able to control their situations and limit the pressures and demands complex society throws at them (usually by off-loading such complexities onto other people). Uslaner (1999a) notes that allowing for the effects of power in considering sanction and reward turns social cooperation into an iterated prisoner's dilemma, or 'rational gamble' of guessing as to the other's trustworthiness, where betting the wrong way as to when to finally defect (ie before the other person does) makes you 'the sucker'. Lacking resources or power means that one struggles under constant pressure and complexity; one cannot afford to trust, because the risks are too great of always being 'the sucker'. Power derived from the generalised normative structure enables one then to shape particularised interactions. Such an approach is akin to 'screening' or limiting information as a form of censorship, and sanctions and conformity are emphasised.

This second argument concerning the dominance of generalised over particularised trust (or norms over rational-processes) can, however, be turned on its head. Rather than flowing from the normative social structure, power may be embedded in the rational-choice decisions made by particularised trusters on the basis of knowledge and experience. By enabling alliances and decisions to be made that allow the accumulation of resources and information, particularised trusters may be able to shape or undermine generalised trust.

We thus find that the particularised and generalised trust variants identified by Uslaner are useful concepts that explain many of the trust relationships postulated by others. Social cohesion is shaped by the interactions between these two types of trust. It can be seen that issues both of power (sanction) and morality (choice) are essential to establishing long-run generalised trust equilibriums. However, power and morality are embedded in a normative structure. It is important then to analyse aspects of this normative structure in conjunction with trust, when attempting to measure social capital. Given our postulations of a particularised trust based on sanctioning and conformity (power), and a generalised trust based on morals of openness and freedom (choice), two prominent types of normative cohesion become apparent.

There is cohesion based upon duty to one's network. This is based on a sense of loyalty and commitment, usually accompanied by a somewhat 'conservative' adherence to group laws and customs. This type of cohesion denotes a strong sense of coercion, and an orientation towards power and sanction. The duty-based form of cohesion can be found within several broad tranches of sociological theory. Classical theory, via Durkheim's sanction based norms and Weber's separation of affect from value-rationality, along with more modern variants in Goffman's (1959) shame based rituals and Luhman's power as 'interaction stabiliser' (1979, 37), all emphasise the first type of cohesion based on 'dutiful' commitment, underpinned by sanctioning. It is also found within empirical measurement of willingness to cheat (Knack and Keefer 1997) (Glaeser et al. 1999) (Raiser et al. 2001). These authors assume that an unwillingness to cheat is synonymous with social attachment. However, an unwillingness to cheat is filtered through institutionalised sanctioning processes before the effects are passed on to society. In effect, measuring unwillingness to cheat can be a potential measure of the fear of sanctioning – and the desire for others who cheat to be sanctioned – associated with a duty-bound cohesion that emphasises the 'rule of law'.

There is also cohesion based upon tolerance towards all comers. This denotes enjoying the experience of company, tolerance, and incorporates a sense of ‘progressive’ acceptance and inclusion. This type of cohesion emphasises the rewards of cooperation. Contemporary theories related to reflexive agency from Giddens (1994), Beck (1994), and Lash (1994) emphasise post-industrial choice and lifestyle, and thus this variant on cohesion. It is particularly predicated on tolerance and openness, but not naivety. Offe (1999) notes that trust is predicated in an amount of distrust, and that strangers build trust by probing evidence of trustworthiness of others – which requires distrust. “A trustworthy person is someone who exposes himself (and thereby enhances his autonomy) to continuous and scrupulous examination by others.” (Offe 1999) (p56) After reasons for distrust are methodically invalidated, generalised trust arises. Tolerance in relation to social capital has been empirically researched by numerous authors (Putnam 2000; Haezewindt 2003; Woolcock 1998; .

If Uslaner’s division of trust into particularised and generalised proves to be correct, and their interaction is related to either power or moral choice, then cheating and tolerance should be included as associational components of social capital alongside trust. Each is indicative of a certain type of cohesion, and the association each bears with generalised trust will point to trust’s relation to coercive or moral cohesion, and more appropriately to the origins and dynamics of trust.

2.2 Networks - Voluntary Memberships

Measuring joining and membership in associations is the mainstay of social capital analysis. Popularised by writers from Tocqueville in the 1800’s through to Almond and Verba’s (1963) classic study of the US in the 1960’s, group membership has an almost mythic status in cultures such as the US. Almond and Verba’s main concerns were of an over-abundance of joining. Given this, it is perhaps unsurprising that Putnam has attracted so much interest in his work when he asserts, thirty years after Almond and Verba’s work, that the danger has reversed, and that associations are suddenly in decline. Putnam’s theoretical examination of network characteristics and their relation to social capital is rather limited however, and it is important to examine the concept of networks in more detail, lest we run into the same conceptual and measurement problems Putnam has been criticised for.

Bourdieu (1986) gives probably the most critical perspective of social interaction centred upon networks. He notes that social networks are based upon shared habits and cultural understandings, but also that such networks are almost by definition finite and contested by warrant of their exclusion of others – thus the analogy with capital:

> The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous mechanical equilibrium between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must reintroduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation and all its effects. (Bourdieu, 1986, 241)

Bourdieu’s networks are similar to those of Olson. Olson (1982) notes that special interest groups can cooperate to impose costs on non-members in pursuit of members interests, the gains being much greater in this regard than from cooperative action. Coleman (1990), like Bourdieu and Olson, notes the importance of closed networks and of reputations in maintaining them. However, unlike Bourdieu, he emphasises the influence not of the individual capital holder within the network, but of the trusted intermediaries that facilitate a network, creating specific networks of connections between individuals and institutions, which settle down over time to become social structures. Both Coleman and Bourdieu thus locate social capital within networks. However, they tend to focus on the advantages of being an insider versus facilitation between the networks.

Burt (2000) takes the analysis a step further. He, like Bourdieu and Coleman, attributes the advantages networks confer to the mechanism of closure, in that closure allows control over access to information resources held by the network, and facilitates effective sanctioning. However, he goes on to further suggest that brokerage across the 'holes' between closed network structures grants the greatest influence. Thus it is not insiders in a network that hold advantage, but the person who spans two or more networks, and can mediate the interactions between them. This idea is captured in a similar fashion by Granovetter (1973), who notes that strong networks close down the flow of information, and Lin (2001) who notes how people's use of positions (theirs and others) in and between institutions and structures as 'resources'. The point of relevance here is that a society in which structural considerations dominate – where all holes and networks close over – is one in which communication and consequently community break down.

These perspectives are not to suggest complete openness of networks. Burt, indeed, emphasises that brokerage is predicated upon it:

> Structural holes are the source of value added, but network closure can be essential to realising the value buried in the holes. (Burt, 2000, Abstract)

From a network theory point of view then, a 'balance' is needed between closed and open networks; closed to create value (from closure and brokerage), and open to redress inevitable inequality. Recent definitions of social capital have crystallised around the idea of social capital as existing in numerous dimensions or networks, each characterised by its own norms of trust and reciprocity, which are in turn conducive to other forms of social action (economic, political, voluntary, etc). Most notably, Woolcock and Narayan (2000) and Putnam in his later work (2000) divide social capital into two distinct and separate dimensions, bonding and bridging, which are vital to maintain in balance. Bonding, also known as particularised social capital, is essentially inward looking, and focussed upon experience and familiarity. Whilst not overlapping exactly with the closed networks identified by Bourdieu, Olson, Coleman, the similarities are distinctive. Such networks confer distinctive advantage to their members by excluding outsiders, or brokering across other closed networks. This type of network is akin to – and likely driven by – Uslaner's particularised trust, discussed at length above. Such trust is rational, information focussed, and calculated. Bridging capital, on the other hand, also known as generalised social capital, is more outward focussed, and driven by generalised norms of interaction. This form of capital is more in keeping with Putnam's conceptions, and is driven by Uslaner's generalised normative trust. The bonding bridging distinction finds substantial support in Putnam's recent work as well as in the extensive typology developed by Stone (2001).

Woolcock also asserts the existence of 'linking' capital, or links formed by communities with economic, political, and social institutions. Such a conception is intended to 'politicise' bonding and bridging, and emphasise the role government can play in the development of either (Woolcock 2000; 2003) However, such linking capital overlaps with both bonding and bridging capital and is not so easily distinguished from them in concept; there is insufficient scope to develop this concept in depth here. Linking capital will only be mentioned here with reference to wider problems relevant to all types of social capital (see social capital's 'dark side', below).

2.3 Practices - Time Use

Time-use data has become an increasingly popular source of information with which to measure volunteering and social capital. Research into time-related aspects of social capital has progressed using various forms of data. Researchers have examined the interactive effects of time in work (Norris 2001; Putnam 2000), television watching (Hooghe 2001; Norris 1996; Norris 1998; Patterson 1999) and Internet usage (Quan-Hase and Wellman Forthcoming) upon social capital. However, the measurement of social capital directly using time-based methods is still quite preliminary. Becker and Hofmeister (2000) attempt direct measurement in their study of dual earners work hours and the subsequent 'time-squeeze' upon volunteering in the US. They find that women without children engage in formal volunteering less, but when they do so, they volunteer longer. Their work indicates the importance of differentiating between measuring volunteering time as an event versus as a continuous interval variable. Becker and Hofmeister's study, however, draws upon phone interview data, so relies on categories of recalled time-use data rather than potentially more accurate time-diary estimates.

Social capital measurement using time-diaries has even more (and unfulfilled) potential then other time-based approaches to capture particular time-based effects. Robinson and Godbey's (1997) important work notes the decline in informal social and voluntary but neither makes theoretical assumptions about social capital nor contrasts its measurement with other sources. Bianchi and Robinson (1997) use US Time Use data to analyse the effects of parenting and work-time upon the social capital accumulation of children. Similarly, Nie et al., (2002) undertake a US time diary study to examine social capital formation through time spent on the Internet.

It has become particularly important in that activity is perceived as different from passive membership. Putnam notes that the decline in membership in traditional groups in the US is being matched by a rise in profusion and membership in new 'professional' groups; but these require little more than signatures and monetary donations as gestures of commitment, and do not constitute an improvement in civic life. Wollebeak and Selle (2002) however put this supposition to the test with an analysis of active vs inactive (intensity) membership of voluntary association in Belgium and find no great difference between active and inactive members in terms of trust and external links. Such debate highlights the importance of distinguishing practices – volunteering efforts – from simple membership measurements.

Putnam makes use of time use analysis in his studies on social capital (2000). He uses US time-diary data to track declining rates of active organisational membership, and contrasts such findings with others from the General Social Survey, Roper Polls and Needham Lifestyle Surveys. He also uses it to verify data concerning informal ‘schmoozing’ social connections, such as time spent visiting friends and socialising. In terms of measuring volunteering, he fails to contrast incidence of voluntary activity (say number of times per week) against average time spent in volunteering (say average minutes per day) in a direct empirical manner.

In the informal realm of friends and relatives, Putnam does contrast social capital based on incidence of socialising with average time spent socialising. However, given that Putnam’s focus is more upon civic society, his incorporation of informal measures into the rubric of general social cohesion is problematic. Putnam, like a number of other social capital researchers (Woolcock 2000; Woolcock and Narayan 2000), has come to accept the theoretical distinction between bridging and bonding social capital networks. He defines bridging capital as based upon informal ties of associations and norms and values such as generalised trust, and contrasts it bonding capital on more intimate kin-based connections. He emphasises the reinforcing effects of activities upon each other and their cumulative good nature. However, this assumes a certain amount of transitivity and fungibility between different types of social capital activity; a problem common within much of social capital analysis [Arrow, 2000 #488; Dasgupta, 2000 #501; Portes, 1996 #341; Robison, 2000 #472]. For Putnam’s purposes – and for those interested in addressing the same type of questions concerning civic association – it is safer to concentrate upon generalised bridging social capital as the correct focus of research.

Various studies, however, are diminished by a lack of distinction between the various ‘types’ of social capital, such as bonding and bridging. UK researchers such as Ruston (2003) and Urwin et al., (2002), analysing UK time-diary data, distinguish between different social capital types, acknowledging and supporting the bonding / bridging social capital distinction. However, Ruston does not connect different time-use activities to such social capital types, and Urwin et al’s focus suffers from a reduction of the social capital concept down to the level of a resource held by individuals rather than by communities. The problem with failing to theorise social capital, or with reducing it to an individual resource, is that measurements and outcomes are falsely equivalised. Each of the studies outlined above sees time spent with ‘intimate’ others - friends, family, and colleagues – as equivalent in value and outcome to time spent with strangers in a civic sense. Friends, family and colleagues are ‘assumed’ to constitute and form outward-focussed civic links. This recreates Putnam’s mistake of assuming transitivity and fungibility between different types of social capital activity. Aggregated ‘generalised’ capital is largely assumed to be ‘all and good’, and there is little perceived need to compare derived social capital measures with the other forms of data for validity purposes.

In addition to volunteering then, there are a number of other potential activities indicative of social capital. Ruston (2002) identifies two other time-use practices that can be described as social capital besides time spent volunteering; time spent socialising and time spent in informal care of others. Volunteering is unambiguously measuring time committed to broader society, and forms an appropriate and primary variable for measuring social capital practices. The other two variables, whilst relevant, are more dubious when considered through the theoretical perspective of bonding and bridging social capital. Time spent socialising could indicate time spent with fewer intimate others or a broad cross-section of general society; it is potentially both a bridging and bonding indicator. However, it is difficult to imagine that time spent in this manner is inherently exclusive, as the very nature of socialising involves activity and engagement with others. Time spent actively engaging with others, however close, breeds habits of interaction, which are likely to increase the chances of successful interaction with non-familiar others. Socialising is thus more likely to be a form of bridging capital. In any regard, it stands as a useful comparator to volunteering. Time spent in informal care however, should be rejected as a bridging social capital variable, in that such time is likely devoted to one's family, and is thus more appropriately conceived of as a form of bonding capital.

Another issue is that trust and volunteering are assumed rather than proven to interrelate. Causality between the two is difficult to ascertain, and indeed most researchers assume a system of mutual reinforcement; those who have tried to measure the causality largely find this, or else inconclusive, results (Brehm and Rahn 1997; Glaeser et al., 1999; Stolle 1998; Stone and Hughes 2002). The most likely direction is ascertained theoretically by Uslaner (2002) as stretching from trust to volunteering, in that - in the generalised realm where interaction, information and sanctioning are limited – rationally formed trust is inherently limited (even within associations). Therefore the presence of apparent generalised trust must be a deeply rooted value, which should lead trusters to self-select themselves into voluntary associations and practices. This is the case found with alternative measurements in Australia, where Fattore et al, (2003) find that community belongingness predicts trust of one's neighbours, and confidence in government predicts general trust, but association membership predicts neither. Stolle's work (1998) also partially confirms this direction. He analysed panel data and found it questionable that voluntary engagement led to trusting. Rather, found it to be the other way around – volunteers are self-selected high social trusters, and the actual act of participation doesn't increase one's tendency to trust others. However, Stolle finds in later work that that there is a tendency for trust to increase after continual membership in an organisation for a period of 5-7 months (Stolle, 2001).

Whichever way the causal relation goes, the relationship between trust and volunteering cannot be a straightforward one. Some countries exhibit counter-posing trends. For example, trust in Australia (Hughes et al., 2000) and the USA (Patterson 1999) is declining, whilst volunteering has been found to remain stable in the US if historical 'shocks' are accounted for (Paxton 1999), and to be increasing in Australia (Wilkinson and Bittman 2002). International comparison of volunteering and trust rates (Patulny et al., 2003) also found no relation. Different measures of volunteering, time-based and otherwise, should be gathered for comparison with trust.

3 The Difficulty in Measuring Social Capital

3.1 Tautology and Outcomes

Putnam's original empirical work has been the subject of numerous criticisms, but none are more prolific then concerns over his and subsequent attempts to measure social capital. Measurement attempts are fraught with concept 'stacking'; almost everything has been cited as being included in social capital. To cite a few examples, from the World Bank, Grootaert and Bastelaer (2002) advocate an exhaustive Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT). The SOCAT instrument is intended to analyse communities (through open discussion/participatory interview as well as structured questionnaire on characteristics, services, migration, education, etc), households (surveys of demographics, genograms, relations to organisational structure/ density/ support/ exclusion, cognitive solidarity/ trust/ conflict resolution etc) and organisations relevant to the community (using semi-structured interviews on origins, history, membership joining/exclusion/subgroups, leadership capacity). Within Australian research, items such as safety, proactivity and tolerance of diversity (Onyx and Bullen 1997), citizenship and disposition (Hogan and Owen 2000), assistance and confidence in support (Hughes et al., 2000; Hughes and Black 2002), and many potential others (ABS 2003) have been included. Cox (1998) has been keen to expand the list of variables to be used, including manners, responsibility, emotions, wide social interest, sociability, attitudes of acceptance, expectations and relations between all these and other resources (presumably including the material, which brings her proclamations into our orbit of interest).

The main problem with measurement is that confusion arises in distinguishing what we are trying to measure (social capital) from the outcomes that the thing we are measuring is meant to induce. This is best captured in a critique by Portes. Portes and Landolt (1996) and Portes (1998) stress the need for sharp theoretical division – that one's networks, the number of organisations we are members of and volunteer for are distinct and separate consequences of social capital, and must be measured separately from the norms of trust and reciprocity that precede such a network. To avoid this is to engage in tautology. Portes suggests that Putnam muddles precursors and consequences together, switching between specific analyses of declining voluntary organisations and sweeping observations of broad social change without establishing causality and interaction effects between the variables.

According to Portes then, norms and networks should be the antecedents, which lead onto practices that are the outcomes of social capital. However, this separation runs into the problem again of causality, and the unresolved issue of whether values and networks cause practices (trust to volunteering) or the other way around. Given an inability to resolve this causal issue, it is necessary to take all these aspects – norms, networks and practices – as indicators of social capital, and separate them from more general social phenomena as outcomes.

Ownership

It is clear that with Putnam (2000), despite his adherence to bonding and bridging dimensions, social capital is a largely a society wide public good. This means that social capital is resource owned by a collective, rather than individuals, and can only be accumulated and wielded as such. Cox and Caldwell support this conception, noting that social capital “social capital is only produced through processes of groups interactions. It appears in interactive relationships and cannot be owned by individuals” (Cox and Caldwell 2000, 49) For them it is a public good, the resource of groups organised in collective action for mutual benefit.

However, this distinction is contested. Portes (1998) notes that the original progenitors of social capital, Bourdieu and Coleman, saw it as a network of resources unique and conveying advantages to individuals. Individuals thus own it. This may not make sense, given that, as Cox points out, social capital exists between people – how can people ‘own’ a relationship? When we consider Coleman and particularly Bourdieu’s ideas more closely, however, individual ownership starts to make sense. Coleman (Coleman 1990) sees trust and reciprocity as a social capital resource under exchange. Each act of trusting or giving in a reciprocal fashion induces similar behaviour in others – it forms a ‘credit slip’ on their behaviour, and is thus cumulative for each individual, in terms of the favours they are owed. Bourdieu (1986) is even more explicit. Whilst he notes that social capital exists within a network or group of people, he also notes that occupying different positions within the network grants different degrees of advantage. For Bourdieu, advantage is conveyed not only from network membership, but also from the network position itself. It is the unique position that is the resource; and it is a single individual that holds such a position. Thus, the group is essential to the creation and maintenance of social capital resources; they do indeed only exist between people. The favours, obligations and information traded within the network as resources, however, are inherently positional; it is mostly individuals who are the recipients of them.

The problem of ownership then is a conceptual one, related to closure. Bourdieu, Coleman and Olson depict networks that are fixed and finite, closed with limited brokerage, and far removed from generalised civic society. Groups of limited size, smaller sub-groups within and between these groups, and ultimately the individuals best positioned within each group, are the recipients of group efforts, and thus the owners of the social capital. Putnam and Cox, on the other hand, envisage civic society as one great generalised network that – by warrant of its complete openness – lacks any kind of positional advantage. As such, any gains achieved from cooperation go only to the whole, and the social capital inherent is indeed the property of the group and not individuals. I would thus argue that the proper way to conceive of social capital ownership is to label whomever is the recipient of the trust, membership or voluntary efforts inherent in the network as ‘the owner’. If the network is closed, and only people within it are trusted – and to varying degrees depending upon the position they occupy within the network – than those members are the owners of the social capital, the amount they possess being proportional to the trust they receive. This ‘closed’ kind of social capital is a private good. If the network as a whole is open, and trust is completely generalised, then society as a whole is the recipient and therefore the owner of the social capital. This ‘open’ kind of social capital is a public good.

Once we start to see social capital this way, things become clearer. If it is just one person that is trusted – such as us, for example, or our partner – they become the recipient of our voluntary actions. Luhman notes that we must trust ourselves with regard to the future; our present actions of delaying of gratification are predicated on trusting our future selves to make good effect of our unrewarded efforts today. Trust and helping activity is frequent between partners. Equally common is for the family unit as a whole to become the recipient of the trust – one's activities on behalf of one's family (particularly the unpaid work of women) are indicative of the great sense of trust typically reserved for such close units. The same applies for work - if we undertake to do unpaid overtime – career progression or fear of unemployment aside – we are showing a sense of commitment to and trust in our employers and what they stand for. Individual rewards and punishments aside, even the most powerful work ethic will erode unless we share some sense of identification with our colleagues and bosses.

Likewise, if one trusts 'society' in general – or more appropriately, a generalised social 'other' – one's voluntary efforts are done on behalf of that society. One believes that one is engaging in unpaid work on behalf of a real (genuinely unfortunate, would-be 'hard-worker), maybe potentially real (needs a hand up, could-be 'hard-worker'), or even imagined unfortunate other that is down on his luck, basically decent, and essentially trustworthy. In each case, the object – individual, family, work, or society – that we trust, or sense that we are joining with or doing unpaid labour on behalf of – is the owner of the social capital. It is important to note from this definition as well that if we are to measure a society's 'linking' capital, asking people how much they trust government is incorrect and back to front. We are in fact measuring the government's stocks of social capital – as they are the recipients of the trust. To correctly measure a society's linking capital, we should be asking the members of government – politicians and bureaucrats – how much they trust people in general. Such measurements are in fact quite important to capture the sense of stigma 'street level bureaucrats' have for the unemployed, which Kumlin and Rothstein (2003) assert is primary in instigating the spiral of distrust between welfare state and recipient that balloons out to erode more generalised trust levels on a society-wide basis

Crowding out - The Bonding and Bridging 'Axes'

In his most recent work, Putnam (2002) lists four dimensions applicable to any given type of social capital. These dimensions are 1) formal vs informal, 2) thick versus thin, 3) inward looking versus outward looking, and 4) bridging versus bonding. They are largely assumed by Putnam to be compatible and combinable in all manner of random constellations.

However, given the propensity for the dark side of social capital to spring up under multitude of conditions, it is unlikely that the different dimensions of social capital identified by Putnam are as randomly distributed as his typologies suggest. Social capital types are quite likely to cluster into specific combinations. It is theoretically possible to have networks characterised by all combinations of the above (eg thick-outward-bridging, or informal-thin-inward looking). It is far more likely though, given our discussion on trust and networks so far, that these aspects will cluster into two distinct 'axes'. On one such axes, we would find a preponderance towards thick/inward/ closed or **bonding** capital. This is premised on exclusion and is captured in Uslaner's calculating particularised trust, and Bourdieu and Olson's depiction of social capital. On the other axes we are likely to have thin/outward/open **bridging** social capital. This is more oriented towards inclusion and is captured in Uslaner's generalised trust, and Fukuyama and Putnam's original depictions of social capital. Only the formal/informal dichotomy cannot readily be drawn into such an opposition of axes.

Given their different trajectories, these different axes of social capital are strongly likely to conflict. There are three reasons why this could be so. Firstly, bonding attachments to one's smaller community might be so strong – or based upon opposition to outsiders - that no bridging links are sought with wider more 'dubious' communities. This phenomenon has been somewhat investigated within Australia, but without much conclusive evidence provided. Stone and Hughes' (2002) quantitative analysis finds no link between bonding family and bridging social capital, whilst Leonard and Onyx's (2003) qualitative study finds that people 'bridge' cautiously across networks using bonding ties; however 'snowballing' recruitment process used for their study render the status of the final group – bonding or bridging – somewhat dubious, confounding their results. A second possibility is that bonding is compounded by poverty in crowding out bridging. This situation is described in Banfield's Montegrano (1958), where the slightest risk means losing all, so only nuclear family arrangements are considered trustworthy. A third possibility is that bridging and bonding are in competition for the same resources, and that policies designed to stimulate one type of capital (eg bonding capital, through promotion of self-reliance and local investment initiatives) might come at the cost of the other sort of capital (bridging capital, in terms of wealth transfers, or external investment).

Regardless of the stimulus, the possibility exists that bonding and bridging social capital can be drawn into opposition through a focus on outsiders – defining oneself by what one is not - and exclusion. Such an axis of bonding capital is not premised on principles of acceptance, and will not be reflective of a desire to embrace others; it should thus link to decreased general trust, membership and volunteering. Driving this theoretical relationship is the premises that social capital is owned by whoever is the recipient of the trust. Bonding capital is owned by and focussed upon helping a limited network of trusted members, whilst bridging capital is owned by and aimed at supporting the (unlimited) network of general society.

The Dark Side of Social Capital

The bonding bridging distinction is important, in that the different types of social capital can just as easily 'crowd' each other out as support one another. Such is the phenomenon of 'amoral familism' described by Banfield: "Maximise the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise" (Banfield 1958, 85) This is the condition whereby families are so exclusively locked into pursuing their own well-being they exhibit behaviour that would be regarded as rude and selfish in a (at least for 1958) western context. It becomes more common to prey on one's neighbours for scraps than to combine to seek an overall improvement in resources – equilibrium of distrust results. A more subtle interpretation of Banfield's observations is that Montegrano was not characterised by the distrustful Hobbesian state of nature of 'all against all'. Rather, it was comprised of a series of closed networks of a certain size (family) that accidentally work to crowd out cooperation and trust between larger groups.

However, it is also possible to have groups that deliberately, rather than accidentally, crowd out others. In each case the importance of the object of trust and voluntary efforts – the social capital owners – is tied not to helping the community, but to helping a privileged few within the community and excluding particular others. Such a type of bonding requires an attack upon a particular other – or others in general – as being or behaving distinctly different. Group definitions under such conditions are adversarial, predicated upon what one is not (another). If such equilibrium evolves into a cultural institution, reiterated interactions involving expectations of rewards and sanctions are associated with completely closed networks, creating the exclusionary 'mafia' like networks identified by many authors (DeFilippis 2001; Gambetta 1988; Portes and Landolt 1996; Sobel 2002). Portes and Landolt (Portes and Landolt 1996) identify a number of negative characteristics that can arise from social solidarity, which they call 'the dark side' of social capital. These include:

- *exclusion* of outsiders, such as occurs within specific ethnic economic groups.
- *conformity* and *restrictions* on individual enterprise, in that resources come at a price. Portes sites the example of fledgling business' being dragged under by weight of their commitments to their (ethnic) community before they have a chance to take off.
- *downward levelling* pressures, including tall-poppy syndrome, whereby the norm becomes one of non-achievement, and anyone who breaks this norm is subject to sanctioning pressures.

Of these, the first point on exclusion requires particular attention in light of arguments raised so far concerning bonding capital crowding out bridging capital. Bourdieu raises relevant points concerning the mechanism of exclusion. He notes that social capital resources are protected on the basis of groups distinguishing themselves through shared knowledge and etiquette – cultural capital – and through victimising and excluding others who lack such cultural capital. In such a way is class reproduced, and social inequality reinforced. However, Bourdieu's ideas can be used to add an extra twist to the argument, in that they suggest that degrees of access and use made of resources amongst closed groups are almost, by definition, uneven. Bourdieu's ideas, like those of Marx many years previously, are premised on an idea of capital as a zero-sum entity. For Bourdieu, one cannot 'share' one's social capital publicly, because the social capital network contains only a finite (and therefore contested) number of positions. One person's social capital gain must be another's loss, and the greater the potential gains, the greater the incentive to exclude others from one's valuable network. This has ramifications for inequality, in that it suggests the greater the levels of inequality, the more the margins for gain by exclusion, and the greater the impulse to bond rather than bridge seeking the 'rents' of exclusion.

Inequality has been related to social capital, though not as a vehicle for bonding and exclusion. Grieg et al., (2003) come close to identifying such a link in discussing the role social capital has in redressing inequalities in community health. They note the danger of the concept when taken over as a purely neo-liberal construct aimed at promoting self-sufficiency:

> Individuals should strive to build up social capital by their own endeavours, thereby increasing their social networks and hence their health. To the extent that they fail to do this, it is because of their own inability to generate social capital. Thus at the turn of the twenty-first century we have seen the return of one of the hallmarks of the turn of the nineteenth century: **blame the victim**. (Grieg et al. 2003, 46-47)

This stresses the wrong in blaming people for their own misfortune. Grieg et al note the importance of acknowledging that the material bases of communities are often beyond their control, and that social capital alone will not redress large structural deterrents and acute competitive disadvantage; a claim supported here and elsewhere (Patulny Forthcoming-a). However, there is another danger in victim blaming; not only does it remove aid from the poor and disenfranchised, it turns these unfortunates into the symbolic causes of society's ills. The poor and unemployed serve as a warning to others of *what they don't want to be like*. Inequality thus potentially enhances victim blaming, which erodes sympathy, splits society, and encourages exclusionary bonding.

Macro vs Micro Influences

Grieg et al's analysis of social capital is limited, in that it conceives of social capital almost purely as a bonding instrument. This does not acknowledge the role that bridging capital can play, in the form of investment and support provided by government and others to disadvantaged communities and persons. Grieg et al's 'bonding only' perspective of social capital is not uncommon though, and stems from the fact that most social capital analysis is focussed upon the individual demographics that form micro-level bonds, and not on macro phenomenon such as inequality that can undermine bridges. This leads onto another criticism of social capital so far unexamined; there is a bias towards recognising and analysing micro-social demographics rather than macro-social forces and structures as potential builders of social capital.

Researchers have typically assumed social capital's origins lie within individuals. Social capital as such is an entity that flows outwards from individuals, via their relations with others, to become a broad social phenomenon. This phenomenon in turn induces macro-social outcomes, such as growth and employment. Assuming social capital's individual origins justifies the use of large-scale population-based surveys of individuals in measuring social capital. However, this 'orthodox' approach has become so not because it is necessarily correct, but because it is more easily measured. Individual trust and volunteering patterns (micro cause) and employment and economic growth (macro outcomes) are more easily captured and empirically defensible than global social forces (macro cause) and individual wellbeing (micro outcome). It is important to recognise that there is an interaction between structure and agency in setting the norms and material conditions of a society. Macro-social influences (exogenous structural forces and social institutions) build and erode social capital as much as individual demographics, and are far less well studied. The increasing uncertainty that Luhman suggests threatens trust is only realised through macro-social forces. What, then, are the primary macro-social influences upon social capital? Do they have a common theme beyond 'uncertainty'?

Keeping in mind that we are focusing on the industrialized first world (which excludes most of the political and social upheaval inherent in the development and democratizing of the third world), four broad areas emerge in the discourse on globalised complex societies. These form the primary macro-social influences most relevant to social capital. The first is materialism. Through our examination of trust, we note that increasing complexity and risk inherent in late modern society is potentially transforming trust. Complexity primarily affects trust through altered communicative relations. Relations are becoming increasingly mediated, through communication systems such as television, and by the market and commercial world. Changing media, increased TV and Internet viewing, represent a considerable influence upon social cohesion. Numerous international social capital studies examine the effects of TV watching upon trust and volunteering (Putnam 1995; Hooghe 2001). Work and overwork are common themes in studies of society and community as well, and have been related to materialism and over-consumption (Hamilton 2002; Schor 1991; Sennett 1998). Similar ideas are echoed in environmental sentiments, whereby attitudes towards sustainability and promoting the environment over the economy may enforce or conflict with social cohesion and wellbeing (Eckersley 1998). Some are optimistic concerning this change; Inglehart suggests that an increasing number of people are shifting towards what he calls post-material values, or values indicative of a better quality of life rather than gaining more material possessions (Inglehart 1997). Hamilton labels a similar phenomenon 'downshifting' (Hamilton 2003a). The relationship between materialism and social capital is in need of further examination, and research is only just beginning in this area (Patulny Forthcoming-a; Patulny Forthcoming-b).

The second macro-social phenomenon is inequality. This is a highly pressing issue, given our arguments concerning bonding raised above, and the widening gap between rich and poor worldwide. Great disparity of resources and the increasing lack of democratic and social control over wealth flows have fuelled calls for redistribution in many countries, not only for its own sake but also from the fear that widening inequality will erode community. Such extreme wealth differentials are theorised to have detrimental effects upon cohesion and wellbeing (Sennett 1998; Uslaner and Brown 2002). Numerous studies are indeed beginning to connect inequality to declines in trust in particular (Patterson 1999; Smeeding 2002; Uslaner and Brown 2002), but study is this area is still only in the fledgling stages, and a long way off influencing public policy.

The third macro-social phenomenon is changing family structure and household dynamics. This is important, as women make up over half the world's population, and when they change work and informal career patterns dramatically – as they have done over the past 30 years particularly and continue to do today – the social consequences are potentially enormous. Gender inequities in social capital are visible, with women volunteering distinctively less in some countries such as Germany (Offe and Fuchs 2002) and more countries where efforts have been made to improve the volunteering profile of the disadvantaged (inclusive of women) through education and access, such as the UK (Hall 2002). The lack of time women face through carrying the twin burden of paid and unpaid (household) labour poses serious problems for woman and social capital. Gender aspects of social capital are greatly under-researched, and deserve considerable attention.

Finally, the fourth macro-social phenomenon in need of examination is the clash of civilisations and culture. Whilst captured originally by Huntington and Fukuyama, Inglehart leads the way in empirical examination of this phenomenon through studying comparative values across the world (Inglehart 1999). However, Inglehart lacks a specific focus on social capital, or upon cultural differences specifically within first world countries. Cultural differences and friction are at the forefront of international issues today, dominating terrorism (Putnam 2002), migration, and multiculturalism. It relates to aspects of social capital concerning tolerance and conformity discussed above in the section on trust, and most studies link trust differentials to race as well as to the multicultural mix within geographic areas. This is an important area of continuing study in relation to social capital.

If there is one theme linking these four macro-social phenomena together, it is material reality. Materialism, inequality, and household dynamics are all embedded directly in material practicalities, and much of the cultural clash of civilisations is linked to issues of material resources and development. Material reality – the structural side of social capital building – is the next frontier in social capital research. The important question then is, what is the most appropriate way to study such phenomenon.

International Comparison – Welfare Regimes

We have already established that social capital is best measured as a combination of norms, networks, and practices, relevant to either bridging or bonding dimensions. Norms, networks and practices are typically studied at the individual micro-level, using unit-record survey data. We have also determined, however, that macro-social phenomenon are important to measure for their effects upon social capital; such data is typically gathered at levels large than the individual however. Since these two levels are incongruous, some degree of data aggregation must take place. One must, however, pick carefully one's unit of analysis. What is the appropriate level at which to aggregate individual level social capital, so as to enable analysis with communal, national, or even global material reality variables? The most obvious level is the nation-state, which allows country-specific effects to be identified in international comparative analysis. Different states exhibit different 'emergent properties' - properties akin to Durkheim's social facts that 'emerge' only at a certain level of social cohesion. Emergent properties are important to identify for two reasons. Firstly, structural properties only become apparent at certain macro levels, such as the level of the nation-state. The aggregate effects of governance, democracy and national culture cannot be picked up at the level of the individual. Secondly, the interactions between the various social capital components may change across countries. Some countries may exhibit high rates of volunteering because they are highly trusting societies. Others, however, may volunteer for the precisely the opposite reason – in order to compensate for a lack of trust. Country effects remain invisible if only individuals are compared, and inter-state comparisons are not undertaken (Inglehart and Abramson 1999).

It is also possible to go beyond the level of the nation-state and examine clusters or typologies of countries. A famous example of this approach is Inglehart's analysis of country 'blocks' based on culture (ie. East vs West). Inglehart's studies (1999) have attempted to map trust levels around the world on the basis of cultural country-blocks, such as 'eastern' Muslim and western Christian. He finds that Muslim country blocks tend to be less trusting than Christian blocks. Harre (1999) criticizes this "macrolexicography" (international trust comparison) for not capturing the local practices or trust and distrust – trust may be strangely distributed within countries, or people's actions may denote trust without they themselves actually registering as trusting. However, disregarding aggregated analysis runs the risk of missing various emergent properties that transcend even nation-state levels. If one is to transcend nation-states in seeking units of analysis, it is important to clearly examine the phenomenon that renders those countries alike and collapsible, in particular if it is a macro-social force that effects social capital, as discussed above.

One particularly important macro-social phenomenon that warrants cross-national aggregation and investigation is welfare regimes. A welfare regime lies at the nexus between most of the macro-social material forces discussed above that may influence social capital. Welfare regimes are the 'bridges' that can counter or entrench the dark-side of bonding social capital; they can either alleviate or reinforce aspects of material reality. Empirically, welfare states have been found to be unrelated to social capital in some countries, such as the US (Putnam 2000), and positively in others, such as Sweden (Rothstein 2003). However, a welfare regime incorporates more comprehensive than just the state and its income transfers, and remains under-studied in social capital analysis. Comprehensive comparative analysis of welfare regimes within political economy reveals many aspects relevant to the present study. Esping-Anderson (1990) notes that welfare regimes involve not just social expenditure, but potential for emancipation from and legitimation within capitalist society. They can free people from materialism through a process of de-commodification (ensuring individuals are not just pure market entities), from inequality through redistribution, and from household and gender constrictions though parental payments and child care; and their ability to do so revolves as much around the stigma they associate with welfare as the payment they provide (Esping-Anderson 1999). Welfare regimes thus heavily mediate social capital's interaction with materialism, inequality and households, through payment and social inclusion (or a lack of stigma). Though not so adequately suited to the clash of civilisation, welfare regimes can also potentially alleviate the excesses of cultural clash within first world societies, through provision to the poor who are typically migrants. Welfare regimes, as defined by Esping-Anderson, are thus pivotal in any study of the effects of material reality upon social capital.

Esping-Anderson clusters countries according to three regime types. Firstly there is Corporatism, a regime typical of France, Italy, Germany and Austria. This regime is historically derived from a conservative desire (by state, family and church) to maintain control and preserve central power, and provides different benefits (social insurance) to different groups within society based on status. Such a system has some potential to emancipate citizens from materialism, less from inequality and cultural clashes, and the least from family-gender constrictions. Next there is Liberalism, typified by the US, Canada, and Australia (and UK, but has only become so recently). This regime is derived from a belief that the market reduces poverty, whilst excessive welfare obstructs the market and creates idleness and dependency; welfare as a consequence is stigmatised. It typically involves a means-tested system of public provision for the poor, and private (market) system of welfare provision for the middle (in terms of company-related benefits and volunteerism). Such a system has some potential to emancipate women from family-gender constrictions, less from cultural clashes, and the least from materialism and inequality. Finally there is the social democracy, typified by Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands. This regime is based on a belief in equality and universal provision. Welfare is designated to preserve universal social rights of citizenship (rather than just economic or traditional) aimed at allowing full social participation by all. It involves a universal (flat rate) system of provision for the poor (pensions, accidents, sickness and unemployment), and an earnings-related public system of provision for the middle class. Such a system is the most expensive, but has the strongest potential emancipate citizens from all four macro-social forces. These three regimes form a basis for comparison in understanding the effects of macro-social phenomena upon social capital.

Esping-Anderson's approach of categorising and comparing countries based on welfare regimes is criticised in that typologising supposedly incorporates too much generalising (according to regime placement) and not enough attention to specific-country detail and small-scale (intra-country) variation (Daly and Lewis 1998). The criticisms bare some legitimacy, but they ignore the original point of studying trends at any level of aggregation – to see emergent properties. Without aggregation and typology, important phenomenon remains invisible. There is no reason however why, given comparability of data, both national and ultra-national comparisons cannot be undertaken simultaneously. Such an approach would compare nations separately, but also look for trends at the level of aggregation suggested by typologies such as Esping-Anderson's. Nations do share similarities thanks to entwined histories and cultures; and to ignore this for the sake of specificity and uniqueness is to quite often miss valuable (and even obvious) points.

3.2 Social Capital And Welfare Possibilities

To demonstrate the advantage of engaging in cross-national and regime comparison, it is useful to hypothesise on how trust and social capital relate to the various welfare regimes. More particularly, the phenomenon of generalised and particularised trust – and therefore bonding and bridging capital – becoming more incompatible as society gets more complex or traumatised has different impacts on the different welfare regimes. Four scenarios are likely to result from this interaction.

Bridging Capital and Social-Democratic Welfare

In the first scenario, as things get too complex, individuals accept their inability to calculate just who is trustworthy, and instead rely on the 'leap of faith' and the normative values of their society. They trust by default, in the manner described initially by Luhman. Such individuals gain certain rewards, in terms of unlimited interaction and experience; and they accept the risks involved as a matter of faith. This is a high risk/

high reward solution that incorporates a movement (or substitution) away from particularised towards generalised trust.

Such a society is based on tolerance, and the moral choice to remain free and open in interaction (trusting more than we should) described by Mansbridge. Such a society requires strong (and expensive) institutional backing – such as the presence of a Universalist welfare state – in order to contain the risks natural to such an open, accepting social ethos. This scenario captures the Scandinavian social capital profile, which is highly trusting and generally tolerant (Rothstein, 2003). It also captures Esping-Anderson's social democratic welfare regime, and goes some way to describing how institutional and civic society can coexist and operate successfully together.

Bridging/ Bonding stabilisation and Liberal Welfare

In the second scenario, individuals simplify their lives through a process of 'screening' information. Under this scenario, they limit the people and pressures with which they come into contact so as to be able to make calculated judgements without information overload. Excessively complex scientific and moral issues are deferred to experts and political leaders; this is the scenario described by both Luhman and Giddens. This is a medium-risk, medium-reward scenario in that interaction is more limited, and the boundaries are drawn more tightly and coercively around the society, but the society, as a whole, remains unified. In social capital terms, bonding capital must decline, because the rational-process relevant to particularised trust (upon which bonding is based) becomes overloaded with information. In order to stop this decline in bonding, individuals reduce information by starting to assert boundaries and exclude others. They become not only uninterested, but actively seek to avoid information concerning others who they feel they can't help and who potentially threaten them (eg migrants, marginalised homeless or poor, etc). In effect, bridging capital declines. Bridging capital declines until the bonding capital is stabilised; both end up in equilibrium, but at a lower equilibrium than they previously occupied.

Such a society comes to be based increasingly more upon duty rather than tolerance. Generalised trust is preserved, but the society ends up needing to draw support from its normative power structures in asserting boundaries, in the manner described by Offe and Luhman. This scenario captures the Anglo-western social capital profile, where trust is declining (Putnam, Hall, Hughes et al), and large influential neo-conservative movements assert the need to build community through voluntary efforts and ridding their societies of welfare dependents (simplification of information, bonding through exclusion). It also captures the liberal welfare regime – built on stigma – described by Esping-Anderson.

Bonding Capital and Corporatist Welfare

In the third scenario, a more intense form of 'screening' is adopted, such that divisions open up within the larger society. Either cooperation is maintained through strict hierarchal process only, based on status, or else cooperation breaks down across the society at large, and the whole fragments into a number of competing interest groups. This is a high-risk, low-reward scenario, whereby distrust erodes mutual gain through enforced and inflexible status distinction, or else reverses gain into loss through infighting amongst fragmented groups. It entails a substitution of generalised for particularised trust.

Such a society is based on duty, but duty to one's particular sub-group of loyalty, rather then to the greater society as a whole. Group loyalties are maintained in the face of rivalry with others, on the basis of power and, in extreme cases, violence. This scenario captures the Italian social capital profile classically described by Banfield, and more recently by Putnam. It also captures the corporatist welfare regime – built on status distinction – described by Esping-Anderson.

No Capital?

Fourthly, individuals screen and remove themselves from society so much that they become isolated and ultra-individualistic. This is an extreme version of Giddens' ideas, whereby in advanced capitalism people 'affective individualism' supersedes social interaction (1994). It entails a substitution of generalised for particularised trust, and potentially no trust at all. This is the lowest risk, lowest reward scenario, where people cocoon in front of televisions, in cyber space, or in long working hours, seeking symbolic, mediated status rather than emotional gratification through interaction with other people. Some argue that symbolically mediated interaction is as good as primary interaction (Calhoun 1992), others that it is a poor and corrosive substitute (Baudrillard 1987). However, it is probably fair to say that the lower risks involved in the interaction are indicative of lower rewards for the society as a whole. This scenario is appropriate to all western industrialised countries.

4 Conclusion

This paper has outlined the major theoretical aspects of social capital in relation to its three main component parts. These three parts are values including trust, networks including associational membership, and practices such as volunteering. Typically, these three cluster into either bonding or bridging categories. Bonding is based on rational-process particularised trust, closed networks, and limited (potentially informal) volunteering. Bridging is based on moral-normative generalised trust, open networks, and civic volunteering. It is hypothesised that the two types of social capital come into disunity as societies become more complex or unstable. This paper has also outlined the major conceptual and measurement problems with social capital from the literature.

This paper also identifies two important new ones. Firstly, that analysis of social capital causes is biased towards individuals and agency. Macro-social forces are understudied. Materialism, inequality, gender-family dynamics, and cultural clashes are materially based structural phenomenon in need of measurement in relation to social capital. Secondly, there is a need to engage in international comparison to identify the 'emergent properties' that shape countries or clusters of countries, such as the various macro-social phenomena identified. Probably the most important emergent property to study in relation to materially based macro-social forces and social capital is welfare regimes. This paper suggests that the three welfare regimes suggested by Esping-Anderson each relate to a specific combination of bonding and bridging social capital, a combination that might result from increased social complexity or instability. Social-democratic countries favour high levels of bridging capital and tolerance, and support the risks inherent in trusting under uncertain condition through a generous and Universalist welfare regime. Liberal countries respond to declining certainty (and bonding capital) by simplifying, reducing information, and utilising normative sanctions (power) to exclude others – or reducing bridging capital – until bonding and bridging are balanced at a lower equilibrium. Corporatist countries embrace bonding capital, by strictly preserving closed status hierarchies, or else by fragmentation into competing sub-groups. They utilise power and crowd out bridging capital in this process.

It can be seen from these observations that the social capital concept can be used in a way which is critical, and which does not suffer from the reductive tendency inherent to economics. Measurement should proceed along the lines of three components listed, in international comparison. Historical trends should be observed according to welfare regime types, so as to test the above theses as to the impact of complexity upon social capital combinations by welfare regime type. And analysis should proceed to examine the influence of macro-social forces upon social capital, particularly the material forces outlined here of materialism, inequality, gender-family relations, and cultural clashes.

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