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# **The Bourdieusian conception of social capital:**

## **A methodological reflection and application**

Fabien ELOIRE, Clersé

### **Abstract:**

This paper is on social capital and the meaning that Bourdieu has given to this concept in his *Notes provisoires*, published in 1980. He considered social capital as one of the most important forms of capital, along with economic capital and cultural capital. Even though he did not propose an explicit measure of social capital, so it remained in a conceptual state, he promoted an innovative research programme. Our contribution is to propose a generic method to empirically measure and test hypotheses on social capital, based on Bourdieu's work. We aim at creating an analytical framework that places this concept at the centre of the Bourdieusian theoretical approach. For this purpose, we combine two sociological tools which relate to two different sociological traditions, namely social network analysis and multiple correspondence analyses. Thus, our paper describes the ways to combine field and network analyses, and illustrates this with an empirical study.

**JEL:** A14, D85, L26, Z13

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## **1- Introduction: on the various approaches of social capital**

Social capital is a concept which allows social science disciplines to intersect. Developed in Sociology in the 1980's, it is also used in Economics and Political Sciences. After more than thirty years of growth of the social capital literature, it seems that the notion has lost its original sense, and has become polysemic. Here it is argued that this notion has evolved from a micro-level to a macro-level conception. At the beginning of the eighties, in his *Notes provisoires*, Pierre Bourdieu proposes to consider social capital as a property not only of social groups but also of individuals, which can be grasped through personal relationship networks and through the individual positions within specific social fields<sup>1</sup>; at the end of the eighties, based on the rational choice theory of James Coleman, social capital was an attribute of the peculiar meso-social context within which individuals act; finally, during the nineties, from the research of Robert Putnam, social capital has become a characteristic of the social organisation of a community or a country at the macro-social level.

Bourdieu uses the notion of social capital in articulation with his theory of the field and the forms of capital. He was convinced that the main aspect of social life was social structures, but he also realised that networks ('liaisons') were important. His perspective was sociological and analytical: social capital was another sociological dimension which, along with cultural capital and symbolic capital, can explain social and economic inequalities; he develops a practice theory in which individuals' relationship to the future depends mainly on their level of cultural capital.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, in an earlier article on the French "patronat" (1978), he evokes the importance of the social capital that is both "inherited" from family and accumulated during professional career within the French State bureaucracy. And he invariably insists on the link between social capital and social group membership.

Coleman uses the notion of social capital too, but in another manner. Indeed, his starting point is the theory of rational action, but conceived in a broader sense (Coleman, 1988). For him, the aim is to ‘import the economists’ principle of rational action’ but ‘without discarding social organisation’ in the analysis of social life. Thus, he uses social capital as a label for a huge variety of collective phenomena which cannot be understood by adopting a purely individualistic and rationalistic approach. While Bourdieu uses social capital to understand some individual-level effects (when purely structuralist explanations seem to be insufficient), Coleman uses social capital to understand some collective effects (when purely individualistic explanations seem insufficient). For Coleman, social capital means either reciprocity and trust, or social norms, and deals with resources that circulate among individuals through relations, and it is a way to characterise a community: does the community promote trust between people or does it foster individuals to forgo their self-interest and work for the public good?

Putnam uses Coleman’s conception of social capital as the starting point of his study. Thus, social capital refers to the characteristics of social organisation which facilitate coordination and cooperation for a public good. Putnam refocuses Coleman’s definition of social capital on the question of social norms and goes beyond Coleman when he gives social norms a core role in democracy by assimilating them to public goods. In his “Bowling alone” article (Putnam, 1995) he proposes a multiplicity of criteria, related to civic engagement, to empirically define the level of social capital in a society: the level of political participation or attendance at public meetings; the rate of affiliations at sports clubs, labour unions, professional societies, fraternal groups, veterans' groups, or service clubs. Thus, Putnam advocates an empirical measurement of social capital, but the measurement he suggests has meaning at a collective level.

This comparison between the three main authors who have worked on social capital shows how, from the first definition of the concept in the early eighties till its appropriation by the World Bank in the mid-nineties, there was a shift in the meaning of the concept. It highlights that, gradually, the individual aspect, which was present in Bourdieu's definition, has been forgotten in favour of the collective aspect, also present in Bourdieu's definition. However, we argue that, although the economic and cultural forms of capital have been translated into empirical indicators thanks to multiple correspondence analysis (MCA hereafter) (Benzécri, 1982; Leroux and Rouanet, 2010), social capital remained in a more conceptual state despite an original and innovative research programme, which emerges from the *Notes provisoires* and is the subject of this article.

Section 2 is devoted to a presentation of the place that social capital has within Bourdieu's sociological theory. Then in Section 3 we present the link between the notions of social network and social capital. We delve into more methodological issues in Section 4 in which we propose a five-step method to measure social capital based on Bourdieu's analytical framework. To complete our description of this method we give an example by applying it to a specific empirical case study. Finally, we close with an overview of the alternative theoretical foundations and empirical implications which the Bourdieusian conception of social capital has to offer.

## **2- Social capital in Bourdieu's theory**

The sociology of Bourdieu is at the junction of multiple theoretical influences. Among these, we emphasise the importance of two traditions, Marxism and structuralism. From Marxism, Bourdieu reclaims and broadens the concept of capital. *Capital* assumes accumulation mechanisms and time, because time is necessary to accumulate capital, so that each form of accumulated capital is the product of the history of its accumulation (Bourdieu, 1986). From structuralism, he retains the *relational way of thinking* (Bourdieu, 1980b) and considers that “the real is relational” that is to say “what exists in the social world are relations – not interactions or inter-subjective liaisons between agents – but objective relations which exist independently of individual wills and consciences” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 72). Thus, this powerful paradigm for social sciences, as Bourdieu says, defines social relations by excluding daily interactions between individuals. For Bourdieu the difficulty lies precisely in apprehending this part of ‘the real’. His *Notes provisoires* on social capital can be understood as an attempt to solve this problem.

Indeed, Bourdieu’s text contains a research programme which consists of a definition of social capital that combines both *relational* and *interactionist* paradigms. It also develops two hypotheses that relate to the *interdependence* of social capital with other forms of capital, and to the *multiplier effect* of social capital. With regard to the definition of social capital, Bourdieu employs it to describe the situations in which cultural capital and economic capital are not sufficient to explain what agents or groups are doing when they ‘work’ to establish and maintain connections which are durable, permanent and useful. Thus, it constitutes a theorisation of what common sense means by ‘having relationships’. These connections allow agents and groups to accumulate resources indirectly, as they are accessible through interpersonal ties, and can be mobilised when necessary. This definition focuses on visible, palpable interactions which manifest in meetings or concrete exchanges within the physical

space. It invites us to seriously consider as ‘work’ a whole set of practices generally equivalent to idleness, leisure and sociability: exchanges of visits, letters, presents, marriages, etc. (Bourdieu, 2007). Therefore it reflects on social capital in terms of what it produces in the social world, that is, in terms of all the practices that induce agents in each field to accumulate social resources, to transmit and reproduce them.

Additionally, the *Notes provisoires* suggests two generic hypotheses to be tested empirically. The first hypothesis concerning the *interdependence* between social capital and the other forms of capital (especially economic and cultural) implies that social relationships are never entirely independent of the social structure and the distribution of the different types of capital. More precisely, it means that interactions actually emanate from objective structures, because the ‘choices’ which guide the forms of mutual recognitions between agents presuppose a maximum of ‘objective’ homogeneity. Similar to what is said in everyday language that ‘birds of a feather flock together’, Bourdieu postulates that, in terms of interactions, *homophily* processes tend to prevail. Thus, when MCA reveals social proximities between two agents because they share similar amounts and configurations of cultural and economic capital, they are statistically more likely to interact. This point of view suggests that, in line with the *relational* paradigm, the social structures occupy the first position for social analysis, and then come interactions.

Bourdieu refers to a second hypothesis, namely the *multiplier effect* of social capital. This means that if two agents have almost the same amount of cultural or economic capital, then the one that has more social capital will be able to use his cultural or economic capital more effectively. The concepts of cultural and economic capital are specifically fitted to the application of the relational paradigm, in which the objective properties of agents directly

contribute to the structuring of the social space (Bourdieu, 1979) and objective social relations. Moreover, MCA can be used to measure these two forms of capital and to reveal their structure.

But concerning social capital, Bourdieu's idea is that, between two close individuals within the social space, differences in profitability could be explained by the ability of some of them to indirectly mobilise the capital held by others in their personal network and/or their social group. Thus, social capital is considered as a 'meta-capital', without specific content (Godechot and Mariot, 2004), acting in a rather indirect way, by multiplying the effects of other forms of capital in order to improve their profitability. Thereby, MCA is found to be an efficient method to describe a field and make tangible the distribution of the cultural and economic forms of capital among people. But the tool which is more likely to provide an empirical measurement of social capital is social network analysis (SNA hereafter). The problem is that this methodology, particularly well adapted to reporting regularities and interaction processes, is used by another sociological paradigm, of which Bourdieu is critical. Indeed, as we see in the next part, he considered that, through SNA, "the analysis of objective structures was sacrificed in favour of the analysis of specific links (between agents or institutions) and flows (information, resources, services, etc.) in which they occur" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 89). In other words, SNA is not able to take account of the collective aspect of social capital which, as discussed above, is intrinsically linked to the fact that individuals belong to social groups (family, school, etc.).

### **3- Social capital and social network**



SNA has experienced a huge development in the social sciences since 1970 in both methodological and theoretical terms. Coleman's interest in social networks is first and foremost theoretical and metaphorical. For him, social capital relates to a specific relational structure namely the "closure of social networks" (Coleman, 1988: 105). These types of social organisational structures are considered as conditions for the emergence of both 'effective norms' and 'trustworthiness' that allow for reciprocity mechanisms. Though Coleman does not use SNA, one of his students, Ronald Burt, follows this line of research about the link between social capital and social networks. He, thus, contributes to the debate on whether it is better to have a brokerage position or to be in closed groups. While Coleman argues that social capital is an attribute of the social structure which cannot be monopolised by any individual, Burt purports that social capital relates to the way an individual's personal network is structured to achieve profitability. Coleman considers that profitability comes from network closure, whereas Burt strives to demonstrate that the brokerage position, measured by the existence of 'structural holes' inside the personal network, is the most profitable structure.

Bourdieu does not address this debate in his *Notes provisoires*, not only because it emerged after his text was published, but also because it relates to the *interactionist* paradigm, of which he was critical. He argues that one of the disadvantages of SNA is that it centres on interactions, which removes the effects of structure and objective power relations: it ignores the structural constraints exerted by the field and tends to see only 'influence effects', even though power relations, struggles, and domination are at play (Bourdieu, 2000). This is why he reproached some eminent members of the American new economic sociology, such as Harrison White or Mark Granovetter, who are both promoters and users of SNA (Convert et al., 2014). Granovetter claimed that Bourdieu's criticism was based on a "misunderstanding" (Granovetter, 2000: 36). He assured that his position was not that of 'methodological

interactionism' and that his perspective was extremely close, in its design and in his mind, to that expressed by Bourdieu. The reasons for this misunderstanding, he explained, was his 'fascination' of social networks due to their ability to articulate the micro and macro levels.

Thus, the link established by Bourdieu between SNA and rational choice theory should be mitigated, first because SNA principally constitutes a methodology, and second because SNA tools are nowadays able to combine structural analyses (like field analysis) and interaction analyses (like network analysis). Nan Lin's work on social capital is typical of this attempt to conciliate a network approach with the sociological literature on social stratification (Lin, 1995). His conception of social capital takes into account the positions of individuals within hierarchical structures. And he shows how this starting position influences the opportunities and constraints individuals face in their search to improve their socio-economic status. Lin insists that an empirical calculation of social capital is possible only by examining the relationships between individuals and the resources available to them through these relationships. Although Lin fits in the rational choice theory, his conception of social capital seems quite close to Bourdieu's conception. However, as he bases his theory on instrumental action, Lin does not raise an important aspect of social capital present in Bourdieu's *Notes provisoires*, that is, the group within which social capital reproduces itself.

Such a perspective, based on a collective conception of social capital, can be found in Emmanuel Lazega's neo-structural approach (Lazega, 2006; Lazega and Mounier, 2002) which places emphasis on the analysis of social processes that trigger collective action. These social processes, including bounded solidarity, social control and status regulation, constitute what he calls the 'collective social capital'. Lazega distinguishes between relational capital (for individuals) and social capital (for groups). The latter is not only a by-product of

interactions between individuals who exploit their relations, but also the result of the politicised activities (in a broader sense) of the members of the group. To uncover such processes we use SNA and its multiple tools: matrices, graphs, name generator, centrality measures, blockmodels, dyadic and triadic analyses (Wasserman and Faust, 1994; Freeman, 2004; Lazega, 2007). All these tools, which have been developed and applied from the mid-seventies till today, offer many possibilities when sociologists have suitable data.

Thus, it becomes clear that social capital whether at an individual level or at a collective level, is inseparable from approaches associated with SNA and MCA. These two forms of analysis come from different sociological traditions in terms of theory, but the theoretical and empirical work which is necessary to build bridges between them remains to be done. So far only a few researchers have tried to articulate these two methods. In this regard, Wouter de Nooy (2003) raises the question of the ways in which SNA can be used to study social fields. His article points out the fact that SNA and MCA are not only compatible but also complementary. First, SNA is able to “produce the same type of spatial maps as correspondence analysis, using the same data and similar techniques”. Second, SNA can be used “to gauge the amount of social and symbolic capital” and “to measure the distribution of these forms of capital” by taking into account the interpersonal ties which play an important role in these two kinds of capital (de Nooy, 2003: 325). For him, the link is evident between social networks and social capital, and they have to be combined with MCA.

Once again in this line, François Denord and his colleagues (Denord et al., 2011) implement a framework in which MCA is associated to social network concepts and tools, such as centrality measures, degree of closure, volume of relations, network cohesive core. The authors investigate the field of power in Norway from a database on elites called the

Norwegian Power and Democracy Survey. In this study, social capital is the main subject. In accordance with Bourdieu's view, they consider that "the social capital of an individual depends not only on his networks (...) [but] also refers to the membership of groups united (...) by the possession of objective properties" (Denord et al., 2011: 104). Moreover, they argue that social capital "also manifests itself in different states: as inherited, embodied, objectified or institutionalised social capital" (Denord et al., 2011: 91), in which the distinction between individual social capital and collective social capital can be found once again. The paper describes precisely the three-step methodology: first, the construction of the space of the elite thanks to MCA; second, the construction of social capital indicators on the basis of formal contacts that take place between individuals; third, the projection (as supplementary variables) of these social capital indicators and clusters within the space of elites. The main conclusion of this research is that social capital is "not only a vector of coordination" between elite members, but also "an asset that may possibly distinguish an elite within the elite", that is "the core of the core" (or "the inner circle", according to Michael Useem in the case of the capitalist class).

Thus, conceiving social capital in a Bourdieusian perspective presupposes the use of these two sociological tools. Their combination seems less than obvious; however, attempts to achieve it not only exist but are also convincing. In the next part, we suggest a way to produce data for social capital measurement by describing a methodology based on interpersonal ties, in conjunction with the structural effects of the field in which agents are involved.

#### **4- Designing data for social capital measurement**

In this part, we describe, step by step, a technique that we can potentially use to run Bourdieu's analytical model and to test the hypotheses he adopts about social capital. We develop this technique in five steps that we think lead to an assessment of social capital through the use of both MCA and SNA.

*First step: drafting a survey questionnaire including two kinds of data*

'Measuring' a phenomenon, such as social capital, necessarily implies the use of quantitative methods. In particular, we argue that conducting a survey questionnaire with face-to-face interviews is the best way to proceed, because then the researcher can properly fit the data he collects to the requirements of his research topic. For the assessment of social capital, the questionnaire should include two kinds of data: first, sociological data, which allow to position the agents within the social space structure and within their social group of membership; second, sociometric data, which allow to reconstitute the structure of the interpersonal relationships of an agent, and between agents within a social group or a social field.

With regard to sociological data, there are a lot of empirical studies that reconstitute social fields and have been conducted either by Bourdieu himself or by other researchers. Many of these studies have been published by the French academic journal *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, and most of them offer a detailed description of the empirical and statistical work that has been done. Here one can find a great deal of information on the attributes, variables and modalities that have been used to build the spatial map of the field (see, for instance, Lebaron, 1997; Bourdieu, 1999; Duval, 2000). We believe that researchers engaging in the analysis of any new sociological field should consult these studies and adopt a

comparative perspective in order to structure the first part of the questionnaire relating to sociological data. In fact, the first part of the questionnaire must include all the variables needed to measure cultural capital, economic capital, or other forms of ‘active’ capital in the field, except social capital. The second part of the questionnaire should be dedicated to the other kind of data, namely sociometric data that is related to the study of interpersonal ties.

*Second step: choosing the sociometric questions*

The choice of the content of the sociometric question or questions that will be directed to interviewees is crucial. Indeed, the network structure, and therefore the measurement of social capital, will directly depend on the criteria used to characterise the relationships between agents involved in the field under study. From the 1930s (i.e. the advent of sociometry with its founder Jacob Levy Moreno), social network sociologists have built an extensive experience in sociometric questions. These questions, which are usually called *name generators*, ask respondents to choose the persons they associate with from a list which ideally contains all those individuals belonging to the field under study<sup>2</sup>. Examples of name generators can be found in the book by Emmanuel Lazega, *The Collegial Phenomenon* (2001). He studies the informal social resources that circulate between lawyers in a corporate law partnership, and he stresses the existence of social processes triggered by interpersonal relations.

The social resources that Lazega covers in his survey questionnaire are advice, co-worker relations and friendship between lawyers. This approach that focuses on the *content* of interpersonal ties, can be supplemented, or replaced, by another approach that focuses on the *strength* of these ties. Since Granovetter’s (1973) infamous article, social network sociologists

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<sup>2</sup> This list should be established before the interviews begin.

distinguish between strong ties and weak ties. All these elements have to be taken into account when choosing the set of sociometric questions. Knowledge of qualitative and ethnographic aspects of the field under study can help researchers in this task. In his *Notes provisoires*, Bourdieu describes the interpersonal ties which are the basis of social capital. He refers to ‘permanent and useful *liaisons*’, which rather relate to strong ties, for instance, friendship ties or family bonds<sup>3</sup>.

### *Third step: measurement of cultural and economic capital*

Since it constitutes a form of capital that is accessible through interpersonal ties, social capital can be considered as a ‘meta-capital’ without a specific content. In this context, social capital acts in a rather indirect way, by multiplying the effects of other forms of capital and improving their profitability (Godechot and Mariot, 2004). Thus, the measurement of social capital implies also the measurement of some other forms of capital upon which it is acting. As Bourdieu has shown in his book *La Distinction* (1979), cultural capital and economic capital are two of the main forms of active capital in the social space.

We therefore propose to base our social capital measurement on these two forms of capital<sup>4</sup>. Inside Bourdieu’s social space, the capital held by each individual has two dimensions: the volume of global capital (on vertical axis) and the structure of capital (on horizontal axis). The volume of global capital relates to the amount of cultural capital plus the amount of economic capital. The structure of capital is equal to the ratio of the amount of cultural capital

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<sup>3</sup> For Bourdieu as for other researchers after him, social capital is considered as an attribute of ‘the dominants’, of the upper class, of the field of power. For instance, Cousin and Chauvin (2012) focus on the existence, within the Milanese upper society, of different conceptions of social capital, which imply different ways to acquire it (ties stemming from family inheritance, sociability of institutions of higher Education, cooptation within clubs, etc.) and, correlatively, a hierarchy of these forms of acquirement.

<sup>4</sup> Though we believe our methodology can be adapted to other forms of capital.

to the amount of economic capital<sup>5</sup>. As we discuss later, these two dimensions (volume and structure) can also characterise social capital under the proposed framework for its calculation.

In the survey questionnaire, some items relate to cultural capital and others to economic capital. Thus, we run two MCAs: the first one to create a social map where the respondents are distributed depending on their volume of cultural capital; the second one to create a social map where they are distributed depending on their volume of economic capital. In our mind, these geometrical data analyses, and the forms of capital they allow to draw, have no substantial and tangible existence, but these statistical constructions can help the researcher produce approximate measures of these concepts. In this logic, we propose to interpret the score obtained by each individual on axis 1<sup>6</sup> of these two MCAs as a quantitative indicator of the amount of his cultural capital and economic capital, respectively. These measures will be used in the next step, to ‘calculate’ social capital.

#### *Fourth step: calculating of social capital through networks*

In the survey questionnaire, the sociometric questions are used to construct a network map<sup>7</sup> which represents the interpersonal ties between agents within the field<sup>8</sup>. Then it is possible to apply SNA tools. A basic tool is the degree centrality measures<sup>9</sup> (Wasserman and Faust,

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<sup>5</sup> To illustrate, some individuals possess more cultural capital than economic capital (teachers), and conversely (entrepreneurs).

<sup>6</sup> Axis 1 is chosen because, in a MCA, the first axis is always the dimension which resumes the most important share of the information within the data. This argument is reinforced by our choice to make two independent MCA with, on the one side, variables relating to cultural capital, and, on the other side, variables relating to economic capital. Obviously, other choices can be tested depending on the analysis model considered.

<sup>7</sup> Pajek (<http://vlado.fmf.uni-lj.si/pub/networks/pajek/>) is one of the software programmes used to conduct SNA which allows us to transform an adjacency matrix into a graph (i.e., a map with vertices and arcs).

<sup>8</sup> The content of the interpersonal ties depends on the choice of the name generator in step 2.

<sup>9</sup> The three degree centrality measures are: degree, indegree and outdegree. For a more detailed and technical treatment we refer the reader to Wasserman and Faust (1994). To give a simple example based on a country’s



1994). The aim of the *indegree* measure is to sum up the number of directed ties that each individual receives from the other individuals in the network: the higher the indegree of an individual, the more people nominate him as a close tie, so he is more ‘central’. For many network sociologists, the indegree measure, i.e. the number of ‘contacts’ an individual has within a set of individuals, represents the volume dimension of social capital. But, in Bourdieu’s perspective, indegree does not suffice. It is also necessary to take into account the position of the contacts within the field structure: it is not only the number of contacts but also the status of these contacts which is important for social capital. Thus, Bourdieu joins Lin, toward the idea that social capital and social status are intrinsically linked: at the individual level, the higher the status of his contacts within the social structure, the better the social resources he can access and exploit; at the group level (a family, a club, etc.), the higher the status of the members of a group within the social structure, the higher the position of this group in the groups hierarchy, and the better the social resources its members can access and exploit<sup>10</sup>.

#### *Fifth step: testing the two hypotheses*

As mentioned previously, in his *Notes provisoires*, Bourdieu not only proposes a definition of social capital; he also suggests two generic hypotheses, namely the *interdependence* and *multiplier effect* hypotheses. To test the interdependence hypothesis we conduct correlation analyses between quantitative measures of cultural, economic and social capital (see the third and fourth steps). To test the multiplier effect hypothesis we first create sub-groups of

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trade networks: “A country with high outdegree is a heavy exporter, and a country with high indegree is a heavy importer” (p. 127).

<sup>10</sup> For instance Bourdieu and Saint-Martin (1978, p.27) give the example of the Debré French family. Because its members were embedded in a multiplicity of fields, at prestigious positions, this group accumulates diverse forms of capital: academic, political, cultural, economic, etc. The authors remark that membership in such a family ensures access to symbolic profits.

individuals with approximately equivalent amounts of cultural and economic capital; then we use individual performance indicators (i.e., measures of economic or symbolic profit) in order to test the effect of social capital on economic and symbolic performance in each sub-group.

At this stage, all the elements are gathered to theoretically design and empirically calculate social capital. Indeed, we have information both at the individual level (the amount of economic, cultural and social capital) and at the group level (the structure of the field, which constitutes the relevant social subspace within which social capital can be profitable). First, each individual involved in a social field can be characterised by his own capital (mainly cultural and economic) and by his own social capital via the capital (mainly cultural and economic) of his contacts. Second, each individual can be defined by his capital in terms of *volume* and *structure*. Similarly, the social capital of each individual can be defined by the aggregated capital of his contacts in terms of *volume* and *structure*. In this way, we have an analytical framework that takes account of both social structures and interaction effects by combining MCA and SNA.

## **5- A case study: social capital and commercial gastronomy in France**

In this section, we present a case study: the sub-field of commercial gastronomy in Lille (North of France). Such a social and economic subspace appeared to us as relevant to analyse social capital. Indeed, during our survey (see below), we observed the existence of ties between restaurant owners; we also found the existence of associations, and more specifically a club of Chefs, “Les Tables gourmandes”, where members co-opt one another to preserve local gastronomy, and compete with one another for distinctions and rewards (for instance,

references in gastronomic guides); moreover, these restaurant owners are linked by multiple forms of interdependence: they have the same suppliers, they compete for the same local customers, they come from the same catering schools. All these social attributes, once combined, allow us to draw the structure of a local sub-field which, of course, is embedded in the national gastronomic field, but also has a relative autonomy in terms of the local dynamics related to the specificity of the economic constraints and of the forms of symbolic reputation. Our aim in this section is first to measure the social capital of restaurant owners located in a French local marketplace; second to test Bourdieu's two generic hypotheses on the *interdependence* and *multiplier effect* of social capital.

### 5.1. *Measuring social capital in a gastronomic sub-field*

Our empirical data on the gastronomic sub-field of the metropolis of Lille was derived from fieldwork research that was conducted from February to October 2006 and was based on a face-to-face survey questionnaire. We interviewed about three hundred restaurant owners. To construct the questionnaire, we conducted a pilot-survey that took place from April to October 2005 and consisted of ten semi-structured interviews with a fairly open framework of qualitative questions. The questionnaire was separated into three parts, each of which corresponded to a specific set of variables: (1) the social attributes of restaurant owners; (2) the economic characteristics of their establishments; and (3) several network variables corresponding to sociometric questions.

First, we construct the field by using the two parts of our questionnaire dedicated to 'the social attributes of the restaurant owners' and 'the economic characteristics of their establishments'. By means of a MCA, presented in Figure 1, we describe the social space of

the restaurant owners in its various aspects (economic, cultural and also symbolic) and develop its objective structures<sup>11</sup>. Two additional MCAs were conducted: one only with cultural capital variables, and the other only with economic capital variables<sup>12</sup>. A principal components analysis was also conducted with the variables of symbolic capital that relate to gastronomic skills of restaurant owners<sup>13</sup>. These complementary analyses allow us to quantify economic and cultural capital as well as symbolic performance: we use axis 1 of these statistical analyses to assign each individual a score that represents the volume of his capital resources and the size of his symbolic profit<sup>14</sup>.

<FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>

Second, we reconstitute the network of friendship ties between restaurant owners. The name generator used in the questionnaire is: “who are the restaurant owners you personally know, and who know you personally too?” Thus, respondents are asked to list the restaurant owners with whom they are linked. Once the list has been established, specific questions are asked about the type of link maintained with each person cited, including the nature of the relationship and the potential exchange of social resources between them. We decided to centre our analysis on reciprocal friendship ties, since we noticed that these ties promote exchanges of different social resources<sup>15</sup>. Figure 2 below gives an illustration of these ties as they were established in our sample of restaurant owners.

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<sup>11</sup> The particular MCA is composed of 18 active variables (61 items) and 5 supplementary variables (20 items). The active variables are used to measure cultural capital (9 variables, 30 items) and economic capital (9 variables, 31 items). The supplementary variables are related to culinary style (1 variable, 7 items) and symbolic capital (4 variables, 13 items).

<sup>12</sup> Details about results and analysis are provided in Eloire (2014).

<sup>13</sup> Symbolic capital hierarchy is objectified through professional rewards, including references in and awards from gastronomic “Guides”, as well as peer co-optations for entry in “honorary associations” of Chef.

<sup>14</sup> Due to limited space, details of these results can be provided by the author upon request.

<sup>15</sup> The social resources identified during the pilot-survey were: informal discussions about economic conditions; transmission of interesting information; sending over customers; mutual support.

<FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE>

Finally, we combine scores calculated for the various forms of capital based on the MCAs, and reciprocal friendship data based on SNA. For instance, in Table 1 we depict the measure of social capital for Rest40, who has cited as friends Rest26, Rest36, Rest32, Rest53 and Rest27 (each of which has also cited Rest40 as a friend). Columns **Capitcult** and **Capiteco** give scores of cultural capital and economic capital, respectively, for each of Rest26, Rest36, Rest32, Rest53 and Rest27. These scores are equivalent to the value that the two forms of cultural and economic capital obtain on axis 1 of the corresponding MCAs. The volume of Rest40's social capital is the sum of these ten scores and is equal to 11.44276. The structure of social capital is the share of cultural capital (64%) compared to the share of economic capital (36%) in the volume of Rest40's social capital.

<TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

## 5.2. *Testing interdependence and multiplier effect hypotheses*

We first test the hypothesis concerning the *interdependence* of social capital with the other forms of capital. Thanks to statistical analyses, we provide evidence of a strong and positive correlation between cultural capital and social capital, as well as between economic capital and social capital. These results indicate that social capital is never completely independent of the other forms of capital. Moreover, we provide evidence of a positive correlation between the volume of cultural (or economic) capital that is individually owned by an agent and the volume of cultural (or economic) capital that can be accessed through his social capital. In

other words: the higher the volume of cultural (or economic) capital that belongs to the agent himself, the higher the share of cultural (or economic) capital of his contacts. This implies that reciprocal friendship connections are not randomly established, but derive from social *homophily* processes: agents establish friendship ties with people who have similar social attributes.

If these interactions reinforce the structural effects of the field, then the specificity of social capital is to be sought elsewhere, particularly in its *multiplier effect*. Bourdieu's idea is that at a nearly equivalent level of cultural or economic capital, a higher level of social capital explains a higher profitability of cultural or economic capital. This hypothesis suggests that, at the individual level, profitability is not awarded to agents only for their individual skills but also for some structural effects located behind their skills, such as the social capital multiplier effect, that offer hidden and unconscious benefits to some agents at the expense of others. To test this hypothesis, first we compare restaurant owners in terms of two profit indicators with regard to economic<sup>16</sup> and symbolic<sup>17</sup> dimensions; second we create groups of restaurant owners with quite equivalent amounts of cultural capital and economic capital, and then examine within each group whether a higher volume of social capital is effectively associated with a higher level of gastronomic reputation or monetary profit. Results are summarised in Tables 2a and 2b.

First of all, with regard to monetary profits, we note no multiplier effect on the part of social capital (Table 2a). This can be explained by the idea that economic performance in the market obeys other logics beyond that of the instrumental use of friendship relations (Dallery et al., 2009). On the contrary, with regard to symbolic performance, our results offer evidence

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<sup>16</sup> We use data on the net margin rate of the company to measure monetary profit.

<sup>17</sup> We use data regarding gastronomic reputation, i.e. any recognised gastronomic awards and honours that restaurant owners had received (see also footnote 13).

that social capital produces a rather strong multiplier effect (Table 2b). We observe that, in most groups of owners with similar economic capital, more social capital coincides with better symbolic performance. Results are similar for groups of owners with equivalent cultural capital (there is an insignificant effect in the first two groups; but at these levels of cultural capital, symbolic capital is nearly missing). Overall, these results offer evidence of the kind of multiplier effects that social capital produces especially on symbolic profits.

<TABLE 2a ABOUT HERE>

<TABLE 2b ABOUT HERE>

## **6- Conclusion: social capital beyond the standard approach of economic rationality**

Compared to other forms of capital, social capital has distinct features that can be measured and tested empirically, if Bourdieu's field analysis is combined with the SNA approach. The aim of this article was to describe the theoretical foundations of the concept from a Bourdieusian perspective which differs from standard conceptions in the literature. Moreover, with the example of a case study, we highlighted the pertinence of some hypotheses included in Bourdieu's *Notes provisoires*. These hypotheses shed more light on the importance of social capital for the symbolic dimensions of economic activities. Indeed, while our results show no significant link between social capital and monetary profit, they show a multiplier effect of social capital on gastronomic reputation.

Thus, social capital does not rely on a purely instrumental conception of individuals' interactions. Although social relations are perceived as an act of investment, their profitability

is precisely based on the essential principle that they go unseen as an investment activity and unrecognised as a source for useful and profitable capital. What we call profit here is not the one economists typically talk about. The social resources exchanged daily between restaurant owners are not only material but also symbolic. Thus, the profitability of social capital must first and foremost be considered in its dimension of symbolic capital accumulation.

Indicative of this is additional evidence offered by our principal components analyses according to which social capital exerts two opposite effects: the higher the volume of social capital, the higher the volume of symbolic reputation, while the monetary profit achieved is lower. Apparently, restaurant owners must choose among these two conflicting goals. However, social capital has the capacity to impact monetary profits, if we also take into account the *structure* of an agent's social capital, that is, the share of economic capital held by his contacts. Indeed, our results demonstrate that the higher this share, the higher the agent's monetary profit. In other words, having some friends (even a few) with economic capital is positively correlated with economic success.

Ultimately, statistical correlations must be combined with MCA in order to uncover the deeper trends which link social capital to the various forms of capital within the network and within fields.

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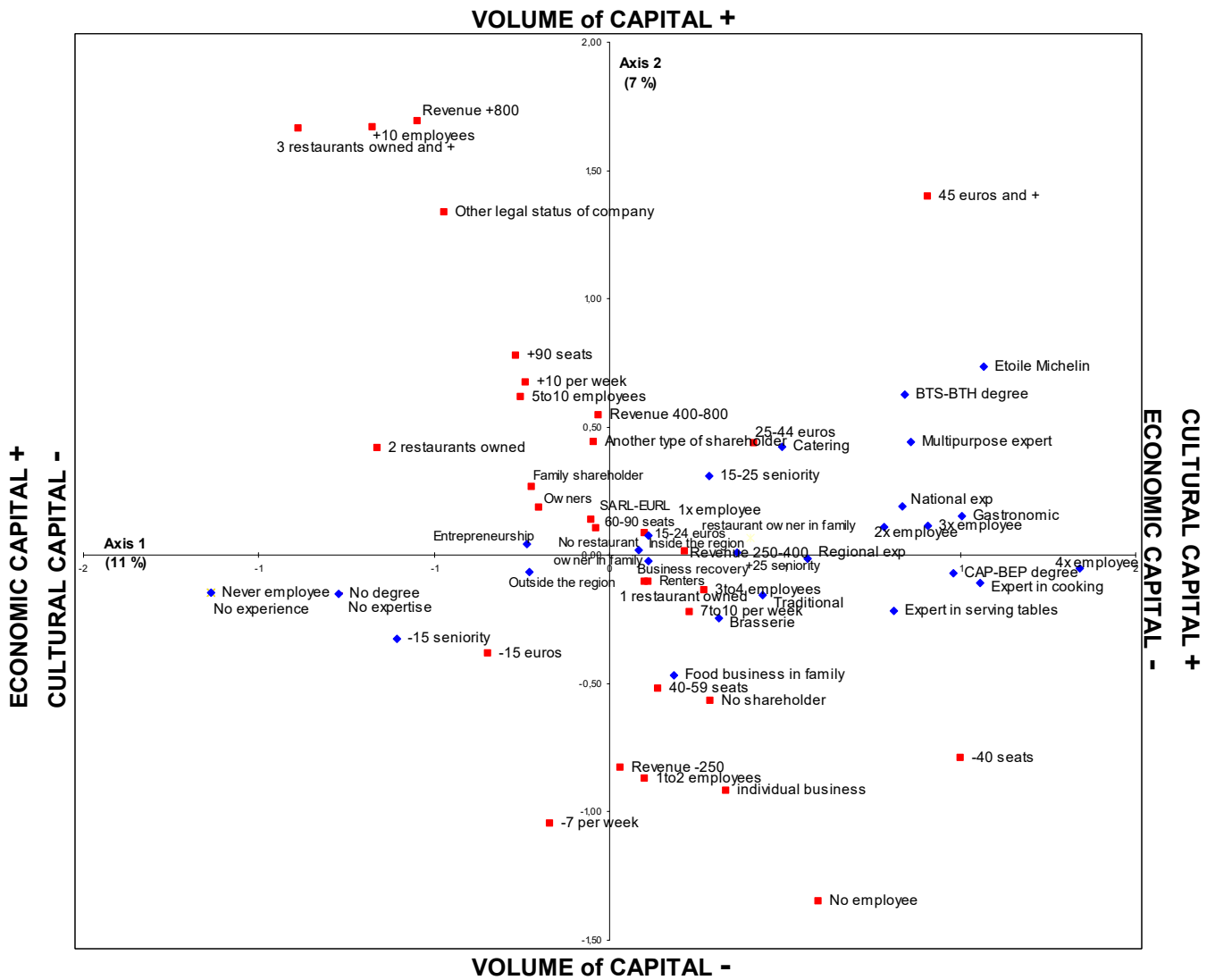
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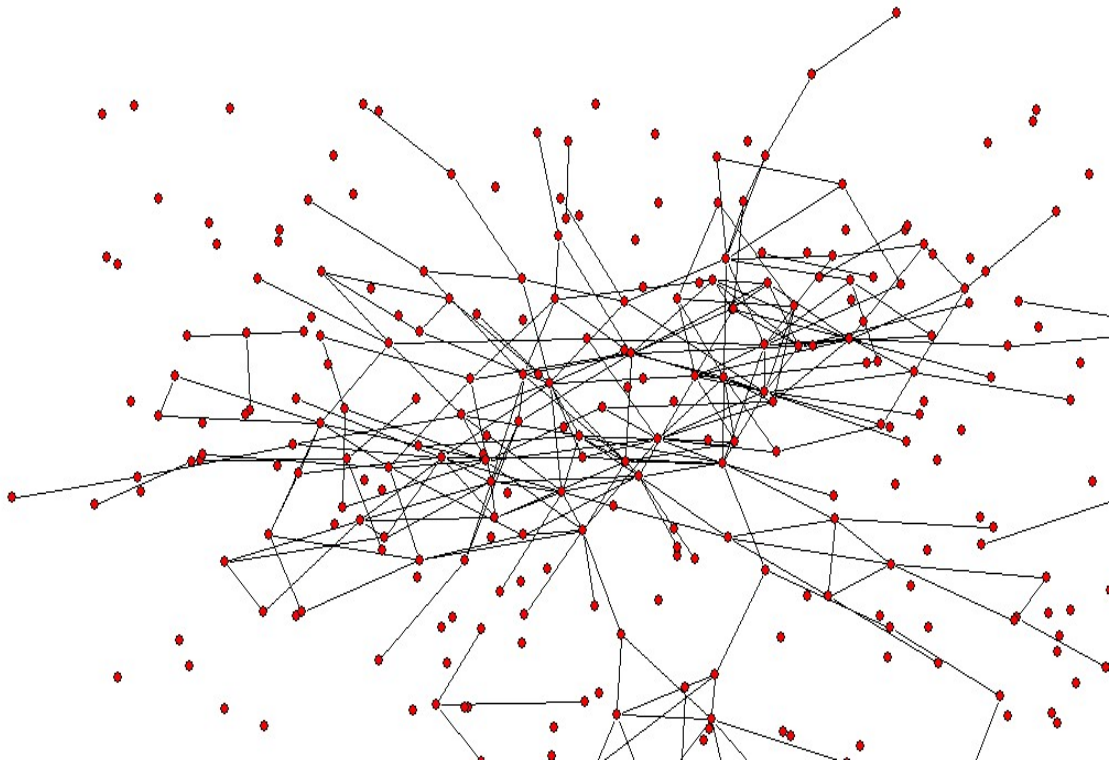
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Figure 1: The structure of the gastronomic sub-field in the Lille metropolis.



**Figure 2: Network of links of mutual friendship**



**Table 1: Aggregated social capital**

<b>Ego</b>	<b>Alters</b>	<b>Capitcult</b>	<b>Capiteco</b>
Rest40	Rest26	1.63524	1.36955
Rest40	Rest36	1.75473	0.82746
Rest40	Rest32	0.60013	1.01786
Rest40	Rest53	1.75084	0.00163
Rest40	Rest27	1.57352	0.91180
<b>Total</b>		<b>7.31446</b>	<b>4.1283</b>
<b>Structure of capital =</b>		<b>64%</b>	<b>36 %</b>
<b>Volume of capital =</b>		<b>11.44276</b>	

**Table 2a: Correlations between social capital and economic performance**

<i>Correlations between social capital and economic performance</i>		
<i>Classes of...</i>	<i>... cultural capital</i>	<i>... economic capital</i>
1	0.05 (0.75)	-0.02 (0.93)
2	-0.23 (0.28)	-0.28 (0.16)
3	-0.30 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.71)
4	0.27 (0.25)	-0.10 (0.57)
5	-0.07 (0.68)	-0.19 (0.22)
6	-0.31 (0.09)	0.23 (0.14)

**Table 2b: Correlations between social capital and symbolic performance**

<i>Correlations between social capital and symbolic performance</i>		
<i>Classes of...</i>	<i>... cultural capital</i>	<i>... economic capital</i>
1	0.06 (0.66)	<b>0.50 (&gt;0.01)</b>
2	0.06 (0.70)	<b>0.28 (0.05)</b>
3	<b>0.26 (0.05)</b>	0.06 (0.65)
4	<b>0.40 (&gt;0.01)</b>	<b>0.77 (&gt;0.01)</b>
5	<b>0.35 (&gt;0.01)</b>	<b>0.45 (&gt;0.01)</b>
6	<b>0.77 (&gt;0.01)</b>	<b>0.51 (&gt;0.01)</b>

*Note:* Bold types have been used to detect correlation coefficients that have a statistically significant effect when the p-value is less than 0.05 or 0.01.