

COLOMBIA'S SOCIAL CAPITAL
THE NATIONAL MEASUREMENT WITH THE BARCAS
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Abstract

To follow up on the constitutional change that declared Colombia a participatory democracy, the National Planning Office decided to measure Colombia's Social Capital. For this purpose a questionnaire that would use available internationally comparable questions, mainly those in the World Value Survey was designed. Additionally, the instrument had to detect social capital in Gemeinschaft communal formations as well as in Gesellschaft modern social formations. The initial form of the Barometer of Social Capital (Barcas) designed to capture the conceptual space available in the literature -mainly Putnam, Coleman and Banfield- allowed to construct ten dimensions and sixty-nine variables. These were studied in a Pretest designed to externally validate the instrument, as well as to assure that several "reservoirs" of social capital were measured. These containers ranged from the interpersonal relationships and family, up to Civil Society, Politics and the State in different territorial aggregates from the barrio to the Nation. The items, variables and dimensions of Barcas were reorganized through regressions of items in variables and those in dimensions, and factor analysis of groups of dimensions and variables to establish were the different elements best belonged.

The national sample (3.000 people) was applied and the data processed in three succeeding stages used to study by factor analysis those that best described the conceptual and empirical space. In the last run two factor were isolated: **Social Capital** (Ksocial) and **Faith in Unvalidated Sources of Information** (Fusi) which explained 38% and 12% of variance each. Once these had been identified, it was possible to calculate individual scores for each of these factors: the dependent variables that were to be studied. Regression on these scores by dimensions were performed and those that added more than 1% of variance to the explanations are presented with their standardized beta coefficients.

| Dimension | Beta Ksocial | Beta Fusi |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Social Control | .214074 | |
| Hierarchy | .191621 | |
| Civic Republicanism | .189207 | .210993 |
| Media | .184649 | .285002 |
| Institutional Trust | .184272 | .223201 |
| Political Participation | .178592 | -. 289304 |
| Civic Participation | .144527 | -. 309420 |
| Mutuality and Reciprocity | .143578 | -. 252512 |
| Horizontal Relationships | .128464 | -. 234249 |
| Information and Transparency | | .556517 |

This procedure was also performed with variables with the following result:

| Dimension | Variable | Factor Ksocial Beta | Factor Fusi Beta |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Social Control | Trust in Institutions that control the State | .438106 | |
| Political Participation | Political Skill | .323342 | -. 219688 |
| Civic Republicanism | Political Education | .206168 | .154606 |
| Horizontal Relationships | Horizontal Solidarity | .181479 | -. 220767 |
| Civic Participation | Membership in Non religious Voluntary Organizations | .150944 | -. 209670 |
| Civic Republicanism | Citizens Politicization | .145814 | |
| Solidarity and Mutuality | Atomization | -. 144214 | .148021 |

| | | | |
|---|--|---------|-----------|
| Media | Media Activities | .129574 | |
| Civic Republicanism | Particularism | | -. 110717 |
| Information and Transparency | Colombians do not know where the country is going because no one tell us | | -. 139218 |
| Institutional Trust | Trust in Government | | .139171 |
| Information and Transp. | Reason not to participate more: I do not get the necessary information | | -. 141450 |
| Information and Transp. | Do you know how the resources of your locality are going to be invested? | | .148623 |
| Information and Transp. | The State makes efforts to keep citizens informed | | 166251 |
| Information and Transp. | Citizens inform themselves appropriately to participate effectively | | .168429 |
| Information and Transp. | People have who explains them public problems | | 170381 |
| Political Participation | Voting Total | | -. 182229 |
| Media and Institutional Trust | Trust in Media | | .229779 |
| Information and Transp. and Civic Republicanism (Political Education) | Communications media explain in depth problems | | .283907 |

As for reservoirs, the same procedure was followed with the aggregated and disaggregated indexes.

| Aggregated Reservoirs | Ksocial | Fusi |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Label | Beta | |
| Total Civic Society | .468503 | -. 296597 |
| Total Politics | .287411 | -. 296097 |
| Total Media | .281561 | .440036 |
| Total State | .183801 | .399636 |
| Total Interpersonal Relationships | .141642 | -. 189755 |

| Desaggregated Reservoirs | Ksocial | Fusi |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| | Beta | Beta |
| TOTAL MEDIA | .293866 | .424302 |
| Politics –Territorial - National | .229249 | -. 251764 |
| State –Territorial - Societal | .203253 | .290041 |
| Civil Society – Participation in Interest Representation Organizations | .199489 | |
| Civil Society – Guild (Gremios) Sub index | .170712 | |
| TOTAL EDUCATIONAL | .165437 | |
| Politics – Political Party Sub index | .154453 | |
| Civil Society – Territorial – Neighborhood | .151379 | -. 179160 |
| TOTAL INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS | .140303 | -. 148546 |
| State- Territorial – Departmental | | .140090 |
| TOTAL WORK | | -. 138195 |
| Politics – Territorial – Societal | | -. 130224 |
| Civil Society – Territorial – Societal | | -. 117292 |

The results, dimension by dimension, and significant variable by significant variable, as well as those international comparisons available from the 1995-1998 World Value Survey data wave are

discussed in detail for a country whose interpersonal distrust and corruption indexes are among the worlds highest. Among them, ordered by dimensions, are the following.

Social Control of Society over the State and Government has the strongest impact on social capital. However, some of these institutions, like Congress and political parties, are the least trusted institutions by Colombians. Also, the participatory mechanisms to exert that control are almost unknown to the population at large, especially those mechanisms that are collective.

Vertical Articulation or Hierarchy has a strong effect on Ksocial as a dimension. Participation in organizations of interest articulation had the strongest effect on the dimension and as container of social capital. When the different institutions that structure this articulation were studied, both in membership and trust, it was found that the Church had both the highest trust and membership but these did not contribute to Social Capital. Parties had the lowest trust and some membership. Professional associations or Gremios, although they were a significant reservoir of Ksocial, had very low membership. Labor Unions also have such low membership (the lowest in the international comparison for both organizations). These results show that the social democratic or neocorporatist model of social contract lacks the social roots to commit society to such agreements. The problem of democratic governability in a country in the midst of territorial decentralization is discussed in the perspective of weak results of the variables in the dimension.

Political Participation is positively related to Ksocial and negatively with Fusi. Here Political Skill, a variable with the complete cycle of negotiation from identifying the problem to rewarding positive leadership, and highly related to education, was the variable that better explained these effects. The independence of Participatory and Representative democracy is established as well as their low level of development by ignorance of participatory mechanisms and weak legislative linkage.

In the study of the three dimensions with positive effect on the two factors -Media, Civic Republicanism and Institutional Trust - it was possible to discern the nature of the second factor. In **Institutional Trust**, trust in the different territorial governments was related to Fusi, but the Departmental Government explains this relation. The international comparison shows that Colombians have a very low trust in national government and civil service. Trust in Ethnic, Women's and Ecological groups is very high, even by international comparisons available for the last two. In **Media**, it was found that the trust and activity elements are independent. Very few people in the population at large enact these activities (writing to an editor, calling a live broadcast, reading newspapers), positively related to Ksocial.

The construction of the **Civic Republicanism** dimension, a polarity between Particularism and Clientelism in one hand, and in the other, the educated and politicized citizen responsible for the public good, was in itself an important finding because empirically confirmed a theoretical supposition by Terry Clark. The study of items of Political Education allowed to discriminate three questions that implied faith in some institution, that mixed with low levels of participation and education confirmed the nature of Fusi, as not validated trust or unrestricted trust in some institution.

The following dimensions all had a pattern of positive impact in Ksocial and negative in Fusi. As they reflect active social connection, their particular enactment of specific activities shows how people socially isolated and high in Fusi would change to connect themselves with a reference group in which they can validate information from previously unvalidated sources. This drop in Fusi can be illustrated by the impact of Atomization from the **Mutuality and Solidarity** dimension.

Civic Participation is studied in detail through the membership in non-religious voluntary organizations. 43% of the population does not participate in any of them. Participation in Church or religious organizations, from a population 85% catholic, did not contribute to Ksocial. However, when internationally compared, Colombia is only second to Nigeria in the ratio of active membership in voluntary organization that are churches or religious, over total active membership in

nine available organizations (44.2%), an indication of the weakness of SECULAR civil society. Educational, sports, neighborhood associations and political parties are the most significant voluntary organization, although this last one has the lowest active to total membership ratio of them all.

As for **Horizontal Relationships**, its widely acknowledged impact in Ksocial is confirmed. Horizontal Solidarity (Who helps when you are in trouble), as compared to General and Vertical Solidarity, has a positive effect on Ksocial. An element of it, Help from your friends, diminishes Fusi. Here the problem of internal-external group solidarity, discussed by Banfield for low trust societies is studied through the variable Third Party Enforcement, and a baseline for the future evolution of this problem set.

Finally, the **Information and Transparency** dimension, the main element of Fusi, allowed to establish the low level of reliable information that people perceive and how statements about when information is satisfactory is given by people who do not have the standards of comparisons to validate them. The specific items that contribute to Fusi, once the variables are desaggregated are the following:

| ITEM | Beta |
|--|-----------|
| The communications media do explain in depth problems (Infotrans) | .318772 |
| People have who explains to them public problems (Infotrans) | .238597 |
| The State makes efforts to keep citizens informed (Infotrans) | .214550 |
| Did you vote in the past elections for Chamber of Representatives? (Voting) | -. 121655 |
| Colombians do not know where the country is headed because no one tell us (Infotrans) | -. 210962 |
| Citizens inform themselves appropriately to be able to participate effectively (Infotrans) | .200368 |
| Educational Voluntary Organization | -. 154373 |
| Trust in TV (Institutional Trust, Social Control and Media) | .180028 |
| You can expect help from your friends (Horizontal Solidarity) | -. 172392 |
| Reason not to participate more: I do not get the necessary information (Infotrans) | -. 138667 |
| Political Party Voluntary Organization (Civic Participation and Hierarchy) | -. 116789 |
| Legislative Linkage: Zero (Atomization) | .144532 |
| Trust in Departmental Government (Institutional Trust) | .121333 |

The two factors are studied in regards to demographic and control variables, and other theoretically important. Education is positively related to Ksocial and negatively with Fusi. It was found that Achievement motivation, generally studied in relation to economic development, is correlated with Social Control at the **individual level**, a finding that indicates how the thought and action patterns of nAchievement translates into the public sphere and generates Ksocial.

The conclusions shows how the general background of mistrust and corruption and the weakness of social capital turn people to church and family, containers that do not add to it. The importance and fragility of social control and the lack of knowledge of the participatory mechanisms is discussed as well as Civic Society as the main reservoir of Social capital, even with its weakness and lack of secularization. Here the current impact of interest organizations and Gremios, as well as the barrio level are significant. If the neocorporatist model of social contract is not viable, what is left is the active citizenry described in Civic Republicanism. However, the territorial cleavages of social capital from the barrio to the nation for the main segments -civil society, politics and the state- makes the expression of this citizenship difficult. In this regard, the Department as the worst case is discussed for these segments. In the political, the lack of linkage after elections shows the absence of Accountability. That departmental government level of Fusi shows the lack of valid information to establish such Accountability. The implication of institutional design, political reform and supply of

public information to increase linkage are discussed. So are political parties as potential creators of aggregated reference rationalities. The continuity of Jacobin-Catholic-Hispanic tradition and the possibility of change in the light of recent findings by Inglehart and the difference in values between young and old Spaniards are discussed. So are the cognitive mobilization hypothesis, confirmed once again and the need to link participatory and representative democracies. Pending research, especially on the regional comparisons is identified.