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Dimensions of social capital

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Overview

- Different approaches to dimensions of social capital
- Origins of the structural/cognitive/relational dimensions approach
- Meaning of dimensions
- Overview of the dimensions
- Details of each component of each dimension


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Social capital is multidimensional


Liu & Besser (2003)	Narayan & Cassidy (2001)	World Bank	Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal social ties • Formal social ties • Trust • Norms of collective action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group characteristics • Generalised norms • Togetherness • Everyday sociability • Neighbourhood connections • Volunteerism • Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups and networks • Trust and solidarity • Collective action and cooperation • Information and communication • Social cohesion and inclusion • Empowerment and political action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural • Relational • Cognitive

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Structural/cognitive/relational origins


- Origins in Karl Polanyi's (1944) work on embeddedness
- Built on by Mark Granovetter's (1992) discussion of structural and relational embeddedness
- First elaborated in the context of social capital by Janine Nahapiet and Sumantra Ghoshal (1998)




Source: <https://www2.ed.ac.uk/leeds/leeds.ac.uk/people/mark-granovetter>



Source: <http://www.dominicmoranofoundation.org/experts/janine-nahapiet/>





Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ghoshal/>



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Polanyi

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Structural/cognitive/relational origins


- It is common to find two-way distinction between structural and cognitive or structural and relational
 - for example, van Bastelaer 2001; Chou, Yuan 2006; Grootaert et al. 2003; Krishna and Shrader 1999; Uphoff 1999
- Cognitive and relational dimensions are similar since both arise from the mental rather than the material realm, therefore both are ultimately 'cognitive'

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Structural and Cognitive Dimensions

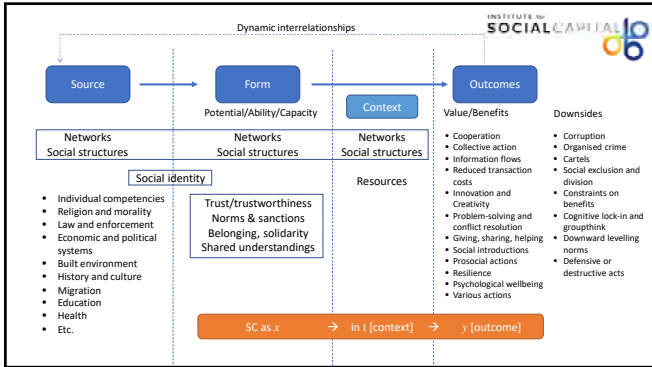
- "The **structural category** is associated with various forms of social organization, particularly *roles, rules, precedents and procedures* as well as a wide variety of *networks*." Facilitates cooperation
- "The **cognitive category** derives from mental processes and resulting ideas, reinforced by culture and ideology, specifically *norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs*." Predisposes cooperation



Source: <http://government.cornell.edu/norman-uphoff/>

Source: Uphoff, 1999: p218

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Components of each dimension

Structural	Cognitive	Relational
<i>Configuration and pattern of social relationships including structures of social organisation</i>	<i>Shared understandings that provide systems of meaning</i>	<i>Characteristics and qualities of social relationships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network ties and configuration Associational membership Roles, rules, precedents, and procedures Coordinating institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared language, codes, and narratives Shared values, attitudes, and beliefs Shared goals and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust and trustworthiness Norms and sanctions Obligations and expectations Identity and identification

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Interrelationships between dimensions

- Dimensions are a conceptual construct
- In reality, the dimensions of social capital may be so connected and mutually reinforcing that they cannot be treated separately
- A dimension is not a discreet entity
- I suggest the terminology 'structural dimension of social capital' rather than 'structural social capital' to avoid confusion

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Examples of Interrelationships

- The structural dimension is an antecedent to both cognitive and relational dimensions since social relationships and structures are essential for social exchange (Tsai and Ghoshal 1998)
- Social structures and relationships facilitate social interaction, and this promotes the development of the cognitive and relational dimensions
- The cognitive and relational dimensions reinforce and encourage the development of structures by facilitating interaction and the formation of new relationships, roles, rules, and procedures.
- Shared goals and narratives might lead to shared norms and obligations, as well as to enhanced feelings of trust and identity (Rao and Gebremichael 2017)

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Structural dimension

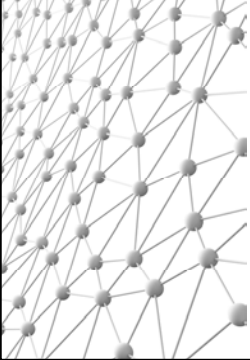
- The properties of the social system and of the network of relations as a whole (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998)
- More tangible and can be more easily observed than the other dimensions
- Connectedness and social structures

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Structural - Networks

- Networks are patterns of relations between social units or actors, for example, individuals, organisations or countries (Scott and Hofmeyer 2007)
- Networks link actors, making many social capital outcomes possible or more likely, and networks also enable or facilitate social interaction, which is essential to creating and maintaining social capital

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Structural - Networks

- Many social networks are unintended by-products of other interactions (Putnam 1993)
 - by-products of the operation of organisations (Westlund, Westlund, and Hans 2006)
 - by-product of participation in personal, political, or civic interests such as sporting, advocacy, or community groups
 - arise in situational networks based on geographical proximity

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Structural - Roles

- Roles allow people to work together more predictably, fruitfully, and efficiently (Uphoff and Wijayaratna 2000)
 - making decisions
 - mobilising resources
 - communicating efficiently
 - coordinating activities and connecting actors
 - resolving conflicts
- Roles can be formal or informal and can be paid or unpaid
- Roles create obligations and expectations and reinforce social identity
 - Roles create tangible and powerful signals of social norms associated with the role

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Structural – Rules, precedents, procedures

- Without roles and rules for decision-making and resource mobilization, collective action becomes more difficult and thus less likely (Uphoff 1999)
- Patterns of collective action are constituted and sustained by a large array of rules that are crafted, monitored, and enforced to establish productive working relationships with one another (Evans 1996)

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Structural – Rules, precedents, procedures

- Rules and how they are enforced can have implications for various aspects of social capital, such as norms, trust, belonging, and shared understandings
- Rules can be formal or informal and tend to be more tangible than norms and traditions but are often unspoken and tacit

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Structural – Coordinating institutions

- Social capital involves the various constructs of society that provide the background context for interaction and exchange
- Coordinating institutions are created to organise, regulate, and coordinate groups of people
- Institutions create distinctive sets of beliefs, ideologies, myths, linguistic styles, and norms that facilitate actions and transactions
- Some authors include this in cultural capital, although it is closely related to, and part of, many conceptual approaches to social capital

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Cognitive dimension

- Relates to resources providing shared representations, interpretations, and systems of meaning among parties (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998)
- Comprises the cognitive schemes and systems of meaning as exhibited in common vocabulary and narratives (Davenport and Daellenbach 2011)
- Somewhat intangible as it relates to interpretations of a shared reality and the nature of intersubjectivity
- It is the shared values or paradigms that allow a common understanding of appropriate ways of acting

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Cognitive – Shared narratives

- Commonly understood myths, stories, and metaphors that give order to human experience and solidify meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998)
- Natural process of socialization that allows us to understand each other and has allowed us to work together cooperatively (Fisher 1984)
- The norms, values, and practices of a social grouping are not based on objective, a priori foundations but are socially constructed through communication (Rosenkranz 2019)

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Cognitive – Shared goals

- The collective aspirations of actors and the sense of shared destiny with others (Adler and Kwon 2002; Tsai and Ghoshal 1998)
- A force that holds people together and allows actors to coordinate their efforts and work together for mutual benefit (Chow and Chan 2008)
- More than just established and documented goals - they are the shared belief that the social group or society represents actors' interests and that working for the benefit of the group will progress personal interests, now or in the future
- Shared goals focus and coordinate strategic action towards mutual benefit, which increases the likelihood that actors can simultaneously fulfill individual and group goals (Uhlaner et al. 2015)

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Cognitive – Shared language

- Critical for effective social interaction, which is necessary for people to work together for collective action (Eiteneyer, Bendig, and Brettel 2019)
- Provides a "common conceptual apparatus" essential for effective interaction and exchange (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998)
- Includes the terms, vocabulary, and jargon used by a social group or in a social setting (Mohammed and Kamalanabhan 2019)
- The common lexicon to 'speak the same language' connotes comfort and similarity with others that are inclusive and associated with a shared identity and belonging

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Relational dimension

- Relates to the characteristics and qualities of personal relationships such as trust, obligations, respect and even friendship (Gooderham 2007)
- Key aspects are trust and trustworthiness, norms and sanctions, obligations and expectations, and identity and identification (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998)
- It is the nature or quality of networks or relationships (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005)

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Relational – Trust and trustworthiness

- Trust is essential for the existence of social capital, and most authors agree that trust and trustworthiness are at the core of social capital (Paxton 2002; Portes 1998)
- Trust is vital for any form of social interaction or exchange and trustworthiness 'lubricates social life' (Cherti 2008)
- Effective collective action requires high levels of trust and perceptions of trustworthiness
- Trust makes it possible to maintain peaceful and stable social relations that are the basis for collective behaviour and productive cooperation (Newton 2001)
- Social interaction and exchange without trust would be virtually impossible, and all economic activity requires at least a minimum level of trust

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Relational - Identify and belonging

- Orients actors towards shared goals, intensifies obligations towards the group or community, increases the likelihood of social support, improves collective efficacy, and empowers collective action (Burbaugh 2015)
- Involves actors seeing themselves as one with other people and enables perceptions of unity, togetherness, solidarity, and community spirit (Ntontis et al. 2019)
- Identity powerfully shapes and reinforces norms as well as expectations and obligations (Holtkamp and Weaver 2019)
- People are more likely to interact, cooperate, and trust others who share a social identity (Han, Han, and Brass 2014)

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Relational – Social norms and social sanctions

- Social norms are socially enforceable expectations about what constitutes normal and appropriate action in a particular context (Bendor and Swistak 2001)
- Social norms “specify what actions are regarded by a set of persons as proper and correct, or improper and incorrect” (Coleman, 1990: p243)
- Norms are the rules, beliefs, mores and habits which regulate behaviour (Spellerberg 2001)
- Social norms serve as the foundations of the maintenance of social order and are essential to the functioning of any social grouping, including society.

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Components of each dimension

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