According to James Coleman (1988, 1990) social capital is highest in relations characterized by
- the easiest possible spatial availability
- the highest frequency of contacts
- a great multiplexity of things done with the same person
- a tight density within the network linking each member to each other

Hence social capital relies essentially on "strong ties" connecting people who tend to be similar to each other.

According to Marc Granovetter (1973) social efficiency of a network rises if relations
- are focussed on merely distinct purposes (weak ties)
- addressing a maximum of different people
- who tend to be dissimilar to each other
- who only by chance are connected to each other.

Social capital based on "weak ties" grants access to a larger range of society with less social control and social fragmentation than strong ties.

INDEX of SOCIAL CAPITAL (COLEMAN)

1. **AVAILABILITY**
   Nominee resides in the same household, same house or in the close neighborhood.

2. **FREQUENCY OF CONTACT**
   Nominee is contacted at least once a week.

3. **INTENSITY**
   Nominee shows up in more than two of the first five name generators.

4. **COMPLEXITY**
   Nominee shows up at least once in an *expressive* name generator (attachment, shared leisure time) as well as in an *instrumental* name generator (discussion on personal matters, given and/or received financial aid)

5. **DENSITY**
   Nominee is perceived as member of respondent´s family and/or is sharing his/her household.

COLEMAN-CAPITAL (STRONG TIES)

is equal to

the sum of each nominee´s scores meeting the 5 criteria over all nominees of a respondent

INDEX of QUALITATIVE VARIATION

This index is a building block for a Granovetter-index of social capital, based on a network´s heterogeneity. Heterogeneity is measured by the

Index of qualitative variation (IQV)

Technically the IQV gauges the extent to which a potential amount of heterogeneity (given by the number of values of a categorical variable) is realized by a population. The IQV is normalized to the range between 0 and 1.

Criterion of qualitative variation within the ego-centered netwoks sampled by the German Family Surveys is the *relationship* between respondents and their nominees:

1.   Partner (spouse or mate)
2.   Consanguine kin
3.   In-law kin
4.   Friend
5.   Colleague (work place or voluntary association)
6.   Neighbor
7.   Other Person

QUALITATIVE VARIATION OF NETWORK MEMBERS

is equal to

the IQV based on 7 classes of relationship between a respondent and all of his/her nominees

Index of Social Capital (Granovetter)

This index is simply the IQV weighted with the size of respondent´s network.

A small but heterogeneous network may attain the same social range as a large network consisting of widely homogeneous people. In general, however, high qualitative variation is prevented by a very small network and facilitated by a large one, as it needs a minimum of seven network members to outwear the full range of heterogeneity measured by the IQV here. Hence

GRANOVETTER-CAPITAL (WEAK TIES)

is equal to

IQV * NETWORK SIZE

One may argue distance of network members is more important than their dispersion. In order to control for that percentage of nonkin within a network is introduced as well.

Conclusion

Social capital of families is senstive to societal impacts but in different ways. To a large extent strong ties as conceptualized by Coleman (1990) remain unaffected. The no-effect hypothesis holds for strong ties without constraint.

On the other hand transformation stress, as it haunted East Germany, has diminished weak ties as conceptualized by Granovetter (1973), at least temporarily. Transformation hypothesis seems to hold for weak ties, but fails to explain their resilience.

We have to acknowledge that the no-effect hypothesis seems to work in the long run, thus highlighting a high level of resilience that allows families to maintain or reconstruct their social capital in the face of economic crisis and social stress

Thanks for your patience