

Assessing social engagement practices in unstable environments: An examination of collective action and community participation in Mexico

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Presented at the SSWR — Society for Social Work and Research
20th Annual Conference Anniversary Grand Challenges for Social Work:
Setting a Research Agenda for the Future
January 13-17, 2016.



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1. Background, aims and case study

21st C. paradox: wealth, development, risks → conflicted societies
→ power of the collectivity

Case study's core features: (1) organized crime and (2) state failures

Mexico in the context of increased insecurity (WoD 2006):

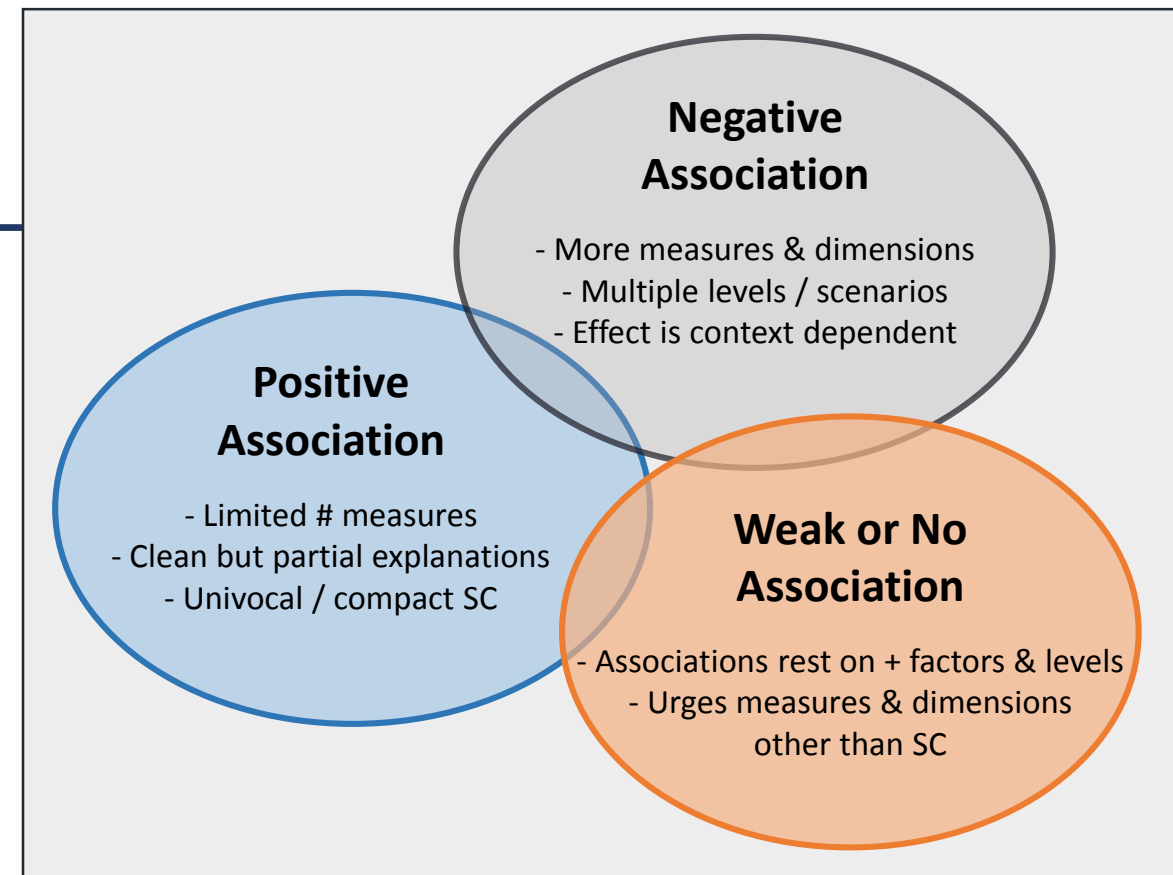
- Greater vulnerability & deteriorated wellbeing
- Diverse effects and responses
- Violence:
homicide rates (21.5 per 100,000 hab.);
deaths (25,317); displaced (1.3 mill).
other consequences (person-person, person-institution,
intra-institution).



2. Literature Review

Gaps & Limitations:

- observed **multiple forms** of relationships.
- research using **contextual** indicators.
- alternatives mostly unexplored:
what **inhibits or permits** social engagement?



recognize the nature and expression of **social engagement in contexts of violence**, acknowledging the **multidimensional feature of social capital** and the protective or detrimental **features of the context**.

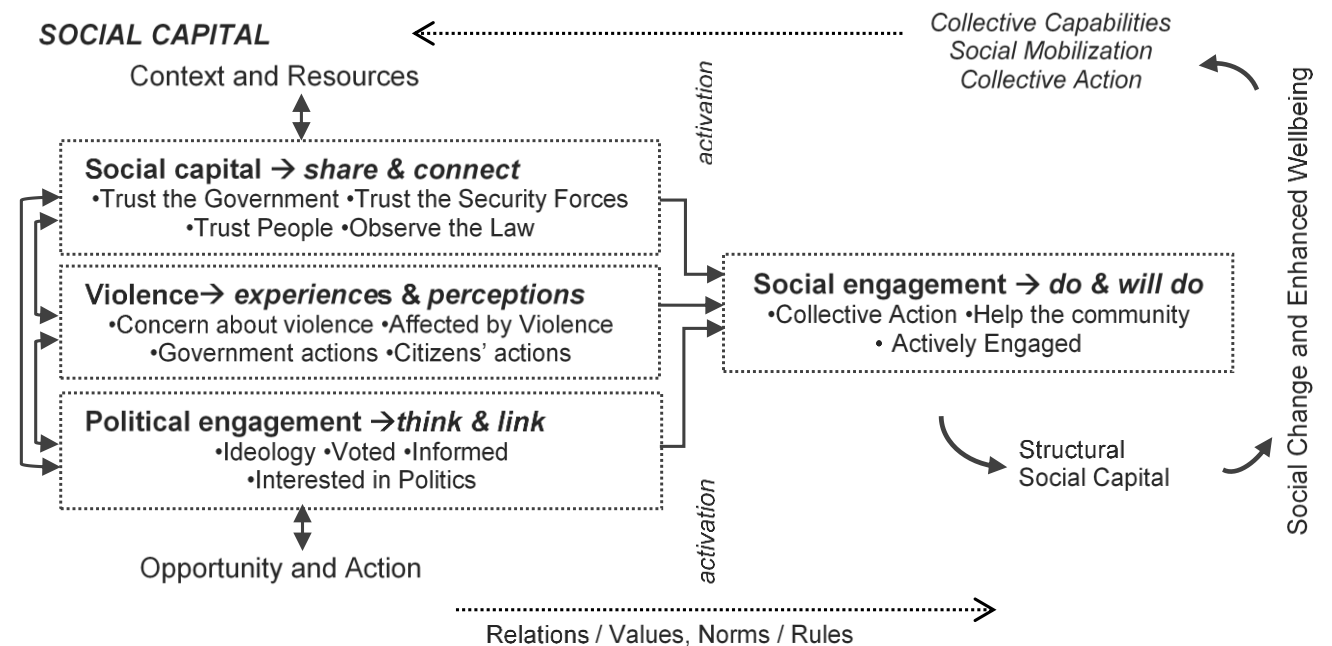
2. Theory overview: Social Capital applied

Social Capital Theory (SCT) → production of resources –a capital- resulting from existing or created social relations for social change, their dynamics and forms (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2001a).

Key components

social capital, trust, networks, institutions

- how relations happen (Portes, 2000).
- SC as a resource, SC as an outcome or both.



3. Research questions

1. Which elements of *social capital* are important in explaining *social engagement* in societies experiencing drug-related crime and violence?
2. Do *violence and political factors* modify the effect of *social capital* on *social engagement*?
3. Do *violence and political factors* influence *social engagement*?
4. Are the levels of *social capital* and the effect of *violence and political factors* related to an individual's levels of *social engagement*?

* Social engagement: a) mobilizing for collective action and b) willingness to help the community

* Violence and political factors: i) experienced and perceived violence and ii) political engagement

3. Methods

- **Data:** Citizenship, Democracy, and Drug-Related Violence survey (CIDENA) Mexico 2011
- **Sample design:** 7 selected states (representative nationwide) + rest 25 (proportional)
- **Respondents:** 7,416 men & women, 18+ year old
- **Variables:** 248 total, 79 used for 24 study variables.

List of the study variables (N = 7,416).

		*			*
Dependent variables					
Social engagement	Collective Action	(12)	Act+Help		
	Help the Community	(5)			
Independent variables					
Social Capital	Trust Government	(6)	Political Engagement	Ideology	(3)
	Trust Security Forces	(4)		Voted in last elections	(1)
	Trust People	(1)	Informed	(6)	
	Observe the Law	(1)	Interested in politics	(1)	
Experienced and perceived violence	Concern about violence	(3)	Demographics	Education	(1)
	Changed life	(11)		Age	(1)
	Violence Witness	(6)		Gender	(1)
	Violence Personal	(10)		Employment	(1)
	Government actions WoD	(1)		State	(1)
	Citizens' actions WoD	(1)			
	Citizens' defense	(2)			
Join organized crime	(2)				

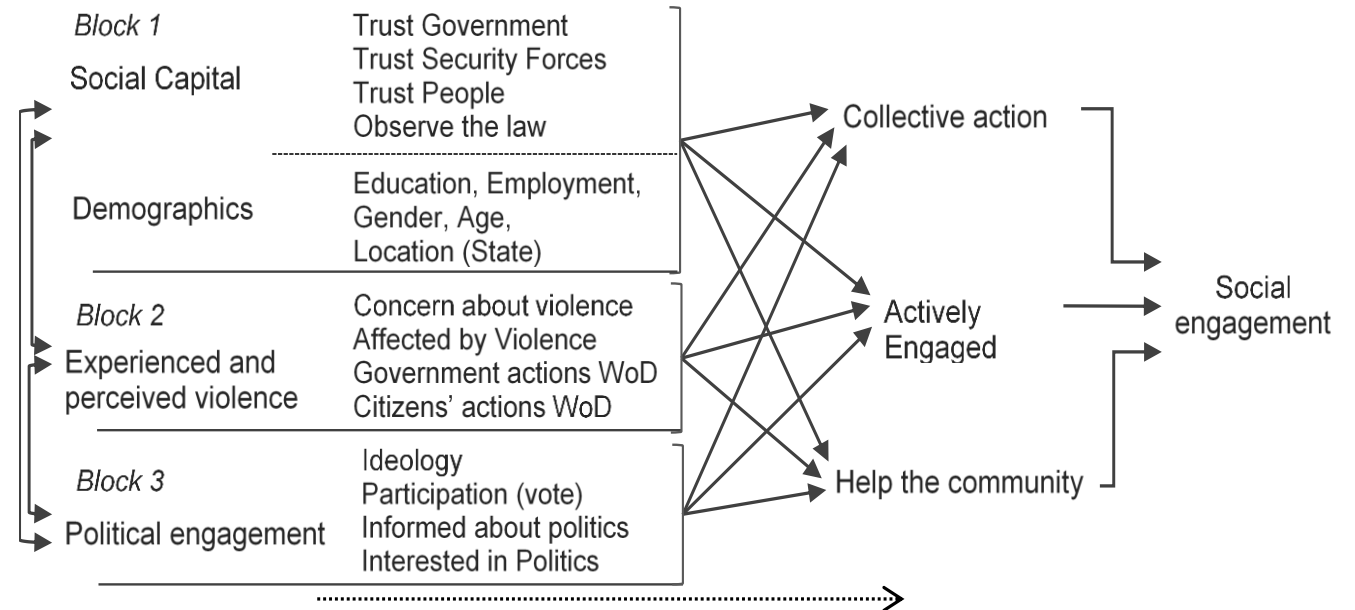
* Numbers in parenthesis show how many original items are used for each indicator.

3. Analysis

- Descriptive and bivariate analyses
- **Main analysis:** Regression analyses using nested models



- I. existing levels of trustworthiness expressed in social relations for SE
potentially affected by
- II. a) experienced & perceived violence b) political engagement



4. Results – univariate

Sample characteristics (N = 7,416).

Variables	% / Mean	Variables	% / Mean
Collective Action *		Witnessed violence [at least once]	64.95%
No collective action	48.54%	Personal violence [at least one]	20.29%
6 or more collective action	2.87%	Citizens Defense	
Help the community (yes)	11.95%	Approves lynching criminals	67.29%
Help in all six forms	5.72%	Approves Self-Defense organization	80.60%
Trust Government (mean)	13.55	Join organized crime [peasant]	9.51%
Trust Security Forces (mean)	10.49	Ideology * [full support certain rights/freedoms]	10.32%
Trust in people (yes)	19.98%	Voted in recent elections (yes)	76.24%
Observe the law (yes)	40.90%	Informed about politics (mean)	13.15
Concerned about violence * [High]	67.64%	Interested in Politics (yes)	71.90%
Changes in life * [1 or more]	76.84%	Occupation * [Housewives]	34.01%
Education *		Gender (females)	52.55%
None	5.26%	Married	59.37%
High School or more	36.14%	Age (mean)	44.68

* Values do not add to 100% because of missing values.



4. Results – bivariate

Pairwise Pearson Correlations for the study variables (N = 7,416).

	CA	HC	AH	TG	TSF	TP	OL	CV	ChL	VW	VP	GvA	CzA	CDf	JOC	ID	Vt	INF	INT	ED	AGE	GEN	EM	ST	
CA	1.00																								
HC	+	1.00																							
AH	+	+	1.00																						
TG	ns	+	+	1.00																					
TSF	ns	+	+	+	1.00																				
TP	+	+	+	+	+	1.00																			
OL	-	ns	-	+	+	-	1.00																		
CV	+	+	+	ns	+	-	+	1.00																	
ChL	+	ns	+	-	-	-	ns	+	1.00																
VW	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	1.00															
VP	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	1.00														
GvA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	1.00													
CzA	-	ns	ns	ns	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	1.00												
CDf	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	ns	+	+	+	-	+	1.00											
JOC	ns	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	1.00										
ID	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1.00									
Vt	+	+	+	+	+	+	ns	+	ns	-	-	-	ns	-	-	-	1.00								
INF	+	+	+	+	+	+	ns	ns	+	+	+	ns	+	-	+	+	+	1.00							
INT	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	ns	+	+	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	+	+	1.00						
ED	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	ns	+	ns	+	+	-	+	+	1.00					
AGE	-	-	-	ns	ns	ns	+	+	ns	-	-	ns	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	1.00				
GEN	-	-	-	ns	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	ns	ns	-	-	ns	-	-	-	-	-	1.00			
EM	+	+	+	ns	ns	+	-	-	ns	+	+	ns	ns	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	1.00		
ST	ns	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	ns	ns	ns	+	ns	ns	1.00	

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed test).

Notation: 1. Collective Action, 2. Help Community, 3. Act+Help, 4. Trust Government, 5. Trust Security Forces, 6. Trust People, 7. Observe the Law, 8. Concern about Violence, 9. Changed life, 10. Violence Witness, 11. Violence Personal, 12. Government actions WoD, 13. Citizens' actions WoD, 14. Citizens defense, 15. Join organized crime, 16. Ideology, 17. Voted last elections, 18. Informed, 19. Interested in politics, 20. Education, 21. Age, 22. Gender, 23. Employment, 24. State.

4. Results – main analysis (1)

Variables	Collective Action		
	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β
Trust Government	+	+	+
Trust Security Forces	ns	ns	-
Trust People	ns	+	+
Observe the Law	-	-	-
Education	+	+	+
Age	ns	ns	ns
Gender	ns	ns	ns
Employment	+	ns	ns
Concern about Violence		+	+
Changed life		+	+
Violence Witness		+	+
Violence Personal		+	+
Government actions WoD		-	-
Citizens actions WoD		-	-
Citizens defense		ns	+
Join organized crime		ns	-
Ideology			ns
Voted last elections			+
Informed			+
Interested in politics			+
N	4,845	4,845	4,845
Adjusted R²	0.03***	0.10***	0.13***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Variables	Help the Community		
	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β
Trust Government	ns	ns	ns
Trust Security Forces	+	+	+
Trust People	ns	ns	ns
Observe the Law	ns	ns	ns
Education	+	+	+
Age	-	-	-
Gender	ns	ns	ns
Employment	+	+	+
Concern about Violence		+	+
Changed life		ns	ns
Violence Witness		ns	ns
Violence Personal		+	+
Government actions WoD		ns	ns
Citizens actions WoD		ns	ns
Citizens defense		-	-
Join organized crime		-	-
Ideology			+
Voted last elections			ns
Informed			+
Interested in politics			ns
N	4,807	4,807	4,807
Adjusted R²	0.03*	0.04***	0.08***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

4. Results – main analysis (2)

Variables	Act+Help		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	β	β	β
Trust Government	+	+	ns
Trust Security Forces	ns	ns	ns
Trust People	ns	+	ns
Observe the Law	-	-	-
Education	+	+	+
Age	ns	ns	ns
Gender	ns	ns	ns
Employment	+	+	+
Concern about Violence		+	+
Changed life		+	+
Violence Witness		+	+
Violence Personal		+	+
Government actions WoD		-	-
Citizens actions WoD		-	-
Citizens defense		ns	ns
Join organized crime		-	-
Ideology			ns
Voted last elections			+
Informed			+
Interested in politics			+
N	4,779	4,779	4,779
Adjusted R²	0.04***	0.09***	0.15***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

- Demographics' consistent (non)significance.
- Social capital: mixed effects.
- Changes observed on social capital set.
- Relevance of the experienced and perceived violence and the political engagement variables.
- A+H: Model with most increment in significance.

4. Discussion – results summary

- Collective mobilization → politically framed.
Supporting the community → individually driven.
- We know little about the effect of individual characteristics (Q1).
- Measures for *trust* appear to be sensitive (Q3).
- Levels of fear and violence appear to influence people's willingness to mobilize.



**Social engagement cannot be fully explained by elements associated to social capital.
Collective Action might be a more critical strategy related to the WoD.**

5. Limitations

- Limited generalizability.
- Cross-sectional data: not to track changes over time.
- Few indicators for welfare, people's motivations, youth responses, and local differences.
- Secondary data: limits for purpose and aims.

6. Implications of the current study

- Cross-cultural assessment: the **locality & diverse contexts**:
 - existing and successful practices, processes and their transmission (created – shared).
 - person-institution relations, local initiatives.
- Social capital **production & reinforcement**:
 - definition and measurement [trust, engagement, acting, violence].
 - distinguish structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital.
- Civil societies and the production of **positive** social capital:
 - local leaders & groups [work, initiatives and transmission of practices] to contain negative provision.
 - stories of success and collective memories.
 - data to track social behaviors and social transformations over time.

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Images

- <http://focoblanco.com.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/narcomex.jpg>
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