Theoretical Perspectives

5. Social integration

http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfos0060/SociologicalTheory.shtml
Methodological holism

- Durkheim (1895/1901): treat social facts as things
  - ‘manners of acting or thinking ... capable of exercising a coercive influence on the consciousness of individuals’
  - ‘not naturally penetrable by the understanding’
  - contrast Weber!
Statistics (1820s-) as new way of seeing

- rate of crime stable

André-Michel Guerry,
*Essai sur la statistique morale de la France* (1833)
Durkheim’s *Suicide* (1897)

Suicide is a social fact

- *any* act where the individual willingly dies, including self-sacrifice
- understanding intentions is irrelevant; actors are unaware of the force of society

‘At any given moment the moral constitution of society establishes the contingent of voluntary deaths. There is, therefore, for each people a collective force of a definite amount of energy, impelling men to self-destruction. The victim’s acts[,] which at first seem to express only his personal temperament[,] are really the supplement and prolongation of a social condition which they express externally.’

—instead use statistics
Social integration

Integration

1. the extent to which people *interact/associate* with each other—social density
2. the extent to which people *identify* with something beyond their individual selves

Regulation

• the extent to which our (boundless) natural appetites are curbed
  (Separable?)

Modernity = reduced integration/regulation

• *egoistic* and *anomic* suicide
• *altruistic* suicide characteristic of premodern societies (vestigial in army)
Style of explanation: egoistic suicide

Suicide rate:
• Jewish < Catholic < Protestant
  • Protestantism allows ‘free inquiry’; it emphasizes ‘religious individualism’ (not explicit belief regarding suicide)
    [euthanasia society!]
• married < unmarried
• falls during wars and political turmoil

Suicides in England & Wales (Salib 2003)
Problems

Statistics aggregate interpretations (Atkinson 1978)

- the death of Durkheim’s friend as ‘a miserable and tragic accident’
- suicide rates rose in the 19th century, when secular authorities took over recording
- **BUT** cross-national patterns across Europe have remained stable for over a century; persist after emigration

How to avoid mystical holism?

- where is “society”—nation, religion, family, institution?
- **contextual effect**: individual i’s outcome depends on average characteristics of all other individuals in the unit, even accounting for i’s characteristic (Blau 1960)
  - e.g. risk of suicide lower where religious % is higher, regardless of your own religion (Tubergen et al. 2005)
Emergent properties

• Macro structures can emerge from the interaction of individuals at micro level

• Conway’s life: cellular automata (cell = 1 or 0) with 4 simple rules where \( \text{cell}_{t+1} = f(\text{cell}_t; \text{sum of adjacent cells}_t) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cell ( t )</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{sum of adjacent} )</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{cell}_{t+1} )</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• flying “glider” is emergent property

• macro property
  • shape created—but not predicted!—by cellular rules
  • does the shape “determine” individual cells (à la Durkheim)?

=> Problems lecture 1
Rediscovering integration

Social capital: ‘networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit’ (Putnam 2000)

Collective efficacy: ‘social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control’ (Sampson 2012)

1. ‘People in this neighborhood can be trusted’ Agree/disagree
2. ‘How likely could your neighbors be counted on to do something if ... happened?’

Variation across Chicago neighbourhoods helps explain—controlling for poverty—

• health, e.g. birth weight
• altruism—lost letter experiment
• crime
But less so for London (Sutherland, Brunton-Smith, & Jackson 2013) consequences of housing policies and social inequality. Namely, there is a positive association of violence with disadvantage in both cities but there are many more disadvantaged neighborhoods in Chicago, where the association with violence begins to tail off. There are more affluent neighborhoods in Chicago as well – note the areas to the left of graph. Overall Figure 5.4 appears to reflect an “equality compression” of ecological distributions in Stockholm, characterized by restricted variation in disadvantage and lower violence. Indeed, Chicago “sits atop” Stockholm at virtually every level of disadvantage, and its extended range of concentrated disadvantage is pronounced. As such the city effects appear strong even though the association of violence with disadvantage is similarly positive. In further analysis this pattern held for each constituent measure of disadvantage.

We also found that structural disadvantage and residential stability significantly predict variations in collective efficacy in both cities at the bivariate level (data not shown). The relationships were consistently stronger in Stockholm than Chicago, but the bottom line is that disadvantage is associated with lower levels of collective efficacy, and residential stability is associated with higher levels of collective efficacy.

Figure 5.5 Similar collective efficacy–violence link by city

(Sampson & Wikstrom 2008)
How to explain integration

Collective efficacy reduced by (Sampson 2012)

• poverty
• crime—circularity!
• residential instability
• ethnic heterogeneity (Putnam 2007)

Suggestion that cross-sectional variation persists over time—decades (Sampson 2012), centuries (Putnam 1993)
Is integration the inverse of inequality? (Wilkinson 1996)
Summary

• Integration (or social capital or collective efficacy) focuses on individuals’ social interactions and emotional attachment to something larger

• Integration used to explain
  • individual outcomes: suicide, crime, health, altruism, voting—even after accounting individual characteristics
  • aggregate outcomes: political performance, even economic growth

• Persistent concern that contemporary societies are “disintegrating”
Questions

- Is social integration possible without shared values?
- Can “social capital” explain anything?
- What is “social cohesion” and how can it be measured?
- ‘The success of Oxbridge is due primarily to the social integration provided by the college system.’ Discuss.
Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: Study in Sociology* (1897)
Alex Sutherland, Ian Brunton-Smith, & Jonathan Jackson, ‘Collective Efficacy: Deprivation and Violence in London’, *British Journal of Criminology* 53 (2013)