



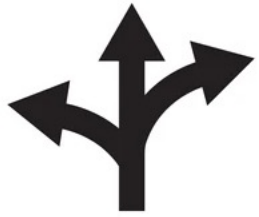
Social capital in teacher research: A trendy but blurry concept

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A bit of history leading to two concepts



- More than a hundred years old (Claridge, 2004)
- Used in many disciplines (economy, sociology, psychology, education, etc.) (Dika & Singh, 2002)
- Several different meanings (Farr, 2004)
- Pierre Bourdieu, Nan Lin, Robert Putnam, James Coleman, Nahapiet & Goshal: ~~Social capital~~

Collective social capital

Definition

Social capital is a community-level good that is not the private property of those who benefits from it; such as **trust climate**, **civic engagement**, **democracy**

Authors

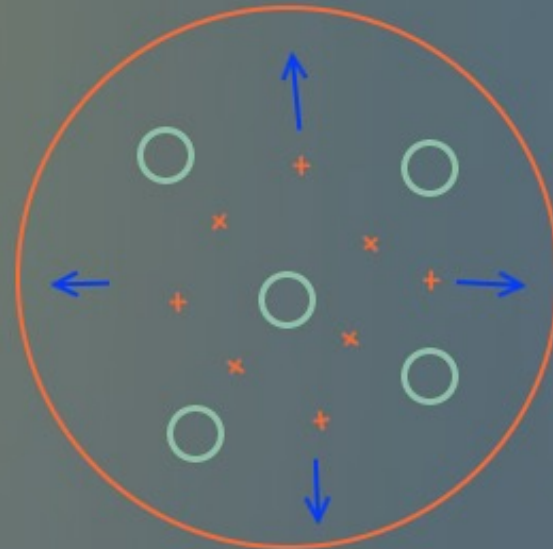
Putnam (Coleman)

Individual social capital

Social capital is the resources embedded in **one's social networks**, **resources** that can be accessed or mobilized through **ties** in the networks

Nan Lin - Bourdieu (Coleman)

Collective social capital

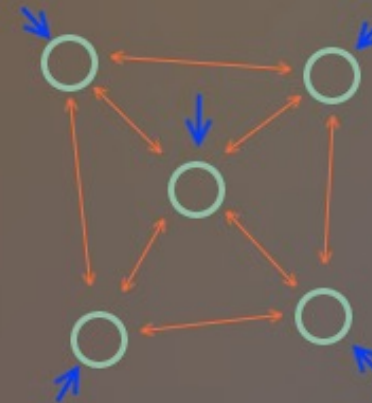


Social capital as the sum of each individuals

- Individuals as **a benefit** for social capital

Individual social capital

Also called network-based social capital

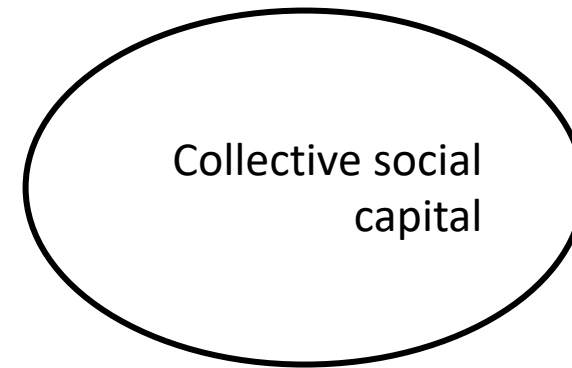
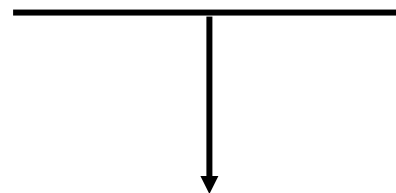
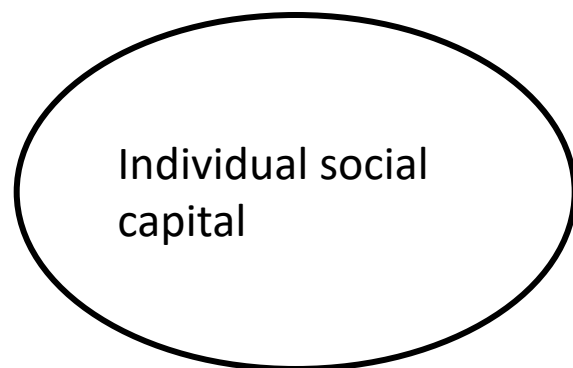
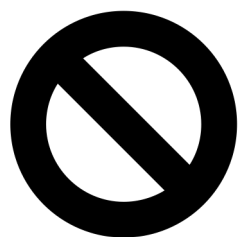


Social capital as social resource

- Social capital as **a benefit** for individuals

A harsh debate

This duality represents a “*considerable disagreement about whether social capital is a collective attribute of communities or societies, or whether its beneficial properties are associated with individuals and their social relationships*” (Poortinga, 2006, p. 293)



Individual and collective social
capitals are two different
concepts (Son, 2020)

Social capital in teacher research



- Last two decades: Growing body of literature recognizing the importance of teachers' interactions for their professional development (Daly, 2013; Moolenaar, 2012)

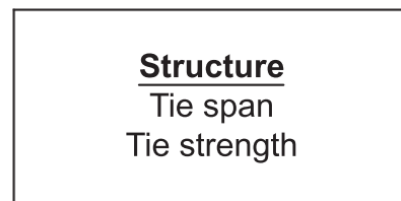
- Teachers' learning (Daly et al., 2020; Kyndt et al., 2016)
- Teacher induction (Thomas et al., 2019, Coppe et al., 2022)
- Teacher agency (Pantić et al. 2021)
- Teacher support (Bristol & Shirrell, 2019)
- Teacher collaboration (Moolenaar, 2012)
- Reform implementation (Coburn & Russel, 2008)

Teachers' professional development

Socially-embedded phenomenon
"Relationships matter" (Moolenaar, 2012)

Social capital in teacher research

- In the backroom of **social capital** (Bourdieu, 1986)



- But ... inspired by the teacher research has identified three capitals within an **urban** school



- Yet, the underlying assumption of these research is that “**relationships matter**” referring to the individual social capital concept and **not** to the collective social capital concept (Baker-Doyle, 2012)

concept of **individual**

social capital, the field of individual and collective social capital

A lot of studies are mixing the two forms of social capital

Some examples

	Conceptualizations	Operationalizations
Moolenaar et al. (2014)	Mixed form with rationale related to individual social capital	Social network approach and psychometric instrument
Hopkins et al. (2019)	Mixed form with rationale related to individual social capital	Social network approach and psychometric instrument
Liou et al. (2017)	Mixed form with rationale related to individual social capital	Social network approach and psychometric instrument

Why is it problematic ?

Advocates of the individual conceptualization

(. . .) trust has also been employed as a component or an indicator of social capital. However, its “social” nature is uncertain, and conceptually it might be more appropriate to consider it as an antecedent or effect rather than a component of social capital. (. . .) These discussions do not take away the conceptual significance of trust in its various forms (. . .). Rather, they remind us that it behooves us to refrain from equating trust with social capital. (Lin, 2008, p. 17).

Advocates of the collective conceptualization

Social capital is a feature of the social structure, not of the individual actors within the social structure: it is an ecologic characteristic. In this way social capital can be distinguished from the concepts of social networks and social support, which are attributes of individuals. (Lochner et al., 1999, p. 260)

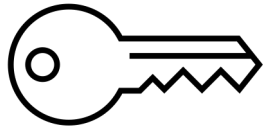
Why is it problematic ?

Mixing individual and collective social capitals within an umbrella concept is problematic at least for two reasons:

- From a theoretical perspective: by losing the distinctions between individual and collective social capitals, the concepts become blurry and lose their theoretical richness (Son, 2020)
- From a methodological perspective: it is problematic to measure one construct (e.g., individual social capital) with measurement methods related to another construct (e.g., collective social capital).

Take away messages

Considering the growing attention to the concept of “social capital” in studying teacher’s professional development...



- Recognizing the existence of two conceptualizations of social capital
→ Leave the umbrella approach of social capital
- Teacher research is rooted the individual social capital perspective
→ « Relationships matter » is NOT the idea behind the collective social capital perspective
- When using a rationale that builds on individual social capital it is important to stay consistent and not mixing individual and collective social capital when it is time to operationalize the concept
→ Stay consistent from the theory to the methodology
- Call for research examining relationships between collective and individual social capital as 2 separate concepts

Thank you !

If you want to know more:

Coppe, T., Thomas, L., Pantić, N., Froehlich, D. E., Sarazin, M., & Raemdonck, I. (2022).
The use of social capital in teacher research: a necessary
clarification. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2703.

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