

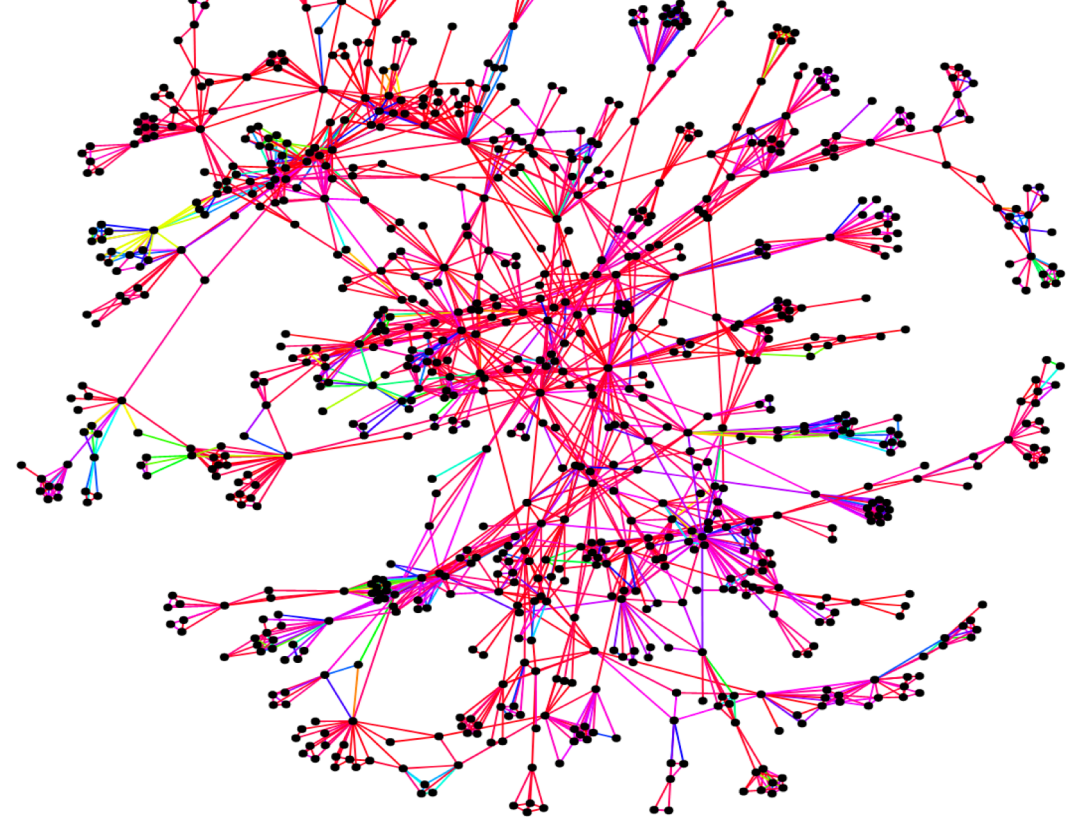
Digital Social Capital and Well-being of Digital Citizens

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Outline

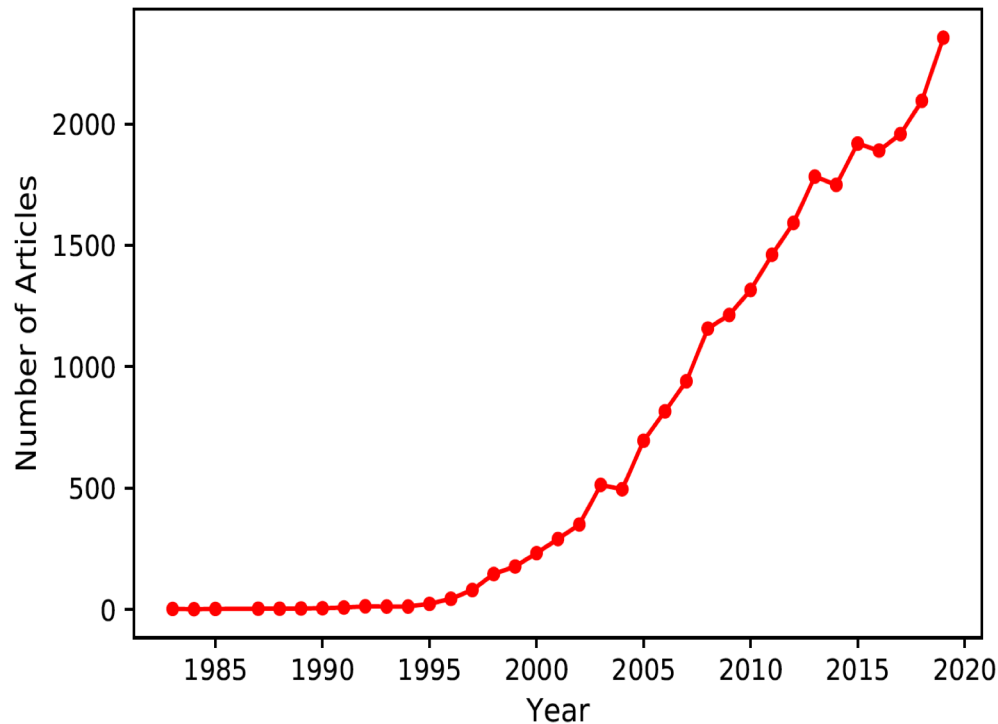
- Social connections & social capital
 - Two perspectives of social capital
- The new form of "digital" social capital (DSC)
- Digital social capital & student development
 - Social capital & civic participation
 - Getting connected vs academic distraction
 - Digital divide & education inequity
- Challenges & opportunities of studying DSC



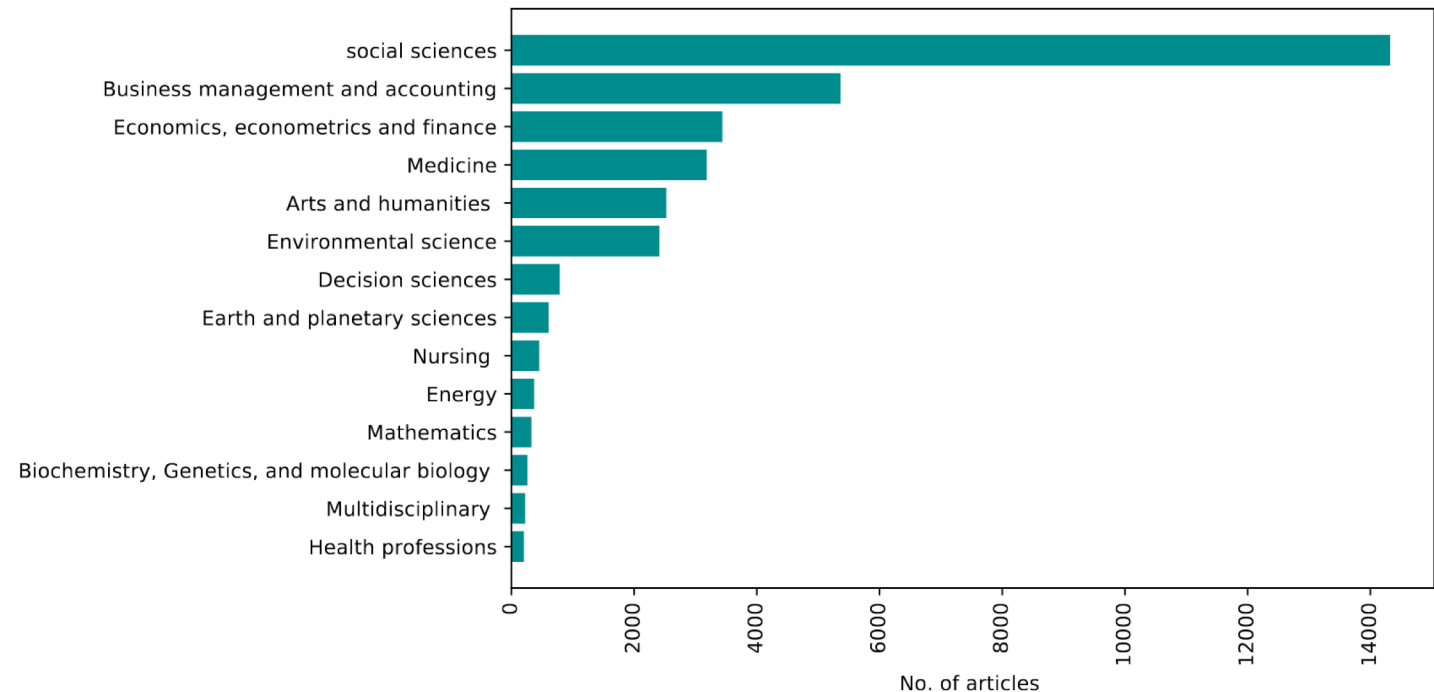
What is Social Capital?

- “investment in social relations through which resources of other actors can be accessed and borrowed” (Lin,2001)

Social Connections = Valuable Assets



Number of articles about social capital in Scopus index (1983-2019)



What is Social Capital?

- Social capital at the individual level



Nan Lin

- Social resources
- Social connections



Henk Flap

- Network size
- The strength of relationships
- The resources of these persons



Ronald Burt

- Network positions
- Structural holes



What is Social Capital?

- Social capital at the group level



Pierre Bourdieu

- Institutionalized relationships
- Group membership
- Social obligations



James Coleman

- Collective assets
- Social structure
- Functional view



Robert D. Putnam

- Social associations
- Degree of participation



What is New in “Digital” Social Capital?



Accessibility & Development



Digital Social Capital & Student Development

- How does the new form of social capital affect student development?
 - Civic engagement
 - Academic performance
 - Socio-emotional development
- What issues are associated with the new form of social capital?
 - Digital divide
 - Education inequality



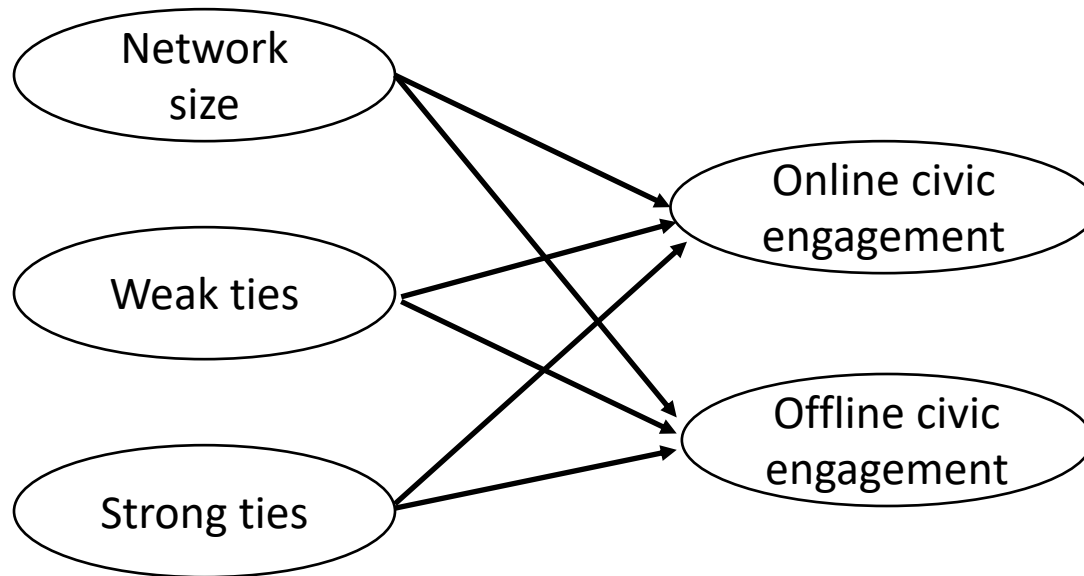
Digital Social Capital & Student Development

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Social Capital & Civic Engagement

- “*Bowling alone: America's declining social capital*” (Putnam, 1995)
- Social influence on individuals’ behaviors and attitudes toward civic engagement activities (Fischer, 1977; Mason et al., 2007)
- Research question:
 - Does students’ social capital affect their online and offline civic engagement?



Feng S, Li M, Erstad O (2021) Social connections matter: Online and offline civic engagement among college students



Social Capital & Civic Engagement

- 371 samples collected from two universities in China
- Measures:
 - *Offline civic engagement*
 - adopted and adjusted from Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2011).
 - the participation in offline meetings about civic issues, donation, and voting
 - *Online civic engagement*
 - the participation in online discussions about civic issues, online donation, and voting
 - *Network size, strong ties, and weak ties*
 - self-reports of their personal contacts with whom they had discussed public affairs, the type of relationship they have with them, and the frequency
- PLS-SEM analysis was conducted to examine the research questions (more variables were included in the full article)



Social Capital & Civic Engagement

- Results
 - Weak ties in college students' civic discussion networks play a significant role in affecting both online and offline civic engagement
 - Network size and strong ties in college students' civic discussion networks were shown to have an impact on online civic engagement rather than offline civic engagement
- Implications
 - We found that the influence from peers and teachers was more significant in both online and offline civic engagement than the influence from family members and friends among college students in China
 - Institutions should utilize online resources and new media platforms for sharing civic information and engaging students in various civic activities
 - College students should be encouraged to adopt the blended approach of engaging in civic engagement in both online and offline settings



Getting Connected vs Academic Distraction

- “a strong association between use of Facebook and the three types of social capital, with the strongest relationship being to bridging social capital” (Ellison et al., 2007)
- “Number of Facebook friends associated with stronger perceptions of social support, which in turn associated with reduced stress, and in turn less physical illness and greater well-being” (Nabi et al., 2013).
- “Facebook users reported having lower GPAs and spend fewer hours per week studying than nonusers” (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010).
- “Students with a high-frequency usage of Facebook per day tend to be more distracted in the course of academic tasks” (Feng et al., 2019).



Challenges and Opportunities of Studying DSC

- How to measure
 - Qualitative approach (most studies)
 - Questionnaire-based approach
 - Network approach
- Multi-faceted nature
 - Social relationships & structures, resources
- Online and Offline
 - Integration
 - Extension (complementary)
 - Counteract (conflict)
- Cause & effect
 - Measure outcome/connections



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Thank you for your attention!

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