

The Fabric of Trust in Families: Inherited or Achieved?

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Families are often considered an example of thick and cohesive social capital. Scholars intuitively compare strong ties inside the family to weak ties outside the family. In this perspective, social capital benefits are supposed to be equally shared among family members. Because the family is defined as a cohesive and homogeneous group, a series of issues were raised concerning its contribution to social integration in late modernity societies. In particular, individualization theorists believe families to be dead as instances of social integration.¹ Others have strong doubts about their ability to maintain their function of socialization of children and adolescents, as well as to resist economic hardship when facing divorce. The complexity of contemporary families questions this set of assumptions and suggests that social capital is an individualized resource in families of late modernity.

Various conditions, we propose, stimulate the development of social capital in families. Social capital can be seen as a by-product of specific roles and status. It may also derive from a history of dyadic relations, both positive and negative. Finally, as the configurational perspective states, social capital develops in a large network of interdependent individuals. This chapter stresses the importance of family interdependencies for understanding the development of social capital in families. Based on exploratory empirical research, it first explains why trust should be considered a central dimension of social capital in late modernity societies. It goes on by underlining the importance of specific family statuses and roles for the development of social capital. The influence of such roles on trust is

1. Beck (1992) describes individualization as a structural transformation of the social institutions and the relationship of the individual to the society. In the field of family and intimate life, these developments allow new and democratic forms of living, freeing men and women free from their traditional roles (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1999).

not, however, without ambiguity: are they important for social capital by their own merit or because they are linked with supportive, multiplex, and reciprocal interactions between two role incumbents? Is reciprocity of support between role holders enough to predict where trust in families arises or may other explanations also be relevant? By using a configurational perspective on families, the chapter shows that a larger set of dimensions of family interactions should be taken into account for the understanding of social capital in families of late modernity.

Trust as social capital

Simmel (1908) considered trust to be one of the most important integrative forces of society. As such, it was considered as a key element of social capital (Coleman, 1988). Trust is defined as a hypothesis on others' future behavior, grounding practices, and actions, and as a mid-point between total knowledge and absence of knowledge of others. Möllering (2006) defines trust

. . . as a reflexive process of building on reason, routine and reflexivity. Suspending irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty *as if* they were favourably resolved, and maintaining a state of favorable expectation toward the actions and intentions of more or less specific others. (p. 356, emphasis in original)

Individuals trust creating ties and relational history. The importance of trust has been underlined by several scholars in the last several decades. Fukuyama (1995) asserts that a high level of trust in society ensures a healthy and competitive economy. Putnam (1993, 2000) invokes the essential role of interpersonal trust for the survival of democracy.

The pace of change of societies in late modernity has transformed social relations and foundations of actions and identities. Individuals are now embedded in networks of relationships that cross over multiple contexts such as friendships, family, occupation, etc. Trust allows individuals to be active in a variety of situations while having only a limited

knowledge and little control over the interactions and people embedded in those fields. It makes actions and relations possible in situations where face-to-face interactions are not possible (Giddens, 1990). Therefore, trust is a resource for individual actions as well as for collective purposes in highly complex societies. It is possible for individuals to take risks while accepting the possible state of disappointment when a decision is made that is contrary to their expectations. Trust helps people get over the complexities of everyday life (Luhmann, 1968). It is indeed a central dimension of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Paxton, 1999) which allows the achievement of personal and collective goals that could not be achieved by an isolated individual.

Families were supposed to provide social capital based on thick ties fostering an emotional component and undifferentiated strong trust among all their members. This, however, does not correspond to the many contemporary families stemming from non-marital cohabitation, divorce, remarriage, lack of fertility, and other non- or only weakly-institutionalized organizations of the family (Cherlin, 2004; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994). We stressed elsewhere the importance of weak ties and bridging social capital in families (Widmer, 2006). The study of trust between family members reveals the importance of complex associations between people in late modernity (Cook, 2005). Therefore, the functionalist interpretation of the family as a monolithic unit, producing trust for all family members, seems inadequate.

Family statuses and doing family

Roles and statuses have great importance in the understanding of trust as they often relate to a normative basis defined by society as a whole. In a functionalist perspective, family statuses such as parent, child, and partner are normatively trustworthy. Unless the family is on the verge of collapse, one should trust the incumbents of such statuses. The mother is normatively defined as the main provider of love, and the father as the main breadwinner. In

this perspective, both are, therefore, trusted as they fill a clear functional role in the family structure. They are trusted because they are the incumbents of family statuses to which trust is normally ascribed.

The normative dimension of family statuses may, however, have less importance than expected, in late modernity societies, because family statuses and roles are associated with less clearly defined normative expectations. The role of a stepfather, for instance, was acknowledged as normatively undefined (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994); expectations toward stepparents are not provided by the societal context and are induced by a constant work of “doing” family (Schneider, 1980). This is the case of a variety of family roles related with the kinship network, including siblings. In a time of desinstitutionalization of marriage itself (Cherlin, 2004), it may well be that the level of trust in roles of the nuclear family vary to a significant extent.

In this perspective, each family member is trusted according to that person’s involvement in family practices. A long acquaintance, shared experiences and actualized interdependencies in reciprocal supportive relationships are likely to influence the ways in which family statuses relate to trust. Therefore, the relational history of family members should be considered when explaining the development of trust. Acquaintance length, contact frequency, the ways in which loyalty issues among family members are resolved, and the development of reciprocal supportive relationships toward specific family members may explain the extent to which incumbents of specific statuses are or are not trusted in families.²

Ambivalence

Trust may develop as an outcome of cooperation and reciprocity. The focus on positive interactions, however, presents a limitation for family research. One major criticism

2. We agree here with Elias about the ways in which groups set up their boundaries and establish a distinction between their members and the outsiders (Elias & Scotson, 1965). During this process, individuals stock memories, develop attachments, and share aversions that narrow the group boundaries and qualify individuals with insider or outsider status.

of the functionalist perspective concerns its understanding of family as a normative institution wherein adults find the emotional support necessary to cope with the stresses of modern life. Instead, empirical research shows that families are embedded in conflicts, power relationships, and interpersonal stress (Widmer, 1999). Strong emotional interdependencies often bring about conflict relationships. The concept of ambivalence enables researchers to overcome the opposition between the family as a cooperative group (Bengtson, 2001) and the family as a group characterized by conflict (Sprey, 1969). It makes it possible to take a middle stance between the family as a support unit and the family as an antagonistic group (Lüscher, 2002; Lüscher & Pillemer, 1998; Merton, 1976).

Individuals are in ambivalent situations when support is tied with conflict. This contradiction emerges in various family situations. For instance, this is seen in the case when normative expectations linked to a family role do not correspond to individuals' expectations. Individuals experience ambivalence when two or more relations have contradicting demands. For example, a mother bread-winner may be easily torn between the expectations of her boss and colleagues, and the expectations of her partner and children. No easy solution may be found in that situation. Multiple participations in various social fields can create antagonistic forces, which pressure individuals to make ambivalent choices.

In that regard, Lüscher & Pillemer (1998) apply ambivalence to the understanding of intergenerational relations. They show that many family relationships between parents and adult children are characterized by feelings of ambivalence. The norm of autonomy competes with the norm of solidarity when parents become physically dependent on adult children care. Similar ambivalences are found in conjugal relations, when individualistic needs compete with marriage obligations, which presuppose a shared life with a partner. When dealing with the development of trust in families, one should, therefore, take into account conflict in family relations that are not always supportive and cooperative. A range of possible relations

structure trust, ranging from unilateral support or conflict to fully reciprocal relationships. We hypothesize that trust is explained by the development of positive, negative, and ambivalent interdependencies between family members.

Trust beyond the nuclear family

Expanding on what occurs in the dyads of the nuclear family, several sound reasons support a configurational perspective on trust. Elias (1994) defined configurations as “structures of mutually oriented and dependent people” (p. 214). Individuals are interdependent in a configuration because each one fulfills some of the others' needs for social recognition, power, emotional proximity, financial and practical resources, or other socially-defined needs (Quintaneiro, 2004). As such, configurations have to deal with power issues: resources are scarce, and individuals, while cooperating, also compete for them within groups. This competition creates tensions and conflicts that are beyond individual control. The patterns of interdependencies that characterize any configuration, therefore, are largely unintended (Newton, 1999). They, in turn, shape the cooperation strategies and the conflicts that occur in each dyad belonging to it (Widmer & Jallinoja, 2008; Widmer, Giudici, Le Goff, & Pollien, 2009).

Like “Gestalts” (Köhler, 1992), a family configuration is not equal to the sum of its dyads. Any dyad belonging to a configuration is influenced by the shape of the configuration. At the same time, all dyads participate in the shaping of the family configuration. Ties within a configuration are not randomly organized but, instead, follow informal rules such as reciprocity and transitivity. Moreno and Jennings (1938) and Moreno (1953) also underlined that configurations concern actual relationships rather than official groupings, as defined by organizational charts, administrations, or census offices. On the basis of this theoretical stance, the configurational perspective on families posits that trust developed in dyads of the nuclear family must be referred to their relational context (Widmer & Jallinoja, 2008). The

configurational perspective stresses the complex patterns of interdependencies, both positive and negative, which link respondent with relatives, friends, and others. On one hand, these patterns of interdependencies depend to some extent on the distribution of conflict and support in the dyads, namely respondent-family member relations. On the other hand, it is stressed that trust is shaped by the larger network of interdependencies with relatives, friends, and others in which individuals are embedded.

Summary

Family statuses, because they combine long-lasting relations, interactions, and feelings of shared membership, may at first sight explain trust in families. Dyadic interdependencies, such as support and conflict are, however, expected to explain the propensity to trust between family members with various statuses. Reciprocal support is expected to consolidate temporary social exchanges by establishing long-lasting relationships (Gouldner, 1960). When more support is present in a dyad, trust is expected to be stronger. Support, however, does not come without a cost. Ambivalence and conflict may take their toll on trust. This might be true not only for specific dyads of the nuclear family but for the family configuration as a whole.

Data and measures

Under which conditions do respondents trust their family members? To answer this general question, an innovative data collection about family configurations was carried out with a sample of middle-aged women. The survey was based on the *Family Network Method* instrument (Widmer, 1999; Widmer & La Farga, 2000). A standardized questionnaire was submitted to 100 women in the Geneva Lake region during the winter of 2008. Two criteria were used in the sampling design: respondents had to be in a couple and mothers of at least one child between 3 and 16 years old and living at home.

We collected valid information on 94 family configurations, almost a third of which involved a divorce and a remarriage. For each of them, detailed information was available about all significant family members included ($N=1020$) and about conflict and support relationships among all of them, according to the respondent. Respondents first included significant family members (the mean of cited terms is 9). They could cite additionally up to five significant friends (the mean of cited friends is 3). Observations are nested in two levels: the first level identifies the significant family members cited by each respondent and the second level corresponds to the characteristics of the respondents and the respondents' family characteristics. This particular data structure has required a multilevel analysis to overcome problems due to non-independent observations (Gelman & Hill, 2008). We measured trust relationships by asking how much respondents trust or consider loyal each of their family members.³ A similar measure applied to loyalty.⁴ The impact of the overall processes of family configurations was measured by density of support and conflict (Wasserman & Faust, 2006). Density was expressed in percentage the number of dyadic relationships actualized on the number of dyadic relationships possible in the whole network. The higher the ratio, the more family members are tied by support or conflict relationships.

A case study

Before turning to the statistical analyzes and a formal approach of the problem, we first wish to present a case study, which exemplifies some of the processes underpinning the development of trust in families. Lea is a 35 years old woman, holding a rather unskilled job as office clerk and living in a small rural town. She has a son, Theo, 10 years of age, from her previous marriage, which only lasted two years. Since then, after some years spent single, she

3. The question reads: For all persons included in your list, can you tell me how much you trust her? The possible responses were: absolute trust, a large trust, some trust, low trust, no trust at all. The answers were initially coded on a five point scale. The scale was then dichotomized to perform logistic regressions. The active modality in further analysis corresponds to higher scores on the scale.

4. The question reads: «In your relationships, what level of priority do you give to this family member? ». The answer items were: full priority, a large priority, some priority, a low priority, no priority at all.

met Laurent, with whom she currently lives. Laurent has two sons from two distinct partnerships, one not yet 10 and the other one a young adult who does not live with him. Lea's parents divorced and her father remarried. She has one sister. Her paternal grandfather is the only grandparent still alive. Her family configuration is a mix between her current husband and her previous husband, who is the father of her son. She first included her son in her list of significant family members, followed by her current husband, his 10-year-old son, her previous husband, her mother, the second son of her current husband, the mother of her previous husband, her father, her sister, two female friends, and a male friend. The composition of the family configuration is, therefore, very heterogeneous; it expresses her relational history (as her parents and sibling are included), as well as her former husband and his mother. Long-time friends are also part of the family configuration. The order of inclusion is mixed, with the ex-husband having an unusually high ranking in it, demonstrating his importance in the family configuration.

If we look at trust relations between Lea and her family members, we see that her trust is quite differentiated. She does not trust her mother much (2 to 3 points on trust scale), nor does she particularly trust her current husband's son, her previous husband, her previous husband's mother and a friend. She has intermediate levels of trust (4 points) in her current husband her father and other friends. Lea absolutely trusts (5 points on the trust scale) only two family members: her sister and her son.

FIGURES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE

Considering the statuses of Lea's family members gives a first insight on the trust development processes. In this case, the current husband, her son, her sibling and her father are clearly the first trusted persons. Trust is then less developed outside this family core. Lea's

trust levels in her stepfamily are mixed as is, counter-intuitively, trust in her mother. Development of Lea's trust follows the timing of her relationships: more recent family relationships and elective ones are more trusted. Blood links between Lea and her family members appear also to be a structuring factor of trust, with the noteworthy exception of the Lea's mother.

We now look at her emotional support and conflict networks. In the support network (Figure 1) there is a clearly visible denser part, which includes Lea, her son, her current husband, her sister, her mother, and her husband's son. The most trusted family members are included in this subgroup. Interestingly, the trusted family members are embedded in a dense part of the conflict network as well. Therefore, trust has developed in this family configuration in a subgroup of individuals connected by support and conflict ties.

Although there is not a perfect correlation between loyalty and trust, strong loyalty feelings correspond to high levels of trust. Actually a friend outside the subgroup has high loyalty score; the husband's son has priority but a little trust level, the mother obtains very little trust while she is the object of middle-low level of loyalty. Ambivalent relationships are present in the core of the family configuration: the respondent, the son, the husband and the sister are all embedded in both conflict and support relationships.

Overall, a complex pattern of relationships among family members' statuses influences Lea's trust. This example suggests that a varied set of explanatory factors is at work, such as lengths of duration of relationship, frequency of contacts, availability of reciprocal support, and conflict. Therefore, a statistical analysis is necessary to disentangle the various explanations that relate to the development of trust.

Statuses or doing family?

Let us now turn to statistical analyses. A bivariate analysis of the effect of family statuses on trust is shown in Figure 3. Ranking obtained by trust mean for each family status

shows that husbands, daughters, and sons are the most trusted people. Parents and sisters are the second most trusted statuses, with brothers having more mixed results. All these statuses, except for brothers, are considered more trustworthy than other family members.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

In a series of additional bivariate analyses, we found that loyalty, contact frequency, support, and conflict relationships, as well as length of acquaintance, vary according to family statuses. Loyalty is primarily granted to sons, daughters, husbands, mothers, sisters, and fathers. Along with tendencies found for these members, parents and siblings are viewed as the second most. In turn, respondents felt a low level of loyalty toward stepsons and daughters; loyalty toward brothers was mixed. A strong association is present between family statuses, dyadic support, and dyadic conflict. Most dyads link respondents with their husband (83%), their mother (57%), their sisters (46%), and their friends (40%) are in terms of support. Relationships with daughters and sons more often are non-reciprocal, with respondents providing support. Most other family statuses do not develop supportive relationships. For conflict, 40% of respondent-husband and 32% of respondent-son dyads are reciprocal. Interestingly, the respondent-previous husband relationships are more conflict-loaded (50% of reciprocal conflicts). Because family statuses are associated with uneven levels of loyalty, contacts, and support, they may have an impact on trust. Indeed, a high contact frequency reinforces trust significantly. The length of the acquaintance influences trust as well. Figure 4 shows how loyalty, support, and conflict relate with trust.

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

Loyalty correlated strongly with trust. Presence of support enhances trust and presence of conflict weakens trust. Associations between dyadic processes of support and conflict, contact frequency, and acquaintance length are present as well; there is a positive association between dyadic support, contact frequency, and trust, and a negative association between conflict and acquaintance length.

To sum up, family statuses have an impact on trust because they are associated with unequal length of acquaintance and everyday contacts. Parents, siblings, husband, and children are those family members with whom the most frequent interactions occur and the longest acquaintances exist. Trust also closely corresponds with loyalty issues and dyadic relationships. The effect of family statuses might well be related to the fact they are associated with such processes. Those factors are interrelated. Multivariate analyses are therefore needed to confirm which factors are the most important.

Multivariate analyses

The following multilevel regression analysis considers trust of family members by respondents as the dependent variable (Table 1). Going from model 1 to model 3 of Table 1, we introduce additional explanatory factors. The configurational perspective leads us to ask which kind of interdependencies, both at the dyadic and network levels, account for interpersonal trust. The configurational perspective on families stresses the importance of reciprocity as founding relational processes of trust. In the first model we deal with the effects of family statuses. In the second model we test the impact of the frequency of contacts, respondent-family member acquaintance length, and respondent loyalty feelings toward family members, while controlling for the educational level of each family member. We add variables measuring reciprocity relations in emotional support and conflict as well. Finally, in the third model we introduce variables characterizing the family configuration as a whole, such as the density of emotional support and conflict. We control for second-level variables,

such as the respondent's age, her educational level and her family structure (stepfamily versus first family structure).⁵

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Model 1 provides a confirmation of the bivariate analysis. Partners, children, parents and siblings are more likely to be trusted. Partners come first, followed by daughters and sisters. Mothers and fathers come afterwards. Respondents trust their daughters more than their sons. The same gendered trend exists for trust in siblings; the 94 interviewed mothers declare a statistically significant stronger trust in their sisters than in their brothers.

In model 2, we introduce contact frequency, acquaintance length, loyalty, and dyadic processes, such as reciprocal support and conflict. The explanatory power of family statuses drops to insignificance in all cases. An impressive boosting effect of loyalty on trust is present; to grant loyalty to a cited significant family member increases the chance of trusting her by a factor of 17. Dyadic processes exert an important effect on trust as well. Support between respondents and their family member strengthens trust. If respondents are the support givers, the chance to enhance trust is multiplied by 2.7 when compared with an absence of supportive ties. If respondents are the support receivers, the chance is multiplied by 5.3. If support is reciprocal, the chance is multiplied by 7.

Interestingly, the direction of support influences trust: individuals are more trusted when they are support givers than support recipients. Conflict presents an opposite pattern of results. When respondents upset a family member, their trust in the upset person does not change when compared with an absence of conflict relationships. In turn, the case in which

5. Models one and two include first-level variables; model three includes both first- and second-level variables.

respondents are upset significantly reduces trust in family members. Reciprocal conflict also weakens trust, but to a lesser extent.

In model 3, we introduce support and conflict densities, controlled for respondents' age, educational level, and family structure. An increase of support density is associated with a rise in trust by a factor of 1.8. The density of conflict does not have a direct impact on trust, although it is correlated with conflict in each specific dyad, which, in turn, has a negative effect on trust. In other words, individuals embedded in dense negative networks have a higher likelihood of developing a conflict relationship with their closest family members, a situation that disrupts the development of trust toward them. Interestingly, a positive and strong correlation is found between conflict network and support network densities, confirming that conflict and support are not antithetical but that they often come hand in hand, as research on ambivalences show. Family configuration properties such as densities are valid explanatory factors for interpersonal trust.⁶

Conclusion

Parents, siblings, partners, and children (either resident or not) are the main persons that adults trust. Therefore, trust in family members goes beyond the nuclear family, as it concerns not only spouses or resident children but also individuals from the family of orientation. Social capital is not limited to the immediate household but crosses generational lines to link individuals who have a history of shared intimacy.

Family statuses, however, cover a variety of processes that, to a large extent, explain their effect on trust. The development of trust as a central dimension of social capital in late modernity is structured by a set of clearly defined and related family processes at the dyadic and configurational levels. Indeed, trust is explained by dyadic processes, such as the

6. The diminution of the random intercept variance in model 3 explains a significant share of the interindividual variance of trust.

development of reciprocal supportive interactions and loyalty feelings between individuals and their family members. Family statuses are likely to be activated in a variety of relational interdependencies between specific persons. In other words, individuals trust in their father, mother, or siblings in adulthood because positive and reciprocal interactions and feelings of loyalty have developed throughout their lives. Individuals give a high priority to a particular family member not because of their social status, the results show, but because there is a history supportive relationships with that person that gives them a high level of priority in one's life. Doing the family work in daily interactions provides the basis for trust to develop. The highest levels of trust are found in cases in which both respondents and family members provide and receive support. Interestingly, being a receiver of support without providing support is associated with higher trust than being a support giver only. Therefore, being in debt to somebody for support creates a large share of trust. Individuals trust others who help them; they do not necessarily trust those that they help.

A main factor of trust holds in the extent to which family members achieve a high level of priority in one's life, a situation we referred to as loyalty. Various practices and rituals help this level of loyalty to be developed and maintained in family assemblages (Jallinoja, this volume): weddings, birthdays, and other transitional events are occasions in which the loyalty toward family members can be expressed publicly by gifts and other material means (Finch, 1989). Attendance (or non-attendance) at such events is also interpreted by individuals as signs of the meaningfulness of relationships. The level of loyalty toward family members is also expressed in the occurrence of non-normative events such as divorce, health problems, or death of a family member. The extent to which individuals care for each other going through those hardships provides clear indications to all about the level of priority given to each relationship.

Trust as social capital does not only depend, however, on the reciprocity of positive interactions such as support, but also on negative or ambivalent dyadic interactions. Dyadic conflicts, indeed, have a negative impact on trust. Some interdependencies create frustration and tensions in families, and such effects make the level of trust toward specific family members decline. In other words, the level of social capital individuals develop from their family ties is not only a function of supportive ties but also of the extent to which conflict is present. Interestingly, conflict and support are not two opposite processes. In the sample considered in this chapter, the correlation between conflict and support is positive, not negative. Family configurations in which a higher density of support exists are also those in which a higher density of conflict is present. Therefore, a significant number of family dyads in late modernity are characterized by ambivalence.

Overall, the development of trust relates to specific dyads, such as the parent-child, the sibling, or the conjugal dyads. Those dyads, however, belong to larger family configurations, by which they are shaped to a significant extent. Individuals embedded in dense and supportive family configurations have a much greater likelihood of benefiting from a high level of trust and social capital. In other words, the level of individual trust in family members not only depends on one's relationships with others, but also on the patterns of connections (or disconnections) that exist overall in family configurations. These results confirm that in order to understand processes occurring in any family dyad, its relational context should be taken into account. Indeed, density of support and density of conflicts within family configurations have a strong impact on the likelihood that parent-child, siblings or conjugal dyads develop reciprocal supportive ties and conflict. Families in which there are a greater number of interactions among members provide a higher level of trust. Confirming the hypothesis of (Coleman, 1988) that bonding social capital is associated with greater trust, our results stress that trust does not only depend on the ability of respondents to develop active relationships

with family members, but also on the general collective processes occurring in their family configurations. Although respondents participate in the shaping of their family configuration, they are not fully in control of it, as their ability to influence relationships among others is limited. Indeed, the extent to which family configurations develop dense sets of ties depends on their composition. As shown in (Widmer, 2006), beanpole family configurations, which are made up of individuals of multiple generations linked by blood, develop a higher level of connectivity. The inclusion of parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts in one's family configuration makes the likelihood of benefiting from bonding social capital and trust higher because many family members have a long history of interactions and support that link them. In other words, dyadic relationships in beanpole family configurations last longer and, therefore, are more interconnected than in other family configurations, such as post-divorce family configurations.

The impact of density of family configurations on trust is also indirect, as it influences the development of reciprocal relationships between respondents and their family members. In that latter case, density of support makes the development of trust in specific family dyads more likely. For instance, individuals tend to develop a supportive relationship with their parents, spouse, or siblings when they are embedded in densely connected family configurations. The more reciprocal and supportive dyadic relationships they develop has a positive impact on trust. Family configurations are, therefore, the turf on which key family dyads (such as the conjugal or the parent-child dyads) develop. Respondents are often not aware of this indirect influence of the overall organization of their family configurations, as they focus on their relationships with their closest family members. It has, however, been shown in several studies that conjugal and parent-child relationships do respond to the overall pattern of interdependencies of families (Widmer, Goff, Levy, Hammer, & Kellerhals, 2006).

Finally, the development of trust in families is certainly not homogeneously distributed across individuals. Respondents without a spouse or parents as members of their family configurations develop lower amounts of social capital. For a variety of reasons, they have not developed strong and long-lasting relationships with individuals of such status. They lack prominent sources of trust in families of late modernity and, therefore, miss one important dimension of social capital. Therefore, access to family social capital is unequally shared. Of course, individual agency is not the main factor explaining the absence of parents, spouse, or siblings in one's family configuration. A whole set of life trajectories come into play in the shaping of family configurations: fertility decisions of parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts have an impact on the number of cousins and siblings available; divorce of parents and grandparents, as well as their life expectancy and the migration patterns of various family members, are also influential. Social mobility is also a dimension of family configurations as it increases the social distance among family members if only some have experienced it. Overall, family configurations are the results of a mix of structural constraints imposed by a variety of individual life courses that come to interact, as well as the ability of individuals to develop meaningful and long-lasting interdependencies with others.

Social capital is an individualized resource in families of late modernity, which depends to a large extent on the set of reciprocal supportive relationships that have been built in childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. These sets of dyadic interdependencies are not fully personal, however, as they are embedded in larger configurations of family relationships and their overall relational logic. Rather than focusing on divorce or problems supposedly raised by a mother's employment to estimate social capital made available by families, one should consider how interpersonal trust develops in the complex network of interdependent individuals who are included in one's family configuration.

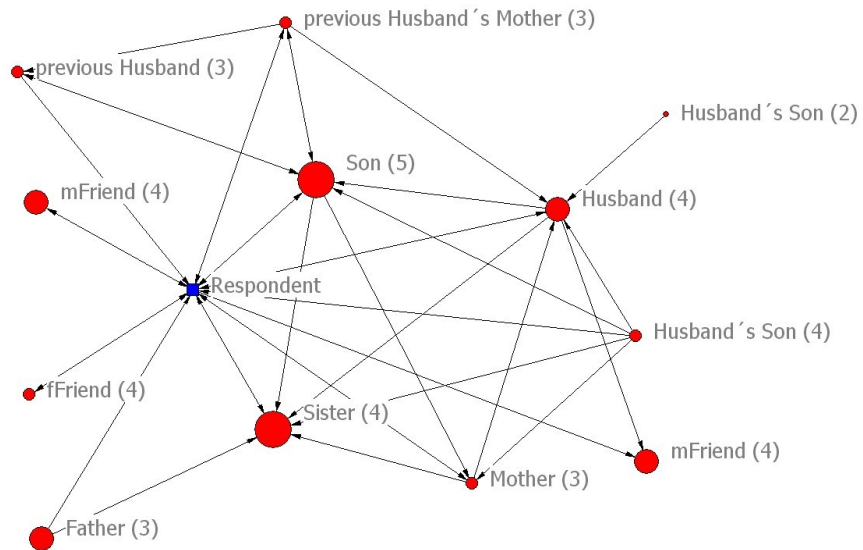
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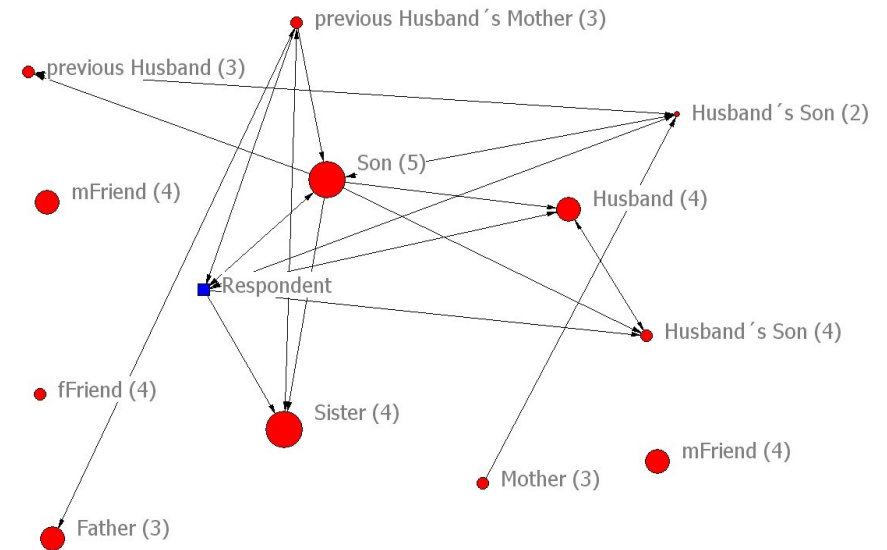
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Figure 1. Respondent-family member trust embedded in *Emotional Support Network*



Notes: point size corresponds to trust relation strength; arrows point to support persons; respondent-family member loyalty in parenthesis.

Figure 2. Respondent-family member trust relation embedded in *Conflict Network*



Notes: point size corresponds to trust relation strength; arrows point to unnering persons; respondent-family member loyalty in parenthesis.

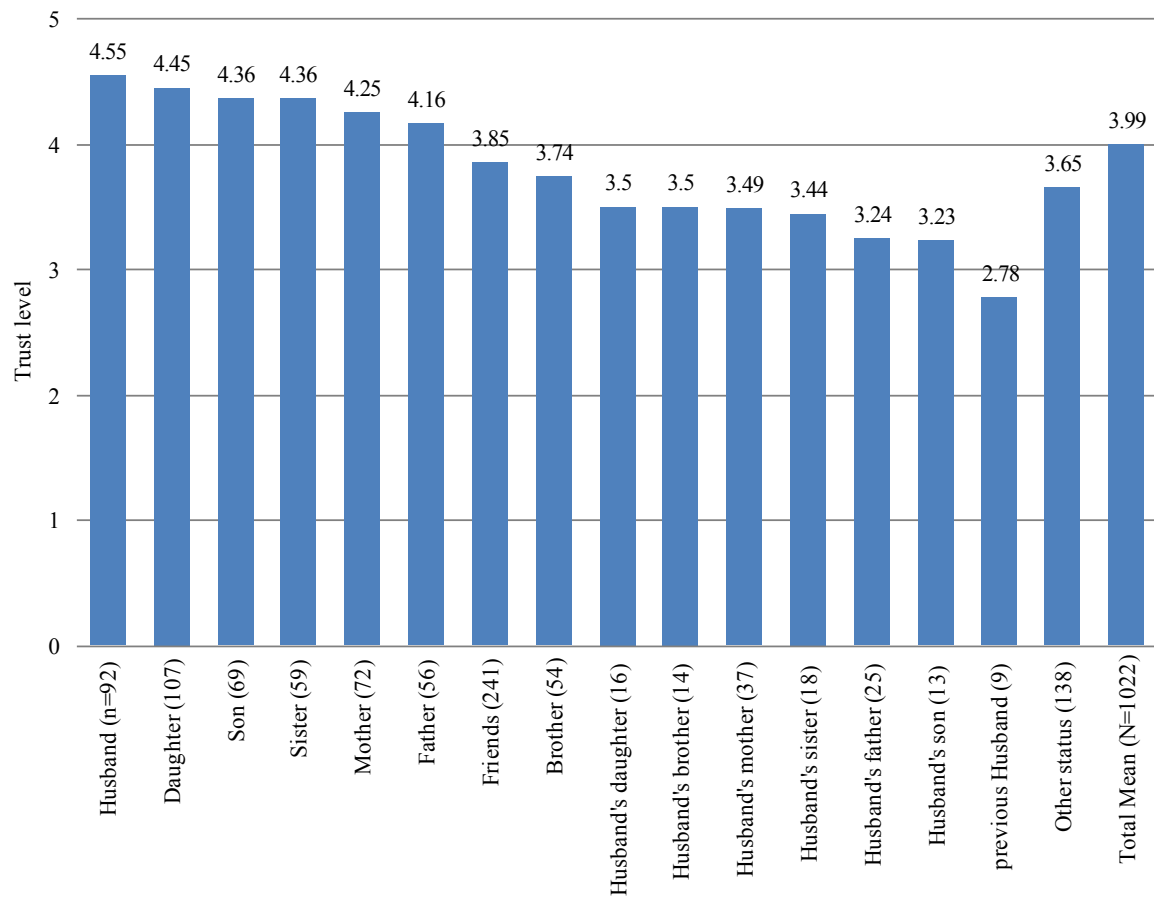
Figure 3. Trust mean by respondent-family member

Figure 4. Trust mean (five point scale) by explanatory variables

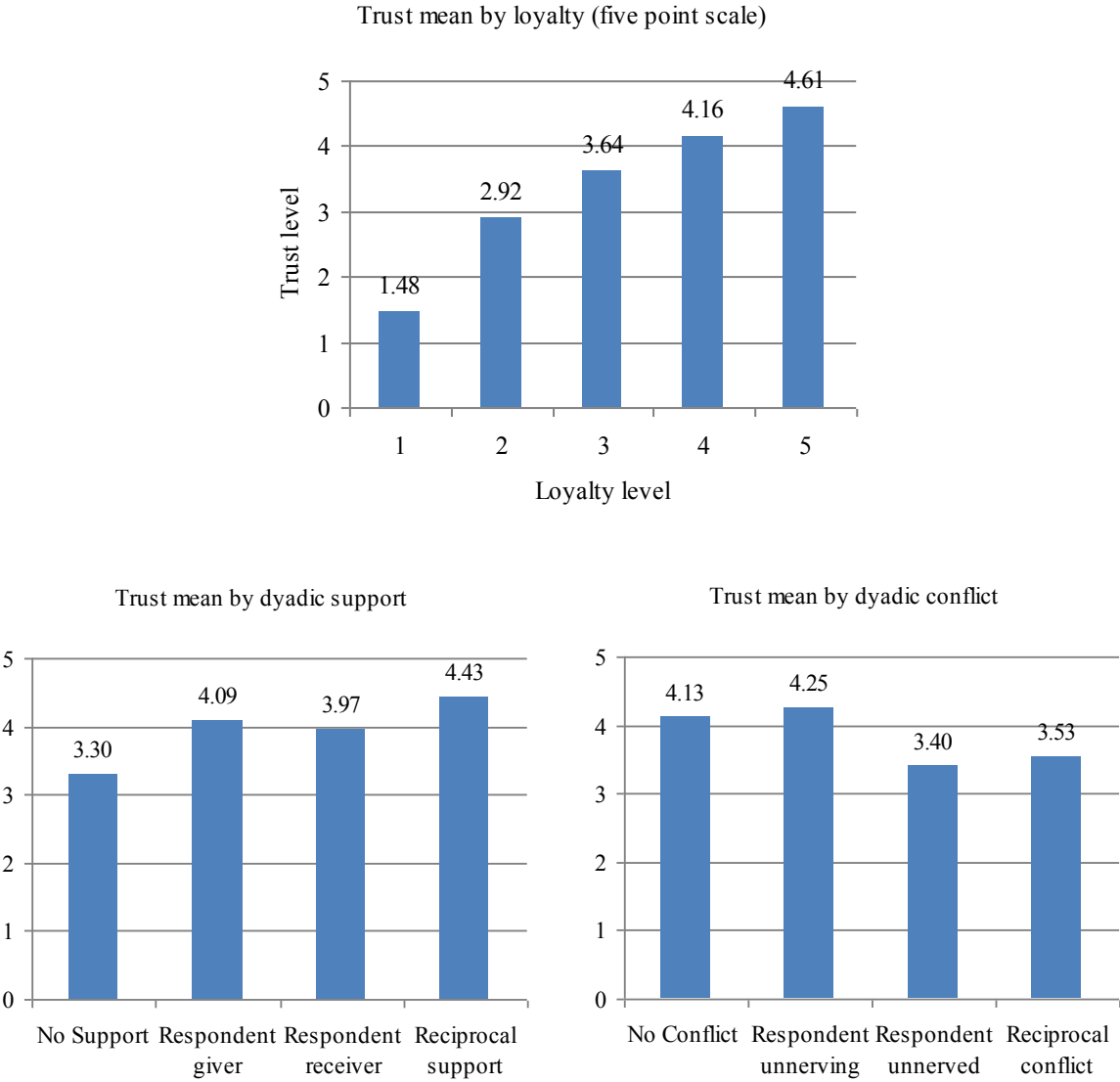


Table 1. Multilevel Logistic Regression Analysis of Trust in Significant Family Members (N=1020)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Predictor	e^B	e^B	e^B
Family member status (ref.: other statuses)			
Friend	1.57	0.75	0.79
Daughter	8.98***	5.37	0.56
Husband	13.01***	7.10	1.32
Son	6.15***	6.23	0.51
Mother	5.56***	2.83	1.02
Sister	8.44***	5.05	2.86
Father	5.01***	5.16	1.91
Brother	1.20	1.25	0.60
Husband's Mother	1.50	1.39	1.41
Husband's Father	0.61	0.90	0.88
Husband's Sister	1.38	2.53	2.64
Husband's Daughter	1.02	1.48	0.90
Husband's Brother	0.40	0.66	0.49
Husband's Son	1.22	1.36	0.76
Previous Husband	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contact Frequency		1.22	1.24
Acquaintance length		1.02	1.02
Respondent-family member Loyalty		17.10***	16.42***
Educational Level: University		1.30	1.38
Emotional Support Respondent-family member (ref.: no support)			
Respondent giver		2.69**	2.50**
Respondent receiver		5.36**	4.87**
Reciprocal support		6.99***	6.22***
Conflict Respondent-family member (ref.: no conflict)			
Respondent unnerving		1.28	1.34
Respondent unnerved		0.16***	0.17***
Reciprocal conflict		0.19***	0.19***
Support Network Density*10			1.88**
Conflict Network Density*10			0.65
Respondent Age: more than 36			1.00
Respondent Educational Level: University			1.00
Recomposed Family Structure			1.00
Intercept	0.15***	0.03***	0.02***
Random intercept variance (Families, N=94)	2.80	3.67	3.17
Standard Error	1.67	1.92	1.78

Notes:

Entries are exponentiated B. *p≤0.1; **p≤0.05; ***p≤0.01. Network densities variables vary between 0 and 1.