Methodological Issues around the Measurement of Social Capital

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Methodological issues around the Measurement of Social Capital: contents

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Introduction: five basic questions

- What is social capital as capital?
- Who are the actors or subjects around social capital and what are their respective roles in making, carrying and using social capital?
- What are the relevant dimensions and components of social capital?
- What are the sources and effects of social capital?
- What are the relevant sources of data on social capital and how their relevance could be evaluated?
Social capital as capital / inflow, stock and outflow

- Sources of social capital - >
  - Accumulating social capital
    (regeneration, (man-made and natural) of social capital)

- INFLOW - > STOCK - > OUTFLOW
  - (depreciation of social capital)
  - Investing social capital into action
  - Effects of social capital on well-being and its returns on the marketplace
Social capital as individual and collective phenomena

Are individual and collective social capital the same thing?

If yes: then collective social capital could be derived from data on individual social capital.

If no: then collective social capital should be measured by some other approaches than individual social capital.

=> Consequences for the solution of the problem of aggregation (assessment of overall social capital)
Social groups, communities and regions as sites, carriers and users of social capital

- The various meanings of the word "community" (according to the report on Measurement of Social Capital, by Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004)):
  - a global community
  - a national community
  - communities sharing loyalty to a state
  - communities of identity
  - communities defined by location
  - communities of interest
  - intimate communities of family and friends
Quantifying social capital: basis and practical approaches

- Basic elements of the concept of social capital

- Social capital and administrative and economic data as proxies for social capital

- The British proposal for a tool for measuring social capital, to be applied in questionnaire surveys

- Overall assessment of social capital
Data sources for measuring social capital, its origins and effects: a summary

- Ordinary statistics as sources for measuring social capital
- Questionnaire surveys as sources for measuring social capital
- Mixture of various sources as a standard procedure
- Data quality as an issue
Measuring social capital: a few practical guidelines

- Make sure that you know what you mean with the concept of social capital (and what you do not mean)
- Make it clear for yourself what kind of units you want to describe as owners, carriers and users of social capital
- Check which dimensions of social capital are conceptually linked with the definition of social capital you have adopted
- Think very carefully what you want to measure and for what kind of purpose
- Finally remember that in most cases, statistical measurement of social capital is an art of using many sources
Measuring social capital: a real-life test coming also on Finland

- Statistics Finland has decided to produce a statistical description of social capital in Finland
- The report will be published by mid-2006 in Finnish and in English
- Project leader: Anna Pärnänen
- Principal investigator: Laura Iisakka

- This provides us a challenge to live as we have taught now.