



Mapping social milieus and cohesion patterns between 1997 and 2014. Exploiting the potential of the occupational position generator

Kmetty Zoltán^a, Tardos Róbert^a, Albert Fruzsina^{b,c}, Dávid Beáta^{c,d,*}

^a MTA-ELTE Peripato Research Group, Eotvos Lorand University Faculty of Social Sciences, H-1117, Budapest, Pázmány Péter sétány 1/a, Hungary

^b Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, H-1091, Budapest, Kálvin tér 9, Hungary

^c Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary

^d Institute of Mental Health, Faculty of Health and Public Services, Semmelweis University, H-1450, Budapest, Pf.91, Hungary

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Keywords:

Position generator
Occupational milieus
Macro-structural modeling
Omninex/uninex network patterns
Social integration

ABSTRACT

The study joins the stream of the social network approach attempting to look beyond micro-level association patterns towards macro-structural modeling. Utilizing the versatility of the occupational position generator technique for measuring network resources generally related to hierarchical aspects, an attempt is made to apply the tool for horizontal targets. Furthermore, with some conceptual transfer, the paper applies the distinction between omnivorous and univorous patterns of symbolic selectivity to nexus choice as well. The comparative investigation relies on data from four Hungarian national surveys from the 1990s on, using 19 items of the position generator to measure network resources. Exploratory and confirmative factor analyses reveal four dimensions of occupational milieus; Goodman RC modeling outlines two organizing axes behind them interpreted in network terms as status and betweenness centrality. Latent class analysis results in a five-element typology with both vertical and horizontal features. The findings point to the stability, in some respects to the increase of gaps between various segments along the social ladder. As concerns the cultural aspect, returns on relational selectivity indicate some fading or even reversal of the omnivorous trend in contemporary Hungary; both tendencies suggesting some growth of distances between milieus with the related problems of social cohesion.

© 2018 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The position generator (PG) is a relatively recent social research instrument. It measures social resources by examining personal network ties. Mostly, it has been applied to evaluate occupational ties (as originally devised by Lin and Dumin, 1986). More recently, researchers have used this tool to measure contact resources as one dimension in mapping people's overall social standing.¹ Most of these efforts approached relational assets with a hierarchical character; however, this instrument has the capacity to go beyond such interests. This paper aims to explore this potential.

The position generator and its application have been significant tools in social-network research in Hungary (Albert and Dávid, 2006; Angelusz and Tardos, 2008), and recently it has been

extended to accomplish more than examining hierarchical relations. (Kmetty and Koltai, 2016). A large amount of PG data has been accumulated in Hungary, and the availability of this data is in itself an impetus to move from one-shot investigations to a broader scope of analysis. Our paper uses a combined data-set from four surveys in Hungary over the last two decades, with a common core amounting to nearly 20 occupational items. Following up on recent attempts (Lin et al., 2014; Angelusz and Tardos, 2008) to outline distinct blocks of occupational ties by applying the PG technique, it is our objective to map the transformation of social cohesion. We also analyze social distance between the upper and lower strata of the population over the last two decades.

This paper is principally exploratory in nature, however we rely on some theoretical concepts. We assume that occupational ties in general are social resources of potential mobilization (Lin, 2001). By focusing on the relative value of contacts we attain a more differentiated picture of network gains. The benefits of social resources extend beyond purely instrumental ones, and embrace symbolic value or capital (Lin, 2001; see also the concept of status signals in Podolny, 2005). A nexus with high-status relations may provide significant gains, whereas ties with people of lower status, may even be a liability (with “bad” relationships alongside “good”

* Corresponding author at: Institute of Mental Health, Faculty of Health and Public Services, Semmelweis University, 1085 Budapest Üllői út 26, Hungary.

E-mail addresses: Zkmetty@tat.elte.hu (Z. Kmetty), tardos.robert@tat.elte.hu (R. Tardos), albert.fruzsina@tk.mta.hu (F. Albert), bea.david@ella.hu (B. Dávid).

¹ This has been exhibited by the tool for gauging the dimension of social capital by the Great British Class Survey (Savage et al., 2013) and the proposal of a new module of the 2017 wave of the ISSP project (Joye et al., 2014).

ones)². We explore the material and symbolic aspects of such gains in this study.³

In addition to the vertical dimension of network structuring, the position generator approach can be used for horizontal segmentation. The PG can identify parallel nexus segments that have relatively equal social standings. Similarly to the concept of social circles⁴, *occupational milieus* can be viewed as frames of identification with no clear boundaries or formal membership, while simultaneously allowing for multiple memberships. Our analysis uses a double approach describing the segments both in terms of various professional skills and their relative network positioning. In this way, the multiple conception of centrality will be applied with aspects of *status* and *connectedness* (an intermediate or bridging position between various parts of a network).

This paper aims to enrich our understanding of social networks relying on structural and cultural concepts not used before. The diversity of relationships within social milieus may manifest differently for different people. Some people find instrumental gains more important and others may care about keeping a distance from socially less desirable status positions. The former attitude implies a more extensive and diverse nexus orientation; the latter (both quantitatively and qualitatively) suggests a narrower one. Although the terms *omnivore* and *univore* (Peterson and Simkus, 1992) were coined for cultural consumption, they may be useful for our network concerns. We will explain the application of these terms for network research and the proposed usage of *omninet/uninet* terminology introduced by Albert et al. (2015).

Our methods for this paper extend from plain correlations, through explorative and confirmative factor analyses, to Goodman's row-column association modelling (RC) and latent class (LC) modelling. They show the conceptual capacities of the occupational position generator. Although our paper has an explicit methodological focus, we also take the opportunity to present the method's potential for interpreting changes in a post-socialist Central European transition country, Hungary. Thus the major substantive findings of this paper are related to the social problems that Hungarian society has faced over the last two decades.

2. Previous research; key concepts

2.1. Network approaches to social differentiation

Pioneering work in the field of social-network analysis has made important steps in using relational methods in the study of social structure and stratification. One of the pioneers, Edward O. Laumann, summed up these steps as a shift from micro-modelling association patterns and intra-psychic dynamics toward "a macrostructural understanding of the differential distribution of social resources" (Laumann, 2006: 68). Laumann developed a hybrid approach to bridge the gap between "egocentric and socio-centric approaches". These conceptions are not far from Blau's (1977) theory of structural parameters or, to some extent, Burt's (1981) conceptualization of *ersatz* network positions. The idea of the duality of persons and groups by Breiger (1974), laying a foundation for later two-mode analysis, is a cornerstone in bridging the

gap mentioned above. Breiger et al. (2014) integrated the duality approach connecting network attributes with structural positions.

Following Laumann's research program,⁵ and relying on the block-model initiatives of White et al. (1976), a block-scheme of class positions by Pappi (1981) outlined social class relationships embedded in interaction (in a Weberian sense). The growth of interest in social capital inspired further research. The introduction of the occupational position generator by Lin and Dumin (1986) was then conceptualized by Lin (2001), who outlined a theory of social capital, explicitly built on the network approach. In the recent volume by Savage (2015) multiple correspondence analysis is applied for a hierarchical ranking of the respective PG-items.

Relying on a Weberian perspective of interactional stratification, Toubøl and Larsen (2017) grouped detailed occupational categories, which are reduced to larger clusters building on a large database of job shifts. In their research, they focused on intra-generational mobility as one possible way to outline various occupational milieus going beyond the limits of one or another distinct occupation. Research has been conducted using integrated approaches with structural and cultural aspects by Flap and Völker (2008); Cote and Erickson (2008), Griffiths and Lambert (2012), Li et al. (2015). Granovetter's (2017) and Bian's research on the subject Bian (2017) highlighted the mix of formal and informal, and instrumental and expressive motives attached to market relationships. This concept highly depends on the given sociocultural settings.

2.2. Cultural orientations and nexus patterns

Bourdieu (1984) delineated the concept of social differentiation embracing economic and cultural components, conceptualizing a more horizontal divide within the vertical hierarchy of the higher social circles. Based on certain aspects of the high-brow and low-brow patterns of orientation in the cultural field, this approach has become influential beyond Europe. According to Bourdieu, higher social classes consume high culture primarily. Taking issue with this emphasis on high culture, and pointing out the heavy presence of a less selective interest in the USA, Peterson and Simkus (1992) introduced the terms of *omnivorous* and *univorous* in cultural consumption.

While not using social network terms, a later version by Peterson (2005) connected weak ties and a more inclusive interest. Later research questioned the prevalence of omnivorous cultural patterns in the USA (Rossman and Peterson, 2015). The basic concepts attached to certain cultural styles, with various degrees of inclusion and selective social exclusion, have not lost their relevance. Erickson (1996), as well as later studies by Vaisey and Lizardo (2010) and Lizardo and Skiles (2015) found that heterogeneous contacts and non-selective cultural tastes may go hand in hand. Although not applying the terminology used by Peterson and others, the study conducted by Savage (2015), also attempts to unravel lines of segmentation with regard to occupational ties. One segment identified by this study is the "technical middle class" and the other one is the "established middle class". The "technical middle class" is an exclusive one while the established middle class is an inclusive one. In our current study, we also present inclusive or exclusive occupational nexus patterns of various social groupings.

² See Hsung and Breiger (2009) on "good" and "bad", or Bonacich and Lloyd (2004) on "negative" social capital in relation to various types of social-network resources.

³ Net personal income and household consumption status are included in the analyses for material, subjective class identification for symbolic outcomes.

⁴ In the sense explained by Simmel (1908, [1955]) and Kadushin (2011) in his wake.

⁵ Explained in great detail in Laumann (1973), on the formation of social bonds.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7538205>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7538205>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)