

Social Capital Theory

Social capital refers to the structure and quality of social relationships and constitutes a positive product of social interactions that can be a source of benefits for individuals, social groups and the society as a whole.

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Theory Factsheet

Proposed By: Bourdieu, 1986

Related Theories: Human Capital

Discipline: Sociology

Unit of Analysis: Individual, social groups, regional/national

Level: Micro-level/Meso-level/Macro-level

Type: Theory for Explaining and Predicting

Operationalised: Qualitatively / Quantitatively

Introduction

The concept of social capital (SC) has evolved over three periods. The first period was at the beginning of the last century reaching up to 1980. The second period took place in the 80s and 90s, when Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Coleman (1988), and Robert Putnam (1995) developed the construct and were established as its main theorists. Finally, from the 90s onwards, several scholars have developed a strong interest in the construct, aiming to delimit the content of the term, to investigate its role in various scientific fields (e.g., economics, psychology, health, education), and to measure it.

The first person who used the term “*social capital*” was the pedagogue Lyda Judson Hanifan (1916), who described it as the elements of everyday life such as goodwill, friendliness, mutual sympathy, and the breadth of social contacts. In 1961, the economist Jane Jacobs (1992) defined social capital as the existence and function of social networks in the big cities of the USA and claimed that it is the real wealth of these cities regarding their economic development. In the 70s, the economist Greg Loury (1977) used the term in his study of social inequalities across various ethno-racial groups, defining it as the networks of family and social relations that can promote the knowledge and abilities of a person. According to Loury, individuals' social connections determine their access to education, work, and other social goods.

However, it was only during the 80s and 90s that social capital theory was grounded. The first to introduce SC in a systematic manner was the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986), who approached it as individuals' access to a collective resource. Bourdieu distinguished between four forms of capital: the economic (which refers to property rights), the cultural (e.g., various assets, such as university degrees), the symbolic (which reflects the social prestige of individuals) and the social (which refers to the resources derived from social connections). Economic capital is the basis. All the other types of capital stem from this through a series of complex and non-automated transformative processes, and, under certain conditions, may be converted to economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, through social connections (i.e., social capital) individuals can have better access to financial resources (e.g., investment capital). Similarly, James Coleman (1988), who was primarily interested in the sociology of education, distinguished between physical (e.g., tangible aspects such as a machine), human (e.g., social skills and knowledge) and social (e.g., social relationships) capital, and he highlighted the role of social capital for the creation of human capital (e.g., family and community support may create development opportunities for young people). Finally, while Bourdieu and Coleman adopted an individualist approach to SC, Robert Putnam (1995) proposed the collective approach that defines it as a public good. According to Putnam (1995), SC concerns the amount of trust and civic participation which is available in a community, a city, or a state and may facilitate interpersonal cooperation, from which all community members may benefit irrespective of their unique investment in social networks.

From the 90s onwards, social capital theory gained momentum. Several scholars from different scientific fields, such as economics (SCHIFF, 1992; Ostrom, 2000), sociology (Carpiano, 2006; Portes, 1998), psychology (Lin, 2002), and educational studies (Israel, Beaulieu & Hartless, 2001), attempted to conceptualise and understand the construct. At the same time, international organisations (OECD, 2001; World Bank, 1998) provided a framework regarding the definition and the dimensions of SC. Despite these developments, Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (1995) are still considered to be the main theorists of the concept.

Theory

Social capital refers to the structure and quality of social relationships, from which individuals, social groups and the society may benefit (Sarracino & Mikucka, 2017). Although the literature on social capital has grown significantly, there is no consensus regarding its conceptualisation and operationalisation (Fine, 2001; Storberg, 2002). However, most scholars agree that social capital is a multidimensional resource that is generated through interpersonal interactions, and it includes both network ties and shared values, such as trust and reciprocity, that may facilitate cooperation and collective action (Agampodi et al., 2015; Lin, 2002; Tsounis et al., 2023).

The main theoretical approaches to social capital as a resource are the individualist and the collective. According to Bourdieu (1986), who is the main theorist of the individualist approach, SC reflects the material advantages gained by individuals who participate in various social networks, as long as they adhere to certain rules of social behaviour that apply within these networks (Carpiano, 2006). These networks constitute a collective resource that all participants have access to, and where their commitment and intentional action is required. Individual actors may create these networks and participate in compliance with the formal or unspoken rules of these networks in order to gain benefits. Thus, these networks are developed because of the deliberate effort aimed at maximising a benefit (Bourdieu, 1986). The amount of SC to which individuals have access depends on the size of the network connections that they can effectively mobilise, and on the amount of SC possessed by the individuals and groups of their social environment (Bourdieu, 1986). Hence, emphasis is placed both on the extent and the content of social relationships. When it comes to the measurement of the construct, Bourdieu (1986) argued that it is better to be assessed at the

individual level. That is, although Bourdieu recognised social networks and their function as a collective resource, he suggested that it is relevant to assess the amount of SC each individual has access to because the results of the participation in the same social networks may be different for different individuals (Bourdieu, 1986). Under this prism, the most important thing regarding the function and the benefits that derive from SC is not its mere existence, but the extent to which an individual has access to and makes use of the available SC. In addition, in order for SC to happen, individuals need to be able (i.e., have the necessary resources such as energy and time) and willing to engage in activities (e.g., networking, collaboration) that promote SC.

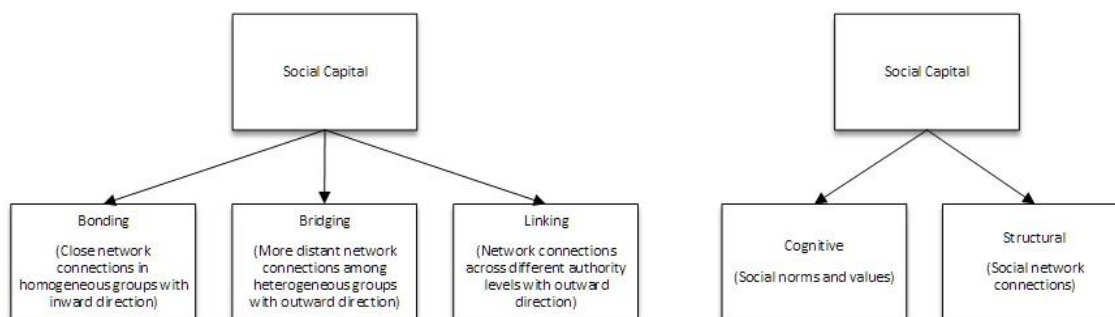
Robert Putnam (1995), who proposed the collective approach, conceptualised social capital as a set of characteristics of a community or social group (e.g., community networks, civic engagement, the cultivation of a strong civic identity), as well as the development of trust and reciprocity between the members of the community or the group (Putnam, 1995). This means that community members can cope with the demands of an adverse situation by using the available resources that exist in their network (Kritsotakis & Gamarnikow, 2004; Putnam, 1995). The positive effects of SC may be boosted when these characteristics are activated, while they may be weakened when these characteristics are not used. For Putnam (1995), SC is a collective characteristic of social structures and as such it must be conceptualised and measured as an ecological resource characterising communities, groups or organisations (Putnam, 1995). Thus, SC is elevated from a feature of individuals to a feature of communities, becoming a collective trait that functions at the aggregate level. According to the collective view, the benefits of SC as a resource go beyond each individual, since collective SC impacts positively the communities where people live in, the organisations where they work, and the society as a whole. For example, social capital may increase a firm’s productivity and innovation (Hasan et al., 2020), contribute to community resilience (Liu et al., 2022), and to a countries’ financial development (Elkhuizen et al., 2018), even if its usefulness is not the same for all individuals in these groups. The main characteristics of both the individualist and collective approach are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Theoretical Approaches to Social Capital as a Resource

	Individualist Approach	Collective Approach
Main Theorist	Pierre Bourdieu	Robert Putnam
Starting Point	Financial Capital	Human Capital
Type of Resource/Type of access	Collective/Individual	Collective/Collective
Effects	Personal Growth	Community Growth
Level of Analysis	Micro-level	Meso-/Macro-level

Based on its main characteristics and functions, SC has been distinguished into: (i) bonding, bridging and linking (Ferlander, 2007; Harpham, 2002; DiClemente, 2002; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), and (ii) structural, cognitive and relational (Krishna, 2001; Uphoff & Wijayaratra, 2000). The first distinction refers to the proximity of linkages between different actors and the direction of social action, while the second refers to the specific dimensions of SC. Bonding SC refers to close/strong ties between individuals within a homogeneous group (e.g., family, close friends) that strengthen the common identities and functions as a resource shared among members. Bridging SC refers to more distant network connections amongst people of heterogeneous or different groups (e.g., neighbours, members of different social groups) (Harpham, 2002; DiClemente, 2002; Putnam, 2000). Finally, linking SC refers to vertical ties between people in different formal power hierarchies (e.g., governmental organisations (DiClemente, 2002; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000)). In the case of bonding SC, the social action has an inward direction (i.e., within group), while in the case of both bridging and linking the social action is directed outward. The second distinction refers to the dimensions of social capital. Structural refers to externally observed social constructions such as closer network ties (e.g., with family members, friends and colleagues), as well as less proximal ties (e.g., strangers that could be approached through organisational and financial collaborations), that may both facilitate access to resources. Cognitive SC refers to intangible aspects like shared values attitudes and beliefs (e.g., trust and reciprocity) (Harpham, 2002; Uphoff & Wijayaratra, 2000). Finally, relational SC -which was initially proposed by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) - refers to the nature and quality of social relationships. However, this dimension is not widely used since it largely overlaps with cognitive and structural SC (Murayama, Fujiwara & Kawachi, 2012). The distinctions between the main forms of social capital are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Basic Forms of Social Capital - Distinction based on the proximity of linkages and the direction of the social action & Distinction based on the content (i.e., dimensions of social capital)



Several other, less common, distinctions which are found in the literature are presented in Table 1. These distinctions are not widely used, because they are either not supported by a strong theoretical framework or they largely overlap with the most dominant distinctions. For instance, the positive vs. negative distinction (Graeff & Svendsen, 2013) integrates the characteristics of SC with its outcomes (e.g., negative SC is related to the reproduction of inequalities). In a similar vein, the distinction between instrumental vs. principled (Heffron, 2001) is based only on the motives for social participation, which again mixes up the dimensions with the antecedents of SC. The horizontal vs. vertical (Dolfsma & Dannreuther, 2003), as well as formal vs. informal (Dhesi, 2000), distinctions broadly overlap with some aspects of the predominant bonding/bridging/linking distinction, without capturing both the closeness of social ties and the direction of social action, in a comprehensive way (as in the case of bonding/bridging/linking differentiation). Finally, other forms such as open vs. closed (Van Deth, 2003), or approaches that distinguish SC according to the strength of social ties,

i.e. weak vs strong ties (Granovetter, 1985), have not been empirically supported, or they have been incorporated in as a part of the predominant distinctions, as described above.

Table 1: Less Common Distinctions of Social Capital

Social Capital	Description	
Positive vs.	Reciprocal social relationships with positive social impact.	(Graeff & Svendsen, 2013)
Negative	Social relationships (e.g., a criminal organisation) resulting in negative social effects.	
Instrumental vs.	Social interactions and relationships that facilitate individual prosperity.	(Heffron, 2001)
Principled	Social interactions based on principles and ethical values	
Horizontal vs.	Ties among individuals within the same groups.	(Dolfsma & Dannreuther, 2003)
Vertical	Ties among individuals across different hierarchical levels	
Formal vs.	Norms, procedures and relationships that concern formal participation in civic organisations.	(Dhesi, 2000)
Informal	Social relationships with family members, friends, or colleagues, where institutional consolidation of networks is not required.	
Open vs.	Civically engaged and based on open membership.	(Van Deth, 2003)
Closed	Protective and exercising closed membership, aiming at individual benefits.	

Despite the lack of consensus regarding what social capital is, the extant literature seems to agree about its role as a resource that captures both social norms (i.e., cognitive) and network connections (i.e., structural). The most important social norms that are identified in the literature are trust and reciprocity (Tounis et al., 2023). Trust refers to the “actor’s belief that, at worst, others will not knowingly or willingly do him harm, and at best, that they will act in his interests” (Newton, 2001:p202). Trust enhances collective behaviour and productive cooperation, reduces transactional

costs, strengthens the ability of individuals, groups, and organisations to work together for common purposes, and helps maintain peaceful and stable social relations (Fukuyama, 2002; Newton, 2001). Reciprocity constitutes a dynamic social condition where people, give, receive, and return emotional and functional support (Mauss, Guyer & Maurer, 2011). Thus, reciprocity is a way to establish mutual social relationships, since giving implies a rigorous commitment to reciprocate (Torche & Valenzuela, 2011). The exchange of mutual support motivates individuals to further re-invest in certain positive social relationships (Xu, Li & Zhang, 2021). Finally, beyond social norms, SC concerns strong social networks, which constitute its structural aspect. Social networks encompass horizontal and vertical connections between individuals, social groups, and organisations that provide access to further resources, which, in turn, can be invested for gaining benefits (Lin, 2002).

Next to these core dimensions (i.e., trust, reciprocity and network connections), several other dimensions of SC have been proposed in the literature but are considered problematic for several reasons. For example, social participation, which refers to active citizenship behaviours (De Silva et al., 2006; Harpham, 2002; Putnam, 1995), broadly overlaps with network interactions that capture connectedness or structural SC. Similarly, helpfulness, solidarity or social responsibility overlap with trust and reciprocity. Social cohesion, which refers to the sense of security and coherence within the community (Onyx & Bullen, 2000), is more a result rather than a dimension of SC. Justice and tolerance of diversity are close yet distinct constructs from SC, while other dimensions, such as democratic orientations, cannot be broadly applied to define the construct (Van Deth, 2003).

The conceptualisation of SC is intertwined with the way it is measured. In line with theory, social capital can be assessed at different levels of analysis, namely, the micro-, the meso-, and the macro-level (Villalonga-Olives & Kawachi, 2015). Assessing SC at the micro-level of analysis is in line with the individualist tradition, according to which it refers to one's personal connections, the strength of these connections, and the resources available to these connections. In this context, SC is assessed with scales that evaluate individuals' access to the SC of the social structures in which they are embedded, e.g., the organisation in which they work (Flap & Völker, 2001), or the community where they live (Chen et al., 2009). Meso- and macro-level approaches are based on the ecological tradition, according to which SC is a collectively produced and owned resource, from which the whole community may benefit (Putnam, 2000). To this end, at the meso-level, SC is measured as a collective resource of an organisation or a workplace (Tsounis et al., 2023), the family (Carrillo-Álvarez et al., 2019), or the local community (Harpham, 2002), while at the macro-level, SC is assessed with regional or national surveys that evaluate trust, social participation and social interactions. Commonly, SC is assessed with macro-indices such as the number of social organisations (formal or informal) in a country, the average number of participants in these organisations, participation in elections or indicators of community volunteerism, which are perceived as reflections of the social interaction and community involvement (Adam, 2008; Sarracino & Mikucka, 2017).

Applications

Given its relevance for economic, social, and political life, social capital has attracted significant attention in several scientific fields. Its usefulness as an individual and/or a collective resource has been widely recognised, since there is significant empirical evidence supporting its added value in explaining health promotion (Ehsan et al., 2019), economic development and sustainability (Sarracino & Mikucka, 2017; McShane et al., 2016), political participation (KRISHNA, 2002) and social life at work (Tsounis et al., 2023), in the family (Alvarez, Kawachi & Romani, 2017) and at school (Israel & Beaulieu, 2004). In what follows, the applications of SC theory for understanding organisations, health, as well as school and family contexts, are presented.

Social capital has been found to have beneficial effects for employees and organisations. Several studies that have examined workplace SC (WSC) as **an individual asset** (e.g., the quality of relationships of employees with their colleagues or within the organisation) indicated that it relates positively with job satisfaction (Flap & Völker, 2001; Requena, 2003), organisational commitment (Watson & Papamarcos, 2002) and work engagement (Strömngren et al., 2016), and negatively with job stress (Boyas & Wind, 2010). However, in organisational studies, WSC is primarily defined and measured as an ecological resource of an organisation from which all members can benefit (Eguchi et al., 2017; Kouvonen et al., 2006; Meng, Clausen & Borg, 2018; Ommen et al., 2009; Pejtersen et al., 2010; Tsounis et al., 2023), even those with weaker social connections (Putnam, 2000). As an **ecological characteristic**, WSC may be perceived as a job resource at the organisational level of analysis that may motivate employees to fulfill their goals but also protect from the adverse effects of job stressors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Indeed, previous studies supported the positive relationship between WSC and work engagement (Fujita et al., 2016; Meng, Clausen & Borg, 2018), as well as between WSC and job performance (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2023; Huang & Liu, 2017). WSC may facilitate goal achievement in several ways. For example, WSC allows better knowledge sharing due to trustfulness and lower transactional costs (Prusak & Cohen, 2001), while it may also contribute to intellectual capital creation and renewal (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), which is an important determinant of individual and organisational performance. Next to the motivational role of WSC several studies have provided evidence for its buffering effect on the relationship between workload (OSHIO, INOUE & TSUTSUMI, 2014) or emotional demands and perceived stress (Pihl-Thingvad et al., 2021). The link between social capital and organisational growth due to the above functions has been supported in several studies that provide evidence for its positive role in knowledge transfer and innovation adoption (Maurer, Bartsch & Ebers, 2011; Michalakopoulou et al., 2023), as well as sales growth as a rate of organisational performance (Subramony et al., 2018).

Several scholars have also highlighted the role of social capital for career and employability research. In an attempt to maximise opportunities for future employment, individuals try not only to strengthen their human capital by acquiring new skills, but they also try to expand their social capital through participation in formal and informal networks (Smith, 2010). SC as a resource may enhance individuals' potential to reach competitive labour markets by gaining access to information regarding job openings, while social connections may trigger future career opportunities (Smith, 2010; Tomlinson, 2017; Tomlinson & Anderson, 2021). In a similar vein, SC is important for employees' career transitions, since it is fundamental for building one's career capital i.e., "*the overall set of non-financial resources a person is able to bring to his or her work*" (Arthur, DeFillippi & Jones, 2001:p101). Beyond "*knowing self*" and "*knowing how*", which represent human and cultural capital, respectively, "*knowing whom*" (i.e., social capital) is important for both internal and external role transitions (Brown, Hooley & Wond, 2020; Mello, Sutari & Dickmann, 2023).

A considerable number of studies have also tested the role of social capital as a social determinant of health (Ehsan et al., 2019). Higher SC reflects better access to (potential or actual) material, informational and affective resources that are embedded in social networks (Carpiano & Hystad, 2011) and may facilitate health promotion and prevention, but also deal with health problems. In line with the individualist approach (Bourdieu, 1986), this may mean that individuals may have access to sources of emotional and instrumental social support (e.g., informal support and care) in case of illness. In addition, SC reflects a broader range of social participation, which may create a sense of belonging to the community and may reduce the stress which is associated with uncertainty and social isolation (Ehsan et al., 2019). Moreover, individuals' social participation may enhance the development of their social skills, which, in turn, may improve access to material resources and information regarding health care facilities (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Similarly, SC, as a collective resource, may benefit the health of a whole community. According to Putnam (Putnam, 2000), communities with high levels of SC may positively affect all community members through two paths: first, through the development and broadening of informal settings and forms of support and,

second, through the development of political action that demands governmental initiatives for the improvement of health-care settings (Kawachi & Berkman, 2014). The findings of systematic reviews and meta-analyses regarding the effects of SC on health can be summarised as follows: (i) the cognitive aspects of SC are more clearly associated with better physical and mental health (Ehsan & De Silva, 2015; De Silva, 2005; Gilbert et al., 2013), (ii) its beneficial effects are more systematic for certain health indicators, such as mortality levels, but contradictory for some others, such as obesity (Kim, Subramanian & Kawachi, 2008; Moore, 2010; Nyqvist et al., 2014), (iii) higher SC implies better health outcomes for almost all age groups (Almedom, 2005; Vyncke et al., 2013), (iv) the positive association between SC and health has been confirmed in both cross-sectional (Ehsan et al., 2019) and longitudinal studies (Choi et al., 2014; Murayama, Fujiwara & Kawachi, 2012), (v) SC may buffer the negative consequences of low socio-economic status on health (Uphoff et al., 2013), and (vi) its favourable effects are more systematic when it is captured as an individual resource (Islam et al., 2006). However, it is important to note that empirical findings are not always comparable due to the lack of agreement regarding the definition and measurement of the construct (Pitkin Derose & Varda, 2009).

Also, literature provides evidence for the applications of social capital in several other contexts such as in schools (Israel, Beaulieu & Hartless, 2001) and the family (Alvarez, Kawachi & Romani, 2017). The study of school SC is based on Coleman's approach (1988), who focused on several functions of SC, such as information, obligations, and social norms, which are transmitted through social ties within schools, promoting children's flourishing. The main indicators of SC in the relevant studies include student-teacher relationships, students' participation in extracurricular activities and contacts between school and parents (Israel & Beaulieu, 2004). Empirical evidence showed that SC is positively related to students' academic achievements (Dufur, Parcel & Troutman, 2013) and well-being and negatively to victimisation (Gottfredson & DiPietro, 2011). Several studies have also examined the effects of the SC of the family on family members (Alvarez, Kawachi & Romani, 2017). It is argued that family SC is a relevant family resource, since family constitutes a primitive social context which provides instrumental and emotional support that is important for life span development (Alvarez, Kawachi & Romani, 2017). Empirical evidence showed that family SC relates positively to family members' well-being, and better health-outcomes (Rothon, Goodwin & Stansfeld, 2012; Wu et al., 2010).

Limitations

A major point of critique of SC theory concerns the lack of consensus regarding the definition of the construct, which raises doubts about its validity. For instance, some approaches to SC are quite restrictive as they capture only some dimensions e.g., social networks (Lin, 2002), but neglect others e.g., reciprocity (Pejtersen et al., 2010), while other approaches integrate dimensions that are similar but not in the heart of the concept (e.g., justice (Pejtersen et al., 2010), tolerance in diversity (Onyx & Bullen, 2000)). Narayan and Pritchett have pointed out that SC is a "*concept that means many things to many people*" (Narayan & Pritchett, 1999:p871), while Fine highlights how "*almost any form of personal and social interaction has the capacity to be understood as social capital*" (Fine, 2001:p21). According to Adler and Kwon (2002), the excessive use of SC as an umbrella construct may damage its theoretical and empirical evidence.

The lack of agreement regarding its definition further limits the valid measurement of the construct. First, there are limitations regarding the core dimensions of social capital, which results in scales that are either too restrictive and capture only a part of the concept like cognitive SC (Glendinning & West, 2007; Ommen et al., 2009), structural (Litwin & Stoeckel, 2014) or bonding SC (Eguchi et al., 2017), or are too extensive and include dimensions that do not lie in the core of SC e.g., justice (Pejtersen et al., 2010). Second, many existing scales assess certain dimensions at the individual level

and others at the collective level. This is a limitation because the conceptualisation varies according to the level of interest each time, and, hence, results are not comparable across levels. For example, the *“Social Capital Questionnaire for Adolescent Students”* (SCQ-AS; Paiva et al., 2014) assesses trust at the individual level (i.e., *“I trust my friends at school”*) while other aspects related with social support are measured only at the ecological level (i.e., *“The teachers at my school are sympathetic and give us support”*). Similarly, the Social Capital Scale of Onyx and Bullen (2000) captures some aspects at the ecological level (i.e., *“Do you agree that most people can be trusted?”* - trust) and other aspects at the individual level (i.e., *“Have you visited a neighbour in the past week?”* – neighbourhood connections). Such inconsistencies also exist in organisational studies, with some scholars examining aspects of SC at both the individual and the organisational level e.g., *“I have much / some / little / almost no / no trust in management”* and *“In my company/organisation people who work together trust each other because that is the best and easiest way to get the work done”* (Requena, 2003). Third, SC is assessed with adapted scales that were designed to assess different constructs for other purposes (Fine, 2010). Finally, next to these limitations, there are also some challenges regarding the measurement of the outcomes of social capital. For example, although several studies support the positive link between social capital and economic growth (Graeff & Svendsen, 2013; van Staveren & Knorrinda, 2007), it is very difficult to link with accuracy specific aspects of SC with specific material gains or economic indices. All in all, these issues refrain from comparing data that derive from different definitions and operationalisations, and make it challenging to fully understand the role of SC for organisational, societal, and economic outcomes.

Another important point of criticism is that social capital is conceptualised as a *“by definition”* positive construct, although it may lead to controversial effects. Several scholars have elaborated on the *“dark side”* of social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Pillai et al., 2017), while empirical evidence has revealed such unfavourable effects (Carrera, Sohail & Carmona, 2017; Martins et al., 2017; Sakuraya et al., 2017). Portes (1998:p15) highlights four main unfavourable consequences of SC: *“exclusion of outsiders, excess claims on group members, restriction on individual freedoms, and downward levelling norms”*. For example, empirical evidence suggests that SC may negatively affect organisational functioning. Research findings suggest that trust may weaken the positive relationship between task conflict and innovation, since it can lead to less monitoring (De Clercq, Thongpapanl & Dimov, 2009). Moreover, strong ties and relationships may negatively affect knowledge acquisition due to over-embeddedness (Presutti, Boari & Fratocchi, 2007; Strindlund, Abrandt Dahlgren & Ståhl, 2022; Yli-Renko, Autio & Sapienza, 2001). Similarly, the intense internal cohesion of a group may enhance convergent thinking, which results in overlooking divergent information (Singh, Tan & Mookerjee, 2011). Zhang et al. (2016) showed that creativity may lead to higher social isolation even under conditions of high SC, indicating that social networking may have controversial effects for more creative employees. Interpersonal networks may produce mutual identification among members, limiting diverse views and the acquisition of new information. Thus, social identification may lead to group polarisation (Janis, 1972; Woolcock, 1998). In turn, due to this polarisation, less powerful members may feel pressure to accept the viewpoints of the more prototypical members of the organisation (Walker, 1985). Under these conditions, high levels of SC may lead to homogenisation, resulting in network closure effects. Thus, a danger posed by higher levels of SC is highlighting confirmation bias, since the presence of dense networks may inhibit the generation of alternative perspectives. Finally, research evidence shows that different forms of SC may lead to differential effects. For example, high trust and reciprocity within closer network connections, such as friends and family (i.e., bonding SC), may lead to emotional or instrumental support, while at the same time they may weaken the social ties with the broader community i.e., bridging SC (Takahashi & Magalong, 2008). These aspects of social capital downplay the idealistic approach towards the concept but contribute to a more realistic understanding of its effects.

Concepts

Cognitive Social Capital (Independent/Moderator): The intangible aspects of social capital that refer to social norms and values such as trust and reciprocity. (Harpham, 2002)

Structural Social Capital (Independent/Moderator): The network ties that provide access to other resources. (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998)

Bonding Social Capital (Independent/Moderator): The form of social capital that refers to strong ties between people within homogeneous groups with inward direction. (Putnam, 2000)

Bridging Social Capital (Independent/Moderator): The form of social capital that refers to weak ties or more distant and open network connections among individuals across diverse social cleavages with outward direction. (Putnam, 2000)

Trust (Independent/Moderator): Individuals' expectation that others will not willingly harm them and that they will act in an honest manner. (Newton, 2001)

Reciprocity (Independent/Moderator): The offer and raising of mutual support which is based on the expectation that the provided help will be returned, if needed. (Torche & Valenzuela, 2011)

Individual Social Capital (Independent/Moderator): A person's closer (i.e., bonding) and community (i.e., bridging) network connections that are trustworthy, reciprocal, and resourceful. (Chen et al., 2009)

Family Social Capital (Independent/Moderator): The amount of structural social capital (i.e., network ties and social interactions), and cognitive social capital (i.e., family cohesion and sense of belonging) that is available within the family and through connections outside the family. (Carrillo-Álvarez et al., 2019)

Workplace Social Capital (Independent/Moderator): A workplace resource that refers to employees' perceptions regarding trust, reciprocity and network interactions that exist among peers as well as among individuals across different levels of the hierarchy within an organisation or across organisations. (Tsounis et al., 2023)

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