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# Making Democracy Work in the Heart of Emilia

An Empirical Investigation Of Social Capital

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# Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to take the temperature of social capital in four cities – Bologna, Modena, Reggio nell'Emilia, and Parma – in the historical region Emilia in Italy. Social capital, which has been described as ‘the key to making democracy work’ is conceptualized and decomposed into two key variables: trust and participation. Furthermore, the study consists of new empirical statistical data compiled by myself. With this theoretical framework, context, and empirical material I pose the question: *what is each city's level of social capital and what variations can be exposed?* The results, which are limited to the questions in the survey, indicate that the cities have a relatively low score of social capital, especially in the dimension that highlights trust. The results also expose a pattern where Bologna and Parma are performing relatively better than Reggio and Modena, in almost all variables measured. Citizens from all cities tend to participate in public affairs through channels, such as the media, Internet and demonstrations, instead of through political parties, and they all indicate a moderately low confidence in political institutions. In its concluding chapter, this thesis moreover gives three suggestions for further studies: (1) to further examine the methodological complexity and how to enable more precise studies of social capital; (2) to continue the study of urban social capital but in a wider comparative context with rural social capital, and; (3) to further examine the socio-spatiality of social capital, to simply study the creation and appearance of social capital in place and space.

*Key words:* social capital, civic trust, civic participation, survey, Italy, Emilia  
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# 1 Overview and Motivation

## 1.1 Introduction

In the beginning of 2011 massive protests emerged in Egypt's capital Cairo with ambition to overthrow the regime led by Hosni Mubarak. Similar scenarios happened in neighboring countries and the revolutions and transitions to democracy that followed were titled 'the Arabic spring' in total. The Tahrir square, that was both the symbol and arena for the revolution – simply put the protest movement's beating heart.<sup>1</sup> In his ethnographic fieldwork in Egypt, Atef Said asked numerous participants of the revolution the same question: why did you go to the Tahrir square? They all answered that 'they all just knew to head there', which stresses the act of mobilization and collective action.<sup>2</sup> The participants, who were politically heterogeneous, crowded altogether for the shared ambition to change the society's game rules and democratize its institutions. With this collective action the demonstrators finally succeeded to force Mubarak back from the throne.<sup>3</sup> The shared norms and ideals to democratize, and the public act to resist and demonstrate, together form the concept of social capital.

In his classic book from 1993, Robert D. Putnam concludes that "building social capital will not be easy, but it is the key to making democracy work."<sup>4</sup> This striking conclusion was supported with over twenty years of on-going measurements of institutional effectiveness in Italy's administrative regions. The pattern was flawless: the better performance in political institutions, the higher was the social capital.<sup>5</sup> The social capital's extrinsic value for a functioning democracy was thus consolidated.

Two components are highlighted in the conceptualization of social capital: trust and participation. The trust, also called generalized trust, refers to a person's belief that another will perform actions that are helpful for him or her.<sup>6</sup> This, in turn, leads to the avoidance of *the prisoner's dilemma* and the *tragedy of the commons*,<sup>7</sup> since the actors, within this norm of generalized trust, can cooperate and achieve certain ends that are unattainable in its absence. Trust in this sense

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<sup>1</sup> Al Jazeera 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Said 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Saouli 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Putnam *et al* 1993:185.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Gambetta 1988:217.

<sup>7</sup> For a review of *the prisoner's dilemma* and *tragedy of the commons*, see Putnam *et al.* 1993.

has been studied within various fields, such as economic efficiency,<sup>8</sup> democratic performance,<sup>9</sup> and social integration,<sup>10</sup> and they all conclude that it is an essential part in solving collective action problems.

The second dimension, participation, is, according to e.g. Alexis de Tocqueville, Robert Dahl and Jean Jacques Rousseau, essential for a functioning representative democracy. Forms of participation, such as demonstrating, debating, protesting, and voting are ways for citizens to criticize and communicate with the government, which is fundamental in the democratic public sphere.<sup>11</sup>

In their work *Civic culture*, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba took these concepts together as a key element in their theoretical contribution to political culture. Trust enables citizens to mobilize together, to set norms and build consensus. Trust, put shortly, encourages participation. But participation in its wide sense likewise creates trust.<sup>12</sup> It is, according to Putnam, citizens' associational activity that teaches them to collaborate and act for the collective good.<sup>13</sup> This stresses the complexity and the interdependent relationship that constitute social capital.

## 1.2 Aim and Purpose of the Study

With this study I intend to contribute to the research field of social capital. The concept has since the early 1990s been regularly measured by both organizations, such as the World Bank, governments, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and academics, e.g. Putnam and World Value Survey.<sup>14</sup> These have the feature in common as being measured on the national, sub-national or regional level. I claim that fruitful analyses can be made with these data, and that for many parts of the world, the regional level of analysis is sufficient for generalizations for subpopulations in a given region. However, in the case of Italy, I am not convinced that a regional level of measurement is adequate for describing and explaining civic attitudes and behaviours. The cities have strong traditions and enormous cultural disparities.<sup>15</sup> Also, I argue that cities should receive more attention as they are providing an interesting context for social capital. The comparison big city-small city or city-countryside in the analysis of social capital would undeniably be interesting, but it lies beyond the scope of this book, but it is suggested for further studies.

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<sup>8</sup> Coleman 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Arrow 1972.

<sup>11</sup> Valencia *et al.* 2010:63.

<sup>12</sup> Almond & Verba 1963.

<sup>13</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993; Putnam 2000.

<sup>14</sup> See preface in Dasgupta & Serageldin 2000

<sup>15</sup> On this important notion, see e.g. Hägg 2012.

This said, in this thesis I examine four Italian cities situated in the region Emilia<sup>16</sup> wherein I aim to take the temperature of social capital. I have no claims and ambitions to reveal causal links on how social capital is created, but only to provide descriptive data on various behavioral or attitudinal patterns. In fact, Putnam's effort to explain social capital in 1993 showed to be indisputably challenging and he even had to trace patterns of civic traditions back to medieval Italy. However, even though the explanatory purpose here is not prioritized, I keep this in mind throughout the thesis and reflect upon how variations could be explained. Apart from this, the thesis is purely descriptive.

I would like to briefly give an outline and present the disposition of this thesis before jumping forward in specifying the research question. You should now have an idea of what message I aim to mediate, i.e. to examine what has been called "the key to making democracy work" and the stressing of co-operation in avoidance of *the prisoner's dilemma*. Simply put, the democratic value of social networks and collaboration. After posing my overarching question in this chapter, the concept of social capital is conceptualized. After that, I specify my methodological design and discuss both the case selection and how I compiled my empirical data. Thereafter, the cities are put in a wider context, that is, a brief historical, geographical, and economical background that, I believe, is necessary for the analysis in chapter 5, wherein the theoretical and methodological model is put as a framework to the empirical material and discussed in detail. The thesis ends with a concluding chapter where I, except for summarizing and interpreting my findings, also suggest for future studies. Finally, two appendices are enclosed for the reader to more in detail follow my use of variables in the investigation.

### 1.3 Research Question

My overarching research question is posed in a fairly straightforward manner: I simply ask how something *is*, and not how something can be *explained*. The question is posed as:

- *What is each city's level of social capital and what variations can be exposed?*

Ontologically, its character is positivistic as it presumes that there is one truth of the level of social capital. However, the conceptualization of social capital has proven to be not so easily determined, which implies a wider span of truths. The next chapter will assess this multifaceted concept further. Also, my own definition and methodological tradeoffs are important for answering the question above as it

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<sup>16</sup> The administrative region is called Emilia-Romagna. The four cities are, however, part of the Emilian land. See map in chapter 4 for a more detailed division of the region. I will henceforth call the region Emilia.

require a definition of social capital and an examination of its components. Moreover, what variations that actually can be exposed are limited to the empirical data, i.e. the respondents' answers in my sample. My intention is thus to answer this question empirically with a statistical basis, though not including any complex arithmetical statistical tests. I hope the following chapters will guide the reader through this explorative journey of social capital.

## 2 Conceptualizing ‘Social Capital’

Social capital is a relatively new research area that was scholarly initiated by Pierre Bourdieu<sup>17</sup> and James Coleman<sup>18</sup> in the 1980’s. The big upswing occurred after Robert D. Putnam published *Making Democracy Work* in 1993<sup>19</sup>, in which the researchers revealed massive empirical evidence that political institutions are more effective where the social capital is stronger. The elegantly executed study inspired, and still does, researchers with various backgrounds.<sup>20</sup> Figure 2.1 illustrates the progress of published works between 1991 and 2004.

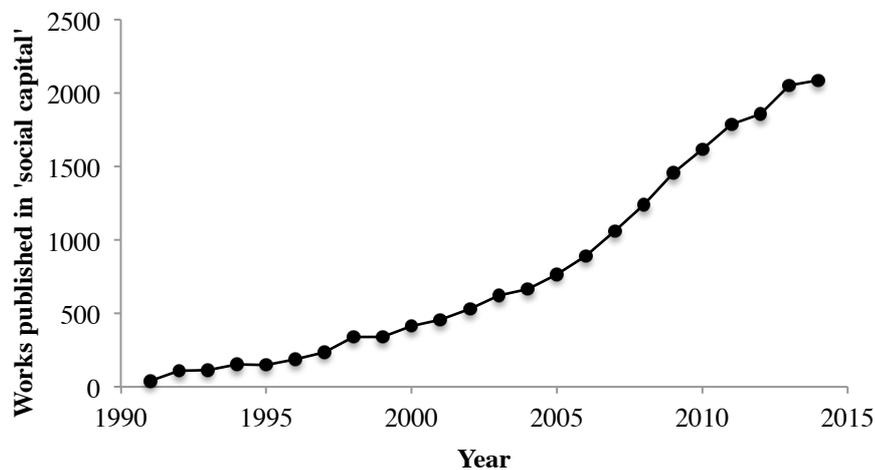


Figure 2.1 – Works published in 'social capital'.

### 2.1 Previous Research

James Coleman follows Mark Granovetter and conceptualize that personal relations and networks generate and maintains trust, norms and reciprocity. The social capital, just like other forms of capital, is productive, and thus making possible achievements of certain ends that would not be realizable in its absence.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bourdieu 1983.

<sup>18</sup> Coleman 1988; 1990.

<sup>19</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Krishna 2002; Portes 2000; Uslaner 2002; Woolcock & Narayan 2002; Rothstein 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Coleman 1990:302-303; Granovetter 1973.

Putnam also centralizes the ties between individuals that constitute social networks and mutual norms that constitute civic virtue. Civic virtue is, according to him, most powerful when anchored in a dense network of reciprocal social networks. Social networks involve mutual obligations and engagement, which fosters robust norms for reciprocity: “I do this for you now and expect you to do the same for me in the future”.<sup>22</sup> A society characterized with this kind of generalized trust and cooperation is more efficient than a society where distrust prevails.<sup>23</sup> Jane Jacobs, who has a perhaps more pronounced spatial dimension in her studies, suggest that social capital is created among neighbors, where they meet and interact causally. It has precise positive effects, such as an increased surveillance over the children’s safety and security, and all the neighbors – not just for their own children – feel responsible.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, when economical and political arrangements are settled in solid social reciprocal networks, incitements for opportunism and corruption diminishes.<sup>25</sup>

Putnam showed us in 1993 that associational activity is the catalyst for social capital. Citizens’ interactions and reciprocal condition make democracy work – voluntary associations basically train citizens to be virtuous.<sup>26</sup> The early pioneers, Coleman and Putnam, thus highlighted social networks and generalized trust as the concepts’ main ingredients, while other scholars centralizes civic participation.<sup>27</sup> Francis Fukuyama argues that social capital must be understood as a set of community norms that leads to cooperation, which in turn generates trust.<sup>28</sup> Bo Rothstein suggest that social capital has two dimensions: a qualitative and a quantitative, where the first is conceptualized as the quality of trust within the individual’s personal contacts and the latter is simply the number of social contacts the individual has. The level of social capital, according to him, is thus an individual’s social contacts multiplied with the quality of trust in those relationships.<sup>29</sup>

One important conceptual division of social capital is the *bonding* and *bridging* dimensions. Consider for example a social group within a church. The level of social capital may well be high among the members, making the group efficient and beneficial, and they minimize risk by participating and cooperating only in their group.<sup>30</sup> Trust is high within the group but trusting out-group members is more hesitant<sup>31</sup>, and such relationships strengthen “pre-existing social stratification, prevent mobility of excluded groups, minorities or poor people, and become bases for corruption and co-optation of power by the dominant social

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<sup>22</sup> Putnam 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Newton 1997.

<sup>24</sup> Jacobs 1961.

<sup>25</sup> Putnam 2000; Rothstein 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Paxton 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Beuningen & Schmeets 2012; Paxton 2002.

<sup>28</sup> Fukuyama 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Rothstein 2005:66.

<sup>30</sup> Adler & Kwon 2002; Narayan 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Uslaner 1999.

groups”<sup>32</sup> Examples on *bonding* social groups are ethnical associations, the Ku Klux Klan, the Camorra, and luxurious golf clubs.<sup>33</sup>

Links between different social groups that promotes cooperation and civic participation, which are crucial for generalized trust, is called *bridging* social capital.<sup>34</sup> Members that hold confidence and loyalty with other members in their particularized group ought to build relationships with others that are different from themselves in order to achieve collective well-being, and to “change values, preferences, and the capacity to act”.<sup>35</sup> This generalized trust is a fundamental basis for giving citizens equal conditions for participation in the public sphere that a democratic society is based upon.<sup>36</sup>

## 2.2 Social Capital and Democracy

Pamela Paxton writes that social capital can affect democracy in two ways. It can help a country’s in its democratic transition, and it can help to maintain or improve a democracy. In the first case, citizens who participate in associations can generate both bonding and bridging trust and mobilize into a political opposition. For the second case, the associational activity produces tolerant members who are stimulated with political participation and promotes compromise.<sup>37</sup> Needless to say, Putnam’s final score in 1993 already pointed on this dimension; that social capital and *civicness* fosters well-functioned democratic institutions – social capital makes democracy work.<sup>38</sup>

After a state’s transition to democracy, the intrinsic value and ideology of democracy must be consolidated and become the “only game in town”.<sup>39</sup> Fundamentally, the democratic regime must encourage its citizens to participate. Already in 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville<sup>40</sup> wrote that an individual’s associational participation fosters virtuous civic members, creates interdependence, and produces routines of taking part in public matters, to participate.<sup>41</sup> Paxton refers to this as the quantitative dimension of social capital in the maintenance of democracy. The qualitative dimension, however, concerns the nature of participation, and is crucial in the civic formation of the public sphere; a communicative, deliberative space that goes beyond the majority’s norms<sup>42</sup>, and

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<sup>32</sup> Narayan 1999:13.

<sup>33</sup> Putnam 2000:22.

<sup>34</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993.

<sup>35</sup> Paxton 2002:258.

<sup>36</sup> Sommerfeldt 2012:285.

<sup>37</sup> Paxton 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993.

<sup>39</sup> Linz & Stepan 1996.

<sup>40</sup> Tocqueville 1990 [1840].

<sup>41</sup> This relationship has been empirically attested; see for example Rosenstone & Hansen 1993; Verba & Nie 1972; Pollock 1982; Olsen 1972; Leighly 1995.

<sup>42</sup> Habermas 1989; Calhoun 1993.

“strengthen democratic virtues such as open-mindedness, tolerance, and respect for opposing viewpoints, while also creating an informed and reasoned public opinion”.<sup>43</sup>

Generalized trust is important in avoiding social traps and promoting rationalization of public goods (the avoidance of *the prisoner’s dilemma*). Trust is thus important in democracies, compared to Hobbesian-like regimes where the state controls society, there is little use for social trust. Some scholars argue that democracies promote participation, deliberation and associational activities, and thus promote trust, which make citizens tolerant and acceptant of minority cultures,<sup>44</sup> but Eric Uslaner expounds, “democracy is no guarantee of either trust or a vibrant community”. He continues;

Democracies that are badly divided by ethnic, religious, or racial clashes may be only marginally more trusting than autocracies that are similarly split. Generalized trust can be the engine of a society only where most people are willing to express at least a modicum of faith in strangers. And people are most likely to trust others (and not just their own kind) when they are doing well and expect to do better.<sup>45</sup>

Social capital promotes civic participation and healthy political institutions. However, it is not always good for democracy and social health. As accounted above, racist movements and, for instance, the Ku Klux Klan are forms of social networks with bonding qualities. The Klan reminds us of the negative side of social capital and that it is not “automatically conducive to democratic governance”.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.3 Social Capital and Place

Social capital is created when actors meet in deliberative practices. Previous research has, although, only rarely exposed the spatial dimension of those practices. Individuals, interactions, associational participation and democratic processes have been well studied, but there is a lack in the literature on the actual physical sites where interactions, participation and democratization occur.<sup>47</sup> This raises a fundamental question: are there ‘good’ and ‘bad’ places for creating social capital? And if specific places are better than other, the landowner (state, region, city) becomes a key-player in the formation of bridging social capital. The

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<sup>43</sup> Paxton 2002.

<sup>44</sup> Levi 1996; Uslaner 1994.

<sup>45</sup> Uslaner 1999:143.

<sup>46</sup> Putnam 2005:9.

<sup>47</sup> Svendsen 2010.

government can thus create in the public space meaningful meeting places for its citizens.

A central idea, originated by Martin Heidegger, of the socio-spatiality of place is that people define themselves in relation to the physical world.<sup>48</sup> Central to Heidegger is the human's spiritual unity with the material world that by repeated experience internalizes knowledge to construct meaningful places.<sup>49</sup> The individual is furthermore governed by societal norms that frame the social construction of physical places. This is an important link between social structures and individual actors in the discourse of space and place. As Paul Knox puts it: "we live both in and through places."<sup>50</sup>

Places cannot solely be perceived by its form, but also by its multifunction, history, subjectivity, and so on.<sup>51</sup> It is both text and context, sites for economic transactions, for meeting others, for sacramental purposes – i.e. the arena for everyday action.<sup>52</sup> It is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis to further examine the connection between place and social capital. This relatively unexplored research field is left behind now and I suggest for future studies to further examine it.

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<sup>48</sup> Heidegger 1971.

<sup>49</sup> Norberg-Schultz 1980.

<sup>50</sup> Knox 2005:2.

<sup>51</sup> Aravot 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Knox 2005:3.

## 3 Methodology and Material

The methodological character of this study is mainly quantitative as it provides statistical data, which have been compiled by myself. I believe however that the quantitative data must be put in a qualitative context, be that historical, social, economical, or geographical, in order to find the mechanisms behind variations and various levels in the data. Therefore, I intend to examine the four cities in a more qualitative manner before jumping to the exploration and interpretation of the data. The methodological character can thus be described as both quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative side is investigated through literature written in Swedish, English, or Italian, and I will focus on historical and geographical background to the cities. I believe that the historical context is essential because learning of the past teaches us about the present. Putnam furthermore confirms this conventional notion in *Making democracy work*, wherein his investigation of social capital goes back to medieval Italy.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.1 Measurement and Definition of Social Capital

Social capital has proven to be difficult to measure. Rothstein warns us for ‘conceptual stretching’ and attribution so that the term says (almost) nothing about (almost) everything.<sup>54</sup> Scholars choose multiple different definitions and the diverse measurements follow accordingly. Furthermore, just like many other social phenomena, it has been stated that social capital is difficult, if not impossible, to measure.<sup>55</sup> There is furthermore a lacking concordance on the definition of social capital. Rothstein reviews Putnam’s definition and points on its problematic nature, highlighting the multidimensionality, causal mechanisms among the variables within the definition, and that the concept’s explanatory ambition is also included in the definition, making it tautological.<sup>56</sup> I, however, define social capital as a combination of civic trust and civic participation, together constituting a civic spirit, basically *civicness*.

Notwithstanding the definitional dilemma of social capital, two central notions can be identified: trust and participation. In figure 3.1 I demonstrate my

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<sup>53</sup> See chapter 5 in Putnam *et al.* 1993.

<sup>54</sup> Rothstein 2005:55.

<sup>55</sup> Grootaert & van Bastelaer 2001.

<sup>56</sup> Rothstein 2005:54.

conceptual model, with participation and trust as the main ingredients. Participation can be divided into social (family, friends), organizational (associations), and political participation (voting, demonstrating, deliberating in public matters), and trust is divided into social (family, friends), organizational (media, military, bureaucracy, NGOs) and political trust (politicians, local government, parliament).<sup>57</sup>

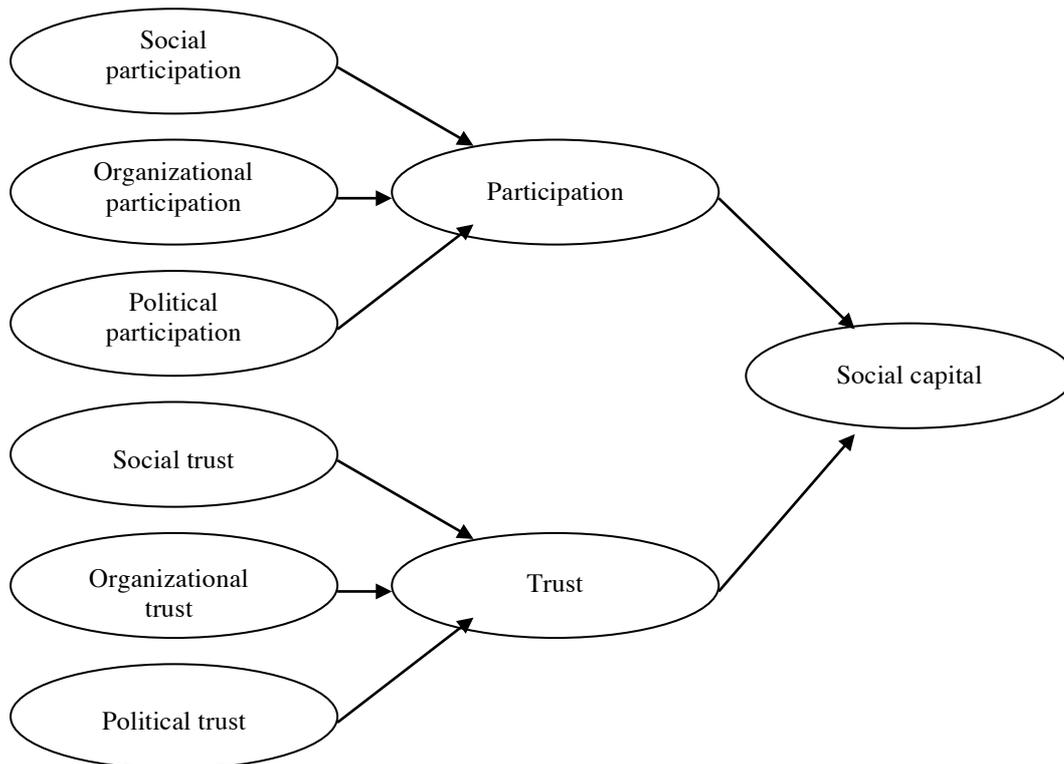


Figure 3.1 – Conceptual model of social capital.

Social participation was examined as the frequency (a seven graded scale between *never* and *every day*) of contact with friends, neighbors and colleagues outside the work frame. Organizational participation was measured as participation, membership or volunteering during the last 12 months in association for:

- Sport or outdoor activities
- Cultural or hobby activities
- A trade union
- A business or professional organization
- For humanitarian aid, human rights, etc.
- For environmental protection and animal rights
- Religious organization

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<sup>57</sup> Beuningen & Schmeets 2012; Paxton 1999.

- Science and education
- Social club, club for young/elderly/women, etc.
- Any other such as the ones mentioned above

Political participation was measured as voting in the last national election and political action during the last five years through;

- Radio/TV/newspaper
- Political parties or organizations
- Government organized meeting
- Personal contact with politician or civil servant
- Protest group
- Public protest or demonstration
- Internet/e-mail/SMS<sup>58</sup>

Social trust was operationalized in the conventional manner<sup>59</sup> by asking “Generally, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or can’t you be too careful in dealing with people?” and “If you were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, would you ask a neighbor for help?” Political trust was measured as trust in politicians, parliament, national government and local government, and organizational trust was measured as trust in the legal system, the police, the bureaucracy, the military, and the media.

## 3.2 Case Selection

This study contains data from four different cities – Bologna, Modena, Reggio, and Parma – all located in the region Emilia in Italy.<sup>60</sup> As will be more clarified in the next chapter, the four cities are fairly homogeneous. In terms of social capital, the region has gained attention for its high scores in comparison with, e.g. the Italian region Calabria that gained attention for its low scores. Putnam praised the region and traced back its social capital qualities to medieval Italy where, according to him, the *civicness* started.<sup>61</sup>

But what about variations of social capital within the regions? Italy’s multifaceted culture might not be perfectly represented in aggregated data scores such as twenty administrative regions. Therefore, Roberto Cartocci made a disaggregate sample of social capital in Italy’s 103 provinces in order to explore hidden patterns.

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<sup>58</sup> These operationalizations regarding ‘participation’ have been used by other scholars. Cfr. Guillen et al. 2011.

<sup>59</sup> Narayan & Cassidy 2001:62; WVS (Inglehart)

<sup>60</sup> The towns selected during an exchange semester at the University of Bologna, which enabled me to grasp the Emilian urban context and to conduct the field research aimed for this study.

<sup>61</sup> See chapter 6 in Putnam *et al.* 1993

In this thesis, however, the sampling is even more disaggregated. I am interested in the city dwellers and how they perceive trust and participate in public life. For that reason, I have chosen to investigate four relatively crowded cities, but with a strong tradition of being cities.<sup>62</sup> I will look for variations of participatory activities and investigate if they actually are that homogenous as previously have been uttered. To my knowledge, social capital has not been measured on the city level in the four cities, which gives this thesis substantial scientific relevance. It has also a popular value as it provides detailed data on how citizens think and behave. In the previous chapter, I stressed the importance of the socio-spatiality of social capital, and that the quality of the city can foster virtuous citizens. This, I believe, is a central statement and should be further examined.

### 3.3 Method of Data Collection

One fundamental rule in scientific research is that the chosen questions determine the answers given.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, when choosing questions for a two-paged survey, they must be considered with precision and well be suited for the theoretical model.<sup>64</sup> A good start is to follow previous scholars' questions in their operationalizations.

A potential bias is that the respondent constructs a "pragmatic meaning" that reflect on why the question is being asked and what is thought to be an appropriate answer. Moreover, previous research has shown that respondents' memories and autobiographical retellings are as much constructed as truthful.<sup>65</sup> In fact, much accuracy concerning memory must be made. The respondent can, for instance, be affected by the language used in the question and remember only pieces of the event, or the respondent can be 'telescoped' back in time and mix the event history with another more recent event.<sup>66</sup>

The sample was conducted as a 'convenience sample', which is a popular method for students who wish to gather quantitative data. However, it can be criticized in many aspects. First, it is not a random selection and the lack of representation is problematic. Second, it may under- or overvalue variations in variables.<sup>67</sup> These objections must be taken seriously, but I argue it is at the same time a preferable sample method. First, given scarce resources, this is perhaps the only method a student can afford. Second, the student should restrain from too ample generalization claims, and consider his study more as a pilot study. Third, the sample can be made in a manner so that it is almost a random selection. I, for

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<sup>62</sup> The four cities was, e.g. during medieval times wealthy and politically important city-states.

<sup>63</sup> Payne 1951.

<sup>64</sup> Schaeffer & Presser 2003.

<sup>65</sup> Tversky & Kahneman 1973.

<sup>66</sup> Teorell & Svensson 2007: 89-91.

<sup>67</sup> Landers, R, N. & Behrend, T, S. 2015, Teorell & Svensson 2007: 95-96.

example, divided my population in three strata based on age, and three strata for quarters and used this rule of thumb in all four cities. This is displayed in the tables below.

	18-29	30-49	50-79
Male	15	15	15
Female	15	15	15

*Table 3.1 – Scheme for age and gender distribution. Numbers in percentages.*

	<b>Quartier Mazzini, Bologna</b>		
	18-29	30-49	50-79
Male	5	5	5
Female	5	5	5

*Table 3.2 – Example of quartier scheme. Numbers in percentages.*

The actual sampling was conducted during two weeks in early June 2015 by myself and with assistance of my brother and a friend. In practical terms, the sampling method means to stop people on the streets and ask them to fill in a questionnaire. Also, as a critique, this tend to twist the representativeness as people are generally more willing to respond questions from whom they feel affinity with.<sup>68</sup> Thus, my sample should be overrepresented by men in their twenties. However, being aware of this, I constantly reminded myself to ask people with much bigger variation. It resulted in 89 respondents in Bologna, 75 in Modena, 65 in Reggio and 64 in Parma, making it a total of 293 respondents for Emilia. Despite the problematic nature of convenience samplings, I claim that my selection is relatively representative in terms of gender distribution, age distribution, and educational background. All these data is provided in the Appendix B.

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<sup>68</sup> Landers, R. N. & Behrend, T. S. 2015.

## 4 Examining Four Cities in Emilia

### 4.1 Previous Indications of Social Capital in Emilia

*Making democracy work* was not only a breakthrough in the sense that it set the agenda for a new research area; it also provided extensive empirical data on Italy's regional differentiations in political-institutional effectiveness and, accordingly, levels on social capital. Putnam's thesis was that the southern regions low institutional quality compared with equivalent high-quality institutions in the northern regions did not depend much on socio-economical development but on the poor level of social capital. This difference is due to historical institutional processes, and Putnam moreover highlighted the southern regions' long-term deficiency of *civicness*<sup>69</sup>, a division that was already studied in 1958 wherein Banfield substantiated the Italian dualism, and emphasized the *amoral familism* – the nuclear family above all – in the south to be decisive.<sup>70</sup>

In describing the term *civicness*, Putnam highlights the distinctive features:

1. Active engagement in public affairs.
2. Political equality, that is, a society characterized by horizontal norms and relations of reciprocity and cooperation, and not a vertical society characterized by vertical relations with authority and dependence.
3. Trust, solidarity and tolerance. This theoretical notion goes back to Tocqueville who emphasized that the generalized trust in a society is the most fundamental postulate for a functioning democracy.
4. Co-operation in social structures, which also goes back to Tocqueville's investigation of democracy in America. When citizens meet and engage in social networks, it inspires them to act for the collective benefit. It is, to cite Putnam's striking title, *making democracy work*.<sup>71</sup>

Emilia was, in short, performing as a stand out region in all four dimensions.<sup>72</sup> Participation in five important referendums between 1974 and 1987 had an average of 89 percentages in Emilia compared to 60 in Calabria, and in preference voting – whereas a high number indicates client-patron relationships and corruption – Emilia scored 17 and Calabria 50 percentages.<sup>73</sup> He writes:

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<sup>69</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993; Cartocci 2007:13.

<sup>70</sup> Banfield 1958.

<sup>71</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993:101-106.

<sup>72</sup> Even though he used the whole region Emilia-Romagna in his study, I will call it Emilia.

<sup>73</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993: 108f.

In most civic regions, such as Emilia-Romagna, citizens are actively involved in all sorts of local associations – literary guilds, local bands, hunting clubs, cooperatives and so on. They follow civic affairs avidly in the local press, and they engage in politics out of programmatic conviction.<sup>74</sup>

Putnam tests his findings with statistical variables such as institutional performance, clientelism, an index of political equality, republicanism, electoral reformism, clericalism, and life satisfaction. All correlations gave a clear indication of a high degree of social capital. Emilia was attributed as the best region in terms of *civiness*.<sup>75</sup>

Roberto Cartocci, who measured social capital in 103 Italian provinces, follows Putnam in both his conceptualization and empirical operationalization of social capital, however slightly differentiated. His four variables are:

1. Diffusion of daily press.
2. Level of electoral participation.
3. Diffusion of sport associations.
4. Diffusion of blood donation.<sup>76</sup>

In table 4.1 I summarize his findings on the four cities examined in this study. The next chapter will continue the empirical investigation with my own data on the city-level, for either prove or disprove Cartocci's findings. Now, however, the four cities need to be put in a context in order to enable a fruitful interpretation of the data in chapter 5.

*Table 4.1 – Cartocci's measurement of social capital. Source: Cartocci 2007.*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Bologna</b>	<b>Modena</b>	<b>Reggio</b>	<b>Parma</b>	<b>Emilia</b>
Diffusion of daily press (of 1000 inhabitants), average of the years 2001 and 2002.	137,16	84,23	103,75	161,99	121,7825
Electoral participation (1999-2001) (percentages)	68,2	67,4	68,1	59,8	65,875
Donations of blood (of 1000 inhabitants), year 2002	64,2	55,4	46,9	66,5	58,25
Donors of blood (of 1000 inhabitants), year 2002	30,6	33,7	26,1	37,7	32,025
Index of blood supply (sum of standardized numbers above)	1,23	1,1	0,39	1,71	1,1075
Index of sport activity (sum of standardized number of associations and members), per 1000 inhabitant	0,62	0,62	1,34	0,6	0,795
<b>Final index of social capital</b>	<b>5,47</b>	<b>3,82</b>	<b>4,44</b>	<b>5,37</b>	<b>4,775</b>

<sup>74</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993: 97.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*:114-132.

<sup>76</sup> "Diffusione della stampa quotidiana"; "livello di partecipazione elettorale"; "diffusione delle associazioni dello sport di base"; "diffusione delle donazioni di sangue". Cartocci 2007:57.

## 4.2 The City: Some Brief Reflections

The city should be separated in two notions: the physical city – the *urbs* – and the social entity – the *civitas*. Together, the *civitas* bond in a community in the *urbs*, i.e. the built environment.<sup>77</sup>

The city is an axiom in our modern urban world. But only two centuries ago, only 5-10% of the world population inhabited cities. People visited, observed, and gathered in the city to trade, but few lived there. Many city dwellers were furthermore born and raised in the countryside and kept a rural embossed life also in the city.<sup>78</sup>

To understand the urbanization and contemporary city, the starting point is clear: the industrialization process. This process is inevitably the engine of social transformations during the past 200 years. The industrialization characterizes modern society.<sup>79</sup> But the city existed before the industrial society. From the city's history and built environment we can learn about its morphology, i.e. the city's grammatical language.<sup>80</sup> Thus, it is not sufficient to see modern urban society as a consequence of industrialization, but also by the already-existing city's built structural sense. A modern man in Athens thus has no direct links to the ancient *agora*, but he perhaps daily visits it and probably possesses a symbolic link to the square's form and function.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, I intend to go back in time for a moment and briefly outline some historical background, both medieval and contemporary, of the four cities.

## 4.3 The Heart of Emilia

Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a big transition in the central-northern Italian cities from relatively poor to rich city-states occurred. The emergence of these communes happened as a response to two complications:

1. There was a lack of order and an absence of emperors who could support its citizens in their needs.
2. The episcopal imperial function was challenged.

An early capitalist spirit and the cities' most essential function, i.e. trade, was conducted on the main square, undeniably becoming one of the key places. Emperors were so keen to keep order in these areas so that, in an example from Bologna where popular recitations of French epics were highly popular, they had

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<sup>77</sup> Areli 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Andr n 1998: 142.

<sup>79</sup> Lefebvre 1982: 9.

<sup>80</sup> Badersten 2002: 181.

<sup>81</sup> Lefebvre 1982: 10.

to legislate against ‘singers of French themes’, *cantatores Francigenorum*, often performing in the main square, the *curia communalis*, today’s Piazza Maggiore.<sup>82</sup> The square was not supposed to have a religious function, even though it was situated next to an impressive but yet unfinished church, but mainly public and economical. In the middle of the square, a large town hall – the Palazzo del Podestà – was constructed to enable the emperor to control and secure activities in the square.<sup>83</sup>

The *podestà* tells us much about the new organized Italian city republics. In the early 14<sup>th</sup> century Modena, the emperor, who had to be born in Modena, served for a period of six months for a salary of 1,200 lire which was paid every second month. He had to be aged at least thirty and not have relatives who had hold public office before him within the previous three years. He was not allowed to eat or drink with any citizens, and he took an oath to be present at the Palazzo Comunale on at least three days a week. It is thus obvious how, both the emperors and the citizens, yearned for control and anti-corruption.<sup>84</sup>

Today, Emilia is a wealthy region with the third highest GDP per capita in Italy.<sup>85</sup> Eminent universities, such as the University of Bologna, and big industries, such as Ferrari and Maserati, residence the region. It is moreover world famous for its culinary traditions, e.g. the Parmesan cheese and tortellini. Politically, the region has historically been a stronghold of the Italian Communist Party, and today, center-left coalitions have a solid ground there.<sup>86</sup>

The four cities’ locations are seen in the map below. A time series diagram of population since Italy’s unification in 1861 is provided to give an idea of the demographic developments. This data is however in provincial level of

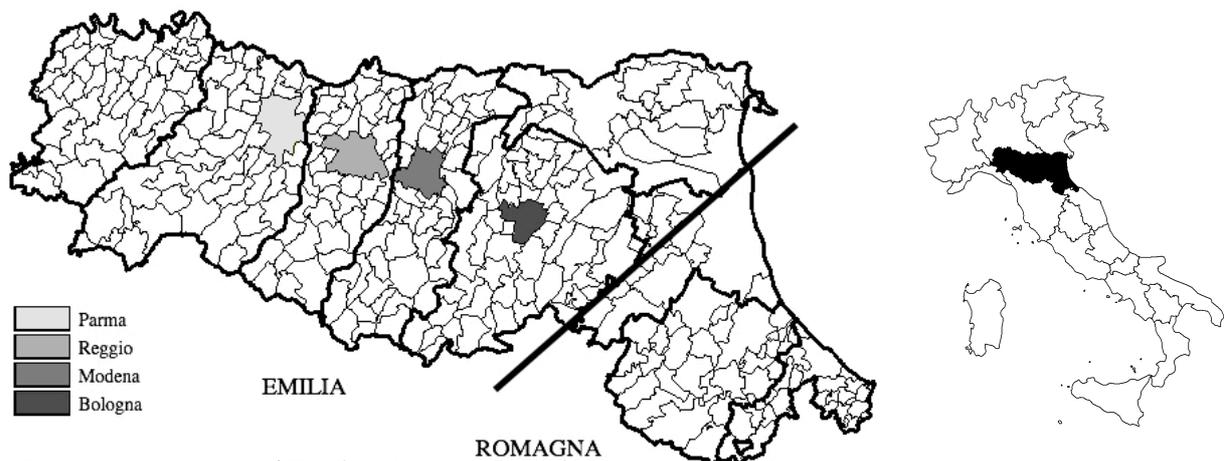


Figure 4.1 – Map of Emilia-Romagna, Italy

<sup>82</sup> Waley & Dean 2010:27.

<sup>83</sup> Bocchi 1997:95.

<sup>84</sup> See chapter 2 in Waley & Dean 2010.

<sup>85</sup> ISTAT.

<sup>86</sup> 'Emilia-Romagna' 2016 in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

measurement, which is skewed for this analysis. Therefore, two additional diagrams illustrate the city's size in relation to its province's size.<sup>87</sup> In addition, GDP per capita gives an indication of wealth in the four cities, in relation to the average in Emilia and Italy.<sup>88</sup>

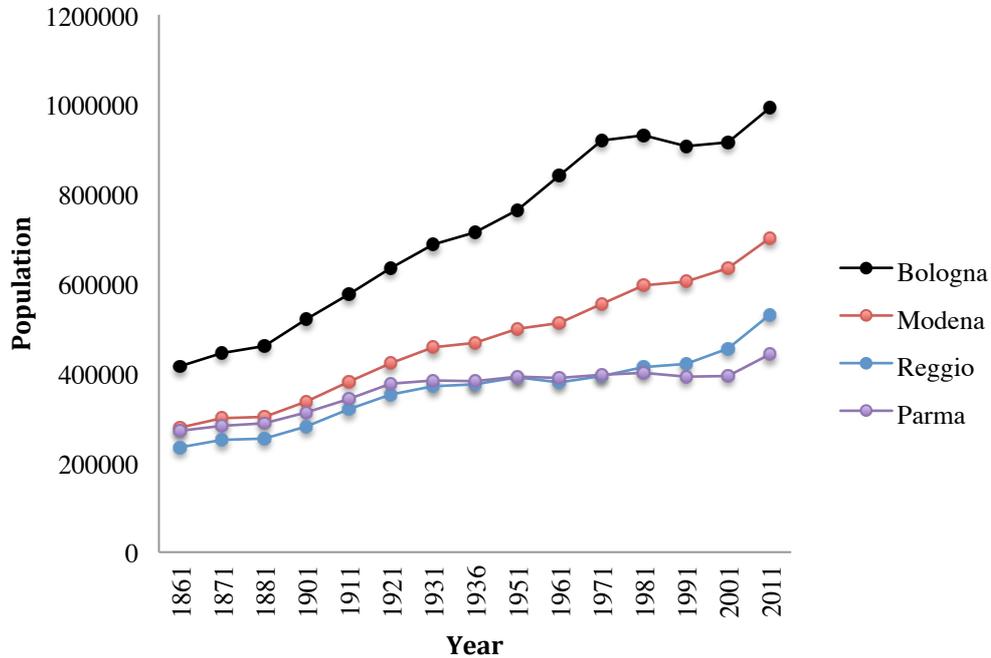


Figure 4.2 – Population 1861-2011.

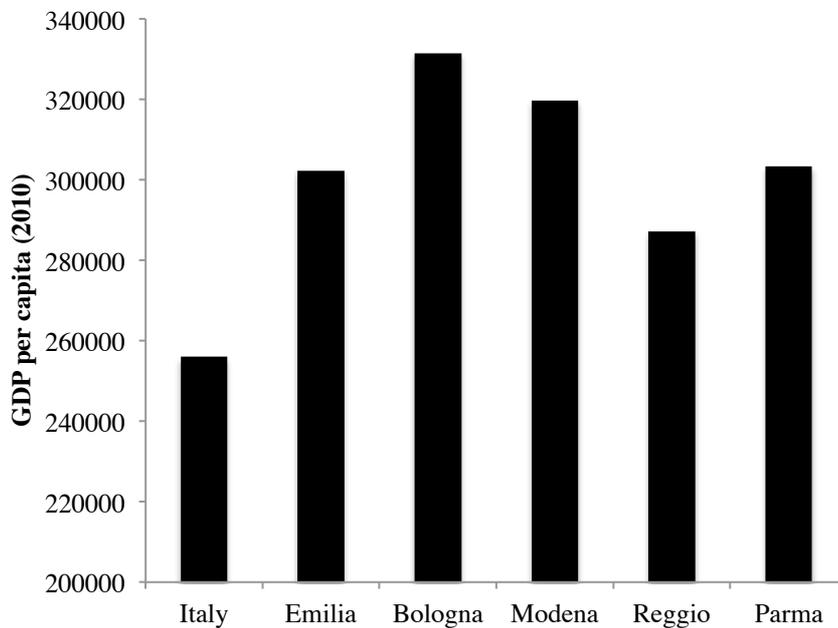


Figure 4.3 – GDP per capita (2010).

<sup>87</sup> Source: ISTAT.

<sup>88</sup> The data in figure 4.2 and figure 4.3 are on the provincial level. Source: UPI 2011.

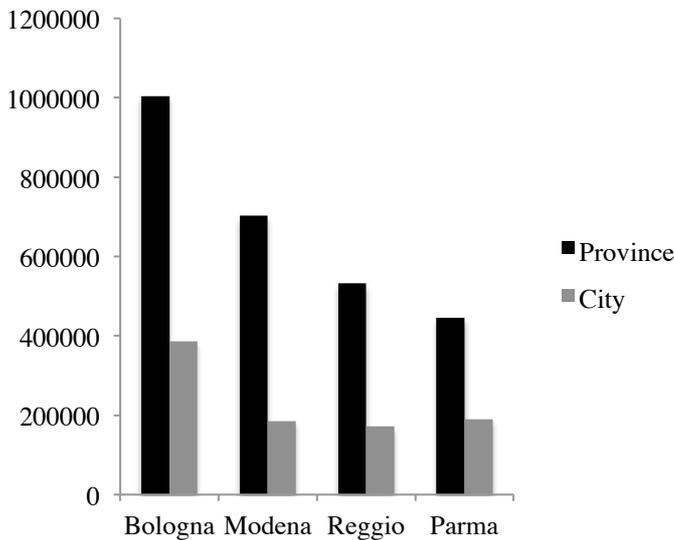


Figure 4.4 – Population (2015).

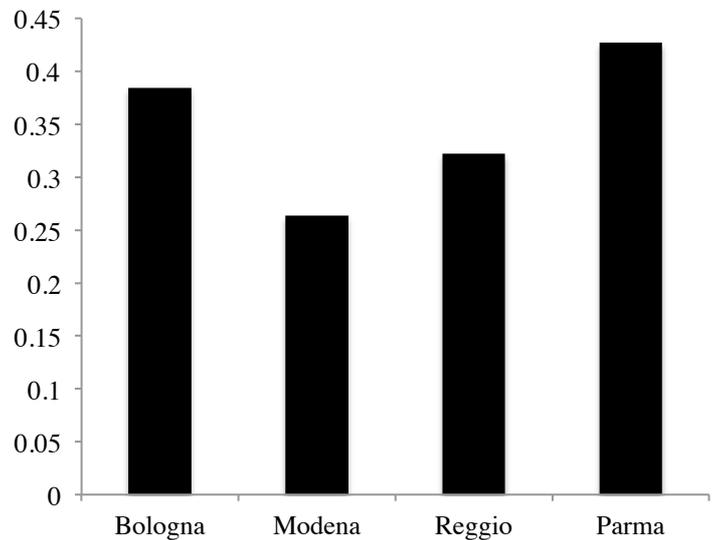


Figure 4.5 – Rate of provincial and city population (2015).

Bologna, established already by the Etruscans in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, takes its current shape in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The city was centered around the cathedral – the Basilica di San Petronio – which had an important function for the emergence of the main piazza. Sunday’s mass was a good opportunity for trade, and the open space outside was an excellent arena for encounters. The square, settled on this open ground in year 1300, was needless to say a response to this primary function, i.e. to be a public arena for economical purposes.<sup>89</sup>

The city is both the largest city, with approximately 380 000 citizens (approx. 1 000 000 in the metropolitan area), and capital in Emilia. Bologna is famous for its high towers, its porticoes and for its famous university, among other things. In fact, the university – the Alma Studiorum – is not only one of the oldest universities in the world, but has also been one of the most renowned ones. At times, during the Renaissance, half of Bologna’s state income was distributed to the university, as a consequence of educational competition and the attempt to attract the most famous scholars.<sup>90</sup>

Bologna is conceived as one of the most livable cities in Italy, ranked 12/110 in 2015.<sup>91</sup> It is called popularly *la grassa*, *la dotta*, *la rossa* [the fat, the learned, the red] for its culinary traditions, for the importance of the university, and for the distinguishing red-colored bricks by which the city center is mainly built with. This red color lies furthermore in the identity of the city’s big industrial manufacturers – Maserati, Lamborghini, and Ducati – who all have their icon models in red color.<sup>92</sup>

Modena was also first settled by the Etruscans and later colonized by the Romans, just like Bologna. It was an important commune in the Middle Ages and

<sup>89</sup> Bocchi 1997:17-19.

<sup>90</sup> Burckhardt 1965: 138.

<sup>91</sup> Ilsole24ore.com.

<sup>92</sup> 'Bologna' 2016 in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

today, just like Bologna, it is wealthy and well-developed and has a score of 14/110 in the annual quality of life measurement.<sup>93</sup>

The history of Reggio is younger than Bologna's and Modena's, but its roots go nonetheless back to the Roman era when the city was settled on the Via Aemilia.<sup>94</sup> Today it is world-famous for its pedagogical innovation – the Reggio Emilia approach – and famous in Italy for left-wing political movements having a strong position. Reggio's score of quality of life is 26/110, the lowest in Emilia.

Parma's history goes back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC when the Romans settled on the Via Aemilia. The city was later an episcopal site, but after struggles between the papacy and emperors it became a free commune in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Annexations of Parma by various dynasties from different periods then followed.<sup>95</sup> Today, Parma is, like the other cities, world famous for its food production.<sup>96</sup> Its score of quality of life is 13/110.<sup>97</sup>

It seems that, from these basic historical descriptions, the cities are quite homogenous. They all have ancient roots, were important communes in the Middle Ages, and have fostered prominent renaissance painters and architects. They have a strong tradition of universities and left-wing political movements. Food production is the main industry in all cities, and the GDP per capita is moderately similar. The quality of life is high, although Reggio is notably separated from the three other cities. With this economical, historical, geographical and demographical context we can now enter the explorative part of this study and aim for variations in the homogeneity.

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<sup>93</sup> Bocchi 1997:19; Ilsole24ore.com.

<sup>94</sup> Bocchi 1997:19-21.

<sup>95</sup> See chapter 1 and 2 in Areli 2012.

<sup>96</sup> 'Parma' 2016 in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

<sup>97</sup> Ilsole24ore.com.

## 5 Exploring *Civiness* in Emilia

In this chapter I present and analyze the data on social capital in the four cities in Emilia. First, I examine the two variables that build social capital – participation and trust – and then combine them into one final social capital score. An analysis of variations and their explanations will be provided in the last section.

### 5.1 Civic Participation

The first variable in my social capital index concerns civic participation, which is divided into organizational, political and social participation. The organizational dimension is what Putnam, following Tocqueville, emphasized when he exposed the institutional effectiveness in the Italian regions back in 1993. He discovered strong correlations between citizens being active in voluntary associations and economical modernity and institutional effectiveness. He found that active volunteers showed more interest in political matters and that they more often read the newspaper. Put together, citizens engaged in associations are more civic virtues.

Emilia, together with the other regions north of Rome, showed clear indications on civic participation in controversy with the southern regions. Thus, in relative terms, the North is undoubtedly beating the South in terms of *civiness*. However, it is not clear what Putnam defines as ‘good’ *civiness* in absolute terms. For example, he writes that in Valle d’Aosta, one out of 377 citizens are engaged in sport clubs, compared to one out of 1847 in Puglia. Clearly, Valle d’Aosta is doing better in this aspect, but is one out of 377 a good number? I believe that one have to keep this in mind before praising regions or cities or whatever it might be.<sup>98</sup>

In Table 5.1 I present data on the four cities in Emilia on associational participation. First, looking at the final score, one third of the Bologna and Parma citizens are engaged in voluntary associations, compared to a quarter in Modena and one out of five in Reggio. Second, the measure clearly has a problem – the reply ‘other’ received many positive responses in all cities. The final score for Emilia as a whole is that a quarter of its citizens engage in associations, but the perhaps most interesting outcome is the variations between on the one hand

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<sup>98</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993.

Bologna and Parma and on the other hand Modena and Reggio. Let us see if this pattern continues as we continue in analyzing the remaining variables.

*Table 5.1 – Organizational participation.*

*During the last 12 months, have you volunteered, participated or been a member of...*

	<b>Bologna</b>		<b>Modena</b>		<b>Reggio</b>		<b>Parma</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Sport</i>	66,3	33,7	66,7	33,3	70,8	29,2	46,9	53,1	63,1	36,9
<i>Cultural</i>	38,2	61,8	64	36	67,7	32,3	57,8	42,2	55,6	44,4
<i>Trade</i>	83,1	16,9	80	20	78,5	21,5	89,1	10,9	82,6	17,4
<i>Business</i>	78,7	21,3	86,7	13,3	92,3	7,7	81,2	18,8	84,3	15,7
<i>Human r.</i>	73	27	84	16	84,6	15,4	73,4	26,6	78,5	21,5
<i>Environ.</i>	75,3	24,7	84	16	96,9	3,1	67,2	32,8	80,5	19,5
<i>Religious</i>	79,8	20,2	84	16	93,8	6,2	78,1	21,9	83,6	16,4
<i>Social cl.</i>	65,2	34,8	85,3	14,7	90,8	9,2	71,9	28,1	77,5	22,5
<i>Other</i>	50,6	49,4	58,7	41,3	56,9	43,1	62,5	37,5	56,7	43,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,8</b>	<b>32,2</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>81,4</b>	<b>18,6</b>	<b>69,8</b>	<b>30,2</b>	<b>73,6</b>	<b>26,4</b>

Numbers in percentages. No=none. Yes=member, participant, volunteer or combined. *Sport*=sport club. *Cultural*=organization for cultural activities. *Trade*=trade union. *Business*=business or professional organization. *Human r.*=organization for human rights. *Environ.*=organization for environmental protection or animal rights. *Religious*=religious organization. *Social cl.*=social club, club for the young/retired/elderly/women. *Other*=any other voluntary organization such as the ones mentioned above.

Table 5.2 concerns political participation. It is contradictory in several ways. For example, Parma shows again a relatively participatory spirit, but at the general election only 38 percentages voted. This might indicate a measurement error, or just explain that the citizens of Parma prefer to engage in politics through alternative channels. In fact, Putnam emphasized that voting in national elections is an unreliable proxy of political participation in Italy.<sup>99</sup>

However, the overall picture of the political participation is clear. In Bologna, citizens use media, such as radio/TV/newspaper to influence and engage in politics. Interestingly, demonstrations and public protests seem to be a meaningful and actively practiced channel for influence in Emilia. Furthermore, back in 1993 the Internet had still not had its big debut, but in 2015 most people use it on a daily basis. In Bologna and Parma, more than half of the respondents participate

<sup>99</sup> Putnam *et al.* 1993.

in political matters through the Internet, but also a substantial number of respondents in Reggio and Modena. As Angelo Antoci *et al.* puts it: people are “bowling alone but tweeting together”.<sup>100</sup> In total, approximately a quarter of the citizens in Emilia participate in politics, where Bologna clearly performs best and Reggio worst.

*Table 5.2 – Political participation.*

*Have you in the last 5 years participated in political actions or influenced politicians/civil servants via... + did you vote in the last national election?*

	Bologna		Modena		Reggio		Parma		Total	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Media</i>	53,5	46,5	74,3	25,7	79,7	20,3	55,4	44,6	65,4	34,6
<i>Parties</i>	85	15	87,8	12,2	90,6	9,4	90,9	9,1	88,3	11,7
<i>Contact</i>	76,8	23,2	80,8	19,2	87,5	12,5	88,7	11,3	82,7	17,3
<i>Protest</i>	69,5	30,5	77	23	87,5	12,5	73,2	26,8	76,4	23,6
<i>Demons.</i>	51,8	48,2	64,9	35,1	75	25	60	40	62,3	37,7
<i>Internet</i>	39,8	60,2	62,2	37,8	70,3	29,7	48,3	51,7	54,4	45,6
<i>Other</i>	80,3	19,7	70,8	29,2	71	29	84,4	15,6	75,9	24,1
<i>Total</i>	65,2	34,8	74	26	80,2	19,8	71,6	28,4	72,2	27,8
<i>Election</i>	32,6	67,4	28,4	71,6	27,7	72,3	61,9	38,1	36,8	63,2

*Media=radio/tv/newspaper. Parties=political parties or organizations. Contacts=personal contact with politician or civil servant. Protest=protest groups. Demons.=demonstrations. Internet=internet/e-mail/SMS. Other=otherwise. Numbers in percentages.*

The last indicator of civic participation is how much citizens get together with friends and colleagues on their spare time. In table 5.3 it is hard to trace any patterns of variations as the ones above. It seems that in all cities, half of the population meet socially between once a week and several times a week. In Modena, however, one significant third of its citizens socialize everyday, compared to Bologna, where only 18 percent socialize on a daily basis. In fact, Bologna is here, interestingly enough, the most introvert city in relative terms with a fifth socializing several times a month or more sporadic, compared to 6,8 in Modena, and 12,5 in both Reggio and Parma.

<sup>100</sup> Antoci *et al.* 2013.

*Table 5.3 – Social participation.  
In general, how often do you meet socially with friends or work colleagues?*

	<b>Bologna</b>	<b>Modena</b>	<b>Reggio</b>	<b>Parma</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Never</i>	1,1	0	1,6	1,6	1
<i>Once/month</i>	2,2 (3,3)	0	3,1 (4,7)	6,2 (7,8)	2,7 (3,7)
<i>Sev/month</i>	16,9 (20,2)	6,8	7,8 (12,5)	4,7 (12,5)	9,6 (13,3)
<i>Once/week</i>	14,6 (34,8)	20,3 (27,1)	29,7 (42,2)	15,6 (28,1)	19,6 (32,9)
<i>Sev/week</i>	47,2 (82)	40,5 (67,6)	35,9 (78,1)	46,9 (75)	43 (75,9)
<i>Every day</i>	18 (100)	32,4 (100)	21,9 (100)	25 (100)	24,1 (100)

*Never=never. Once/month=once a month. Sev/month=several times a month.  
Once/week=once a week. Sev/week=several times a week. Every day=every day.  
Numbers in percentages. Cumulative percentages in parentheses.*

The tables have so far revealed interesting results. Bologna and Parma seem to have the most engaged citizens in various organizations and in political matters. However, Bologna clearly has a lower score on the social dimension of participation. Let us now move on and analyze the cities' final proxy on civic participation.

I believe the variable Election should be excluded from the final indicator on civic participation. The low rate on voting in Parma is clearly misleading. Therefore, the final score differs considerably whether the variable is included or not. This is illustrated in Table 5.4.

The four cities are fairly similar. The pattern that has so far been revealed is consolidated – that Bologna and Parma are indicating a higher rate of civic participation than Modena and Reggio. The distance between Reggio and Parma is furthermore notable.

*Table 5.4 – Final index for civic participation.*

	<b>Bologna</b>	<b>Modena</b>	<b>Reggio</b>	<b>Parma</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Associational participation</i>	32,2	23	18,6	30,2	26,4
<i>Political participation: influence</i>	34,8	26	19,8	28,4	27,8
<i>Political participation: election</i>	67,4	71,6	72,3	38,1	63,2
<i>Social participation*</i>	79,8	93,2	87,5	87,5	86,7
<b><i>Final index score</i></b>	<b>0,5355</b>	<b>0,5345</b>	<b>0,4955</b>	<b>0,4605</b>	<b>0,5103</b>
<b><i>Final index score excluding election variable</i></b>	<b>0,4893</b>	<b>0,4740</b>	<b>0,4197</b>	<b>0,5870</b>	<b>0,4697</b>

*\* Social participation has been recoded into the rate of respondents who meet socially once a week or more often.*

## 5.2 Civic Trust

The second dimension of social capital is trust, which I have divided into organizational, political and social trust. The organizational aspect concerns how much citizens have confidence on various institutions. Measuring institutional confidence is needless to say problematic – it could be argued that everything is institutional, so the list of thinkable institutions could thus be long. Nevertheless, in order not to make the survey too extensive, I included the following five institutions: the legal system, the police, the bureaucracy, the military, and the media.

Rothstein argues that *just institutions matter*, which is the overarching theme in all his research. A democracy, according to him, function best if it has well developed and solid institutions. Furthermore, healthy institutions tackle corruption and foster democratization.<sup>101</sup>

Table 5.5 reveals an indication of institutional confidence in the four cities. Evidently, Bologna is again the city with the highest score in all variables and has therefore, in relative terms, citizens with the highest trust in institutions. One interesting finding is that all cities express relatively high confidence in the military and police, which could indicate a strong feeling for security and control. Kenneth Newton and Pippa Norris have previously showed a negative correlation between confidence in the military and participation in voluntary associations, which indicate that the more confidence in the military, the less social capital.<sup>102</sup> The variables have, however, relatively high standard deviations that witnesses variations within the variables. The lowest scores were given to the bureaucracy and the media. The low confidence in bureaucracy could be explained by Italy's high level of corruption<sup>103</sup>, and the media's low confidence could possibly be explained by the medial development in Italy the last 25 years, where Silvio Berlusconi – the former Prime Minister – own a substantial amount of the industry and have been subject for numerous scandals.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> See e.g. Rothstein 1998.

<sup>102</sup> Newton & Norris 1999: 9.

<sup>103</sup> TI 2014.

<sup>104</sup> See e.g. Kappelin 2010; Hägg 2012.

Table 5.5 – Organizational trust.

	Bologna	Modena	Reggio	Parma	Total
<i>Legal</i>	4,58 (2,07)	3,93 (1,96)	3,58 (1,78)	3,36 (1,92)	3,93 (1,99)
<i>Police</i>	4,93 (2,06)	4,05 (1,94)	4,31 (2,17)	4,13 (2,14)	4,40 (2,09)
<i>Bureau.</i>	3,99 (1,94)	3,72 (1,67)	3,70 (1,53)	3,10 (1,53)	3,67 (1,72)
<i>Military</i>	4,81 (2,27)	4,05 (2,01)	4,35 (2,04)	4,15 (2,01)	4,37 (2,13)
<i>Media</i>	4,01 (2,19)	3,51 (1,69)	3,79 (1,62)	3,27 (1,63)	3,68 (1,84)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,46 (2,11)</b>	<b>3,85 (1,85)</b>	<b>3,95 (1,83)</b>	<b>3,60 (1,85)</b>	<b>4,01 (1,95)</b>

*Legal*=legal system. *Bureau.*=Bureaucracy.

1=no confidence. 9=full confidence. Standard deviation in parentheses.

Table 5.6 shows citizens' perceptions of political institutions. As mentioned above, corruption is widespread in Italy, which is somewhat expressed in this data. Again I would like to oppose Putnam's analysis that praises the northern regions for their relatively high scores on both participation and trust. Certainly, the conclusion saying that the North is better performing is, I believe, correct, but is the North ideal? Are the citizens ideal democratic virtues, do they co-operate in all matters and do they trust all institutions? The general impression of his study, according to me, is that the North and the South are, as Dante Alighieri would have put it, paradise and inferno. To talk about this, almost stereotypical, dualism, it deprives important facts. The North is not paradise and the South is not inferno. For example, the Mafia exists also in the North, and so does institutional corruption.

A score of below 3 out of 9 must be considered low – all cities have low confidence in political institutions. The variations here are not very big, but the pattern earlier presented, with Bologna at the apex and Reggio on the bottom, is again attested. Respondents from all cities expressed a higher amount of trust in their local governments in comparison with its national government. This, I believe, confirms two things:

1. Italy is a young country, bound together as recently as in 1861, numerous important cities with distinguished cultures and languages. The citizens' historical context is palpable: 'we trust our own but not the politicians in Rome'.
2. When Italy was founded, during the *Risorgimento*, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian statesman Massimo d'Azeglio wrote in his memoirs: "L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli italiani", translated literally as "We have made Italy. Now we must make the Italians."<sup>105</sup> The Italians are, I believe, still not fully made but remain strongly tied to their regions, provinces or cities.

<sup>105</sup> Emmott 2012.

Table 5.6 – Political trust.

	Bologna	Modena	Reggio	Parma	Total
<i>Politicians</i>	2,51 (1,51)	2,21 (1,46)	2,25 (1,21)	2,15 (1,44)	2,30 (1,42)
<i>Parliament</i>	2,88 (1,81)	2,25 (1,59)	2,03 (1,22)	2,38 (1,34)	2,42 (1,57)
<i>Government</i>	2,84 (1,80)	2,29 (1,65)	2,02 (1,19)	2,40 (1,58)	2,42 (1,62)
<i>Local gov.</i>	3,69 (2,15)	2,93 (2,00)	2,85 (1,41)	2,97 (1,63)	3,15 (1,88)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,98 (1,82)</b>	<b>2,42 (1,68)</b>	<b>2,29 (1,26)</b>	<b>2,48 (1,50)</b>	<b>2,57 (1,62)</b>

*Local gov.* = local government.

1=no confidence. 9=full confidence. Standard deviation in parentheses.

The last indicator of trust concerns the social trust (Table 5.7). This is perhaps the trickiest dimension to measure. However, I have followed previous scholars' operationalization.<sup>106</sup> Here it is clear how the different questions induces different answers and thus reveal the disparate meanings of the notion. In the first question 58,7 % in Modena responded that most people can be trusted, while in the second question only 44 % would ask a neighbor for help, thus a difference of 14,7 %. Meanwhile, the difference in Reggio is 13,9 %, 3,2 % in Parma, and -4,5 % in Bologna. Taking both questions together, the social trust in Bologna, Modena and Parma is approximately 50 %. In Reggio however, only 39 % expressed trust in one another. This interesting finding will be analyzed further below.

Table 5.7 – Social trust.

	Bologna	Modena	Reggio	Parma	Total
<i>Generally, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or can't you be too careful in dealing with people?*</i>	50,6 (49,4)	58,7 (41,3)	46,2 (53,8)	49,2 (50,8)	51,4 (48,6)
<i>If you were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, would you ask a neighbor for help?***</i>	55,1 (44,9)	44,0 (56,0)	32,3 (67,7)	46,0 (54,0)	45,2 (54,8)
<b>Average social trust</b>	<b>52,85</b>	<b>51,35</b>	<b>39,25</b>	<b>47,6</b>	<b>48,3</b>

\* "most people can be trusted" and "you can't be too careful" (in parentheses)

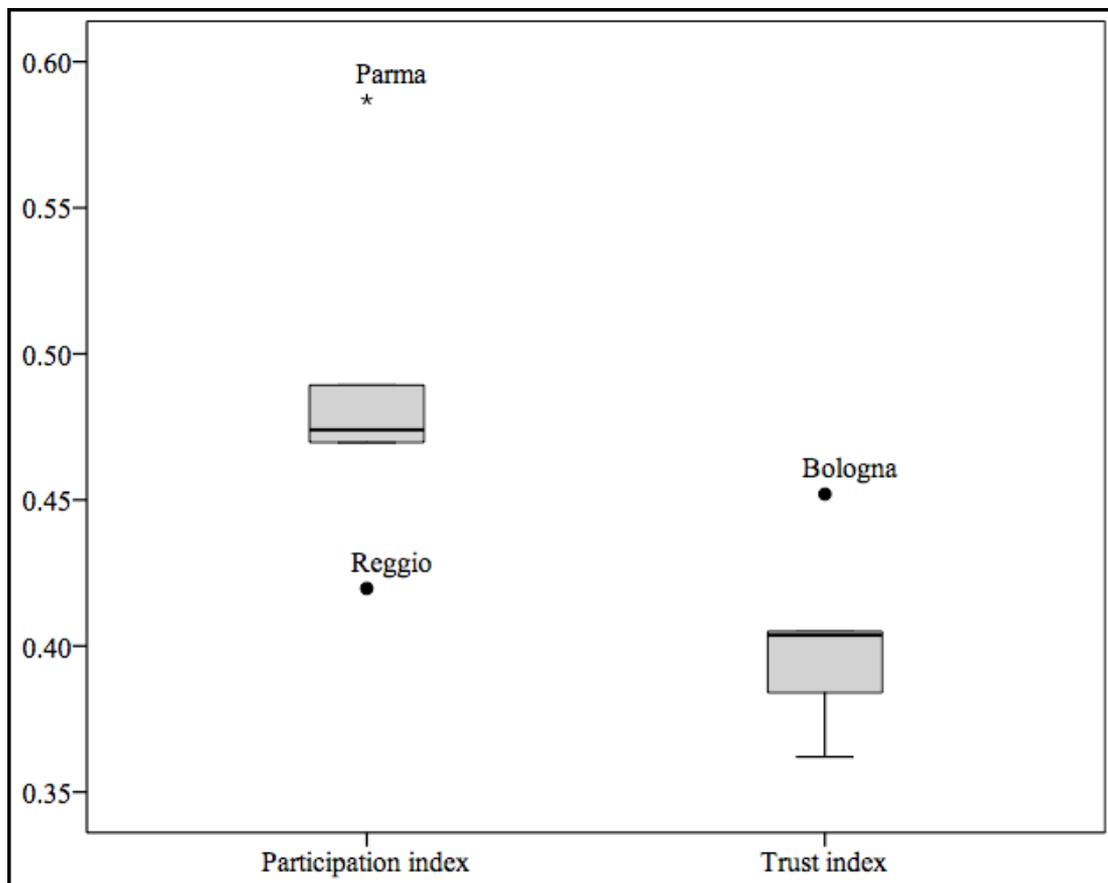
\*\* "yes" and "no" (in parentheses)

<sup>106</sup> E.g. in the World Value Survey and by the official Italian statistics agency, ISTAT.

We can now put the variables together into a final index on trust (Table 5.8). Just as in the section concerning participation, Bologna seem to be the relatively best performing city while Reggio lacks certain qualities. Parma, that was the clear winner in the participation proxy, is here similar to Reggio with a score below 0,4, and it is above all the lack of organizational trust that states this low score. The overall picture, however, is that all of the cities are rather similar and not very deviant from the average score of Emilia. A boxplot illustrate the diffusion in the two indices (Fig. 5.1).

*Table 5.8 – Final index on civic trust.*

	<b>Bologna</b>	<b>Modena</b>	<b>Reggio</b>	<b>Parma</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Organizational trust</i>	49,6	42,8	43,9	40,0	44,6
<i>Political trust</i>	33,1	26,9	25,4	27,6	28,6
<i>Social trust</i>	52,85	51,35	39,25	47,6	48,3
<b><i>Final index score</i></b>	<b>0,4520</b>	<b>0,4037</b>	<b>0,3620</b>	<b>0,3840</b>	<b>0,4050</b>



*Figure 5.1 – Diffusion of index scores.*

### 5.3 Social Capital: Final Score and Remarks

To sum up, Parma and Bologna have the highest scores in a final social capital index shown in Table 5.9. In Bologna, people trust one another and institutions more, but in Parma, if excluding the ‘voting variable’, people engage more in associations, in political matters, and socialize with others. Reggio is perhaps distinctive – showing lowest scores in both participation and trust, and hence in the final social capital indicator. What creates and what explains differences in social capital is beyond the scope of this study, but my reflection is, in accordance with Putnam’s conclusion that history matters – it takes time to build trust and lust for participating in public life. A high social capital is desirable for a good governance and economic prosperity. This generally accepted rule is also confirmed by this study. For example, the regression coefficient between my final social capital index and ‘most livability in Italy’<sup>107</sup> is 0,83 and with ‘average income’<sup>108</sup> 0,985.

*Table 5.9 – Final social capital index.*

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	<b>Bologna</b>	<b>Modena</b>	<b>Reggio</b>	<b>Parma</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Participation index</i>	0,4893	0,4740	0,4197	0,5870	0,4697
<i>Trust index</i>	0,4520	0,4037	0,3620	0,3840	0,4050
<b>Social capital index</b>	<b>0,4707</b>	<b>0,4389</b>	<b>0,3909</b>	<b>0,4855</b>	<b>0,4374</b>

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<sup>107</sup> *Il sole 24 ore* have for over 20 years measured quality of life in Italy. The index contains numerous indicators, such as standard of living, public order, clean air. For full documentation, see [www.ilsole24ore.com](http://www.ilsole24ore.com).

<sup>108</sup> ISTAT.

## 6 Conclusions

In this study, my aim has been to investigate four cities' levels of social capital and how they vary among each other. The cities are rather homogeneous. They are neighbouring cities, they have a quite similar historical background, and they are all relatively wealthy and score high in the quality of life measurement. Thus, I have looked for alterations in the homogeneity. Although this homogeneity, my results indicate some notable variations among the cities. In this concluding chapter, I wish to reflect upon these variations and end with some suggestions for continuing further in this field of research.

I would say that there are two important patterns in the data from chapter 5. The first is that, overall, the four cities have a quite low score of *civiness*. They have a particularly low level of trust in political institutions with an average of 28,6 out of 100. They have low faith in the media and in the bureaucracy, but relatively high confidence in the police and in the military, which indicate, following Newton and Norris as discussed above, a decrease in social capital – people's desire for control basically indicate a suspicion in others, i.e. the opposite of generalized trust. The social trust, as measured and presented in table 5.9, shows the dilemma of measuring trust in others. The difference between the two questions thus determines the fact that the formulation of a question affects its answer. The first question is for example more hypothetical and much more general. The second question, however, is very personal that asks how the respondent would behave with his/her *own* child. Also, a respondent could very well normally have high confidence in others, but very bad experiences with neighbours, and therefore answer that question negatively.

Following Putnam, the associational activity has been used to indicate civic participation. One quarter of the population in Emilia engage as members, participants or volunteers, but the interesting finding was how this number differs within the four cities. In Bologna and Parma, a third engage, in Reggio only a fifth and Modena is on the average of Emilia. This pattern is consequently relevant in the political participation. The results from that data tell us many things, e.g. that people do not participate much in political parties, which confirms a conventional finding from many countries. It could also be explained recent political turbulence, which also decreases faith in politicians. It could also be explained by the political parties' positions in Italy being weak, unsustainable, young, and not credible. Instead, people use media and the Internet to participate in public life. They write e-mails, articles and participate in radio. This is also a conventional conclusion: that the Internet and social media have become new forums for expression and public participation. The citizens, however, also have the need to physically mobilize. Especially in Bologna, people demonstrate. This, which in

the introduction was highlighted and put into the Egyptian context, clearly indicates a high social capital.

In general, the cities tend to participate more than they trust. To say if the index scores are 'good' or 'bad', or 'high' and 'low', I think they must be put in another, more heterogeneous context. Because what is a virtuous civic citizen? Is it one who participate through all possible channels, who always vote, who meet socially everyday, who is active in associations and who put full confidence in political and organizational institutions? I believe, for example, that the citizens who demonstrated on the Tahrir square, and showed a great amount of social capital, not necessarily did wrong in criticizing the political institutions. Perhaps it is these civic participatory critical mobilizations against the power elite that make democracy – the people's government – work.

The second interesting pattern of variation that has been exposed here is how Reggio is through all variables performing worst. And it is clear how this have an impact of the liveability in the city; where Reggio scored significantly lower than the other three cities in the annual quality of life measurement (see chapter 4 above). What, however, explains Reggio's inferiority lies beyond the scope of this study but is suggested for further analyses in the future.

It is clear that the results in this thesis are limited to the data from my survey. The survey, that consisted of 293 respondents, have some critical qualities as discussed in chapter 3. The biggest criticism concerns the possibility to generalize for the population from the data. Therefore, my results have limited generalizability and should more be perceived as a pilot study of social capital in the four cities. Thus, I reserve myself for drawing any grand conclusions, but what I can say is that the cities and their variations *indicate* that social capital is highest in Bologna and Parma and lowest in Modena and Reggio, which somewhat confirms Cartocci's findings (see tables above).

The question determines the answer is, as stated previously, a conventional rule of thumb. I think this raises the complexity of the concept of social capital in whole. Social capital, being a latent variable, has so many definitions and aspects and a measurement can result in so many directions depending on the questions used in a survey. Even though I believe that there should be a larger agreement within the academic community on the definition and conceptualization of social capital, this also raises the dilemma of putting a fixed manuscript between different contexts. The second question in table 5.7 shows the complexity of this.

With these reflections, I would like to give three suggestions to further continue this field of research.

The first is to examine the methodological character of social capital. How can social capital be assessed and how do different context correspond to the different methods of study? And how should these measurements relate to the ever-changing societal patterns? Basically, this suggestion is purely epistemological: how can we study social capital?

The second suggestion is to continue the examination of social capital in cities, and tentatively compare it to rural contexts.

The last suggestion is to further examine the spatial dimension of social capital and simply ask *where* do people create social capital? What is the

architectural context? In terms of social capital, what is the difference of meeting physically on the e.g. square in deliberative forms to encounters and trust-creating forms on the Internet? Are there 'good' and 'bad' places for creating social capital?

If so, the built environment should undeniably gain more attention, because we do know that social capital is the key to making democracy work.

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# Appendix A: Questionnaire



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITA DI BOLOGNA

(English version)



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

City of residence \_\_\_\_\_

Highest education \_\_\_\_\_

*In general, how often do you meet socially with friends or work colleagues?*

- |                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Never                  | ( ) |
| Less than once a month | ( ) |
| Once a month           | ( ) |
| Several times a month  | ( ) |
| Once a week            | ( ) |
| Several times a week   | ( ) |
| Every day              | ( ) |

*Have you in the last 5 years participated in political actions or influenced politicians/civil servants via:*

- |   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Radio, TV, newspaper                              | ( )        | ( )       |
| Political parties or organizations                | ( )        | ( )       |
| Personal contact with politician or civil servant | ( )        | ( )       |
| Protest group                                     | ( )        | ( )       |
| Demonstration                                     | ( )        | ( )       |
| Internet, e-mail, SMS                             | ( )        | ( )       |
| Otherwise   | ( )        | ( )       |
| None of these                                     | ( )        | ( )       |

*Did you vote in the last national election?*

- | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|------------|-----------|
| ( )        | ( )       |

*How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?*

- |                  | <b>None</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | <b>A lot</b> |
|------------------|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| The legal system | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9            |
| The police       | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9            |
| The bureaucracy  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9            |
| The military     | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9            |
| The media        | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9            |

*How much confidence do you have in the following?*

	<b>None</b>								<b>A lot</b>
Politicians	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
The parliament	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
The national government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
The local government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

*During the last 12 months, have you volunteered, participated or been a member of:*

	<i>None</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Volunteer</i>
A sport club or club for outdoor activities?				
An organization for cultural or hobby activities?				
A trade union?				
A business or professional organization?				
An organization for humanitarian aid, human rights, etc.?				
An organization for environmental protection or animal rights?				
A religious or church organization?				
An organization for science or education?				
A social club, club for the young/retired/elderly/women?				
Any other voluntary organization such as the ones I've just mentioned?				

*Generally, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or can't you be too careful in dealing with people?*

Most people can be trusted ( )  
 You can't be too careful ( )

*If you were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, would you ask a neighbor for help?*

Yes ( )  
 No ( )



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

(Italian version)



LUND  
UNIVERSITY

Sesso \_\_\_\_\_

Età \_\_\_\_\_

Città di residenza \_\_\_\_\_

Livello d'istruzione \_\_\_\_\_

*In generale, quanto spesso incontra amici o colleghi fuori lavoro?*

Mai	( )
Una volta al mese	( )
Più volte al mese	( )
Una volta alla settimana	( )
Più volte alla settimana	( )
Ogni giorno	( )

*Negli ultimi cinque anni ha partecipato al dibattito politico attraverso i seguenti canali?*

	<b>Sì</b>	<b>No</b>
Radio, TV, giornali	( )	( )
Partiti o organizzazioni politiche	( )	( )
Contatti con politici o funzionari amministrativi	( )	( )
Gruppi di protesta	( )	( )
Manifestazioni	( )	( )
Internet, e-mail, SMS	( )	( )
Altro	( )	( )
Nessuno	( )	( )

*Ha votato alle ultime elezioni politiche?*

	<b>Sì</b>	<b>No</b>
	( )	( )

*Quanta fiducia ripone nelle seguenti istituzioni?*

	<b>Nessuno</b>								<b>Molta</b>
Sistema giudiziario	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Forze dell'ordine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
La pubblica amministrazione	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Esercito	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

*Quanta fiducia ripone nei seguenti attori?*

	<b>Nessuno</b>								<b>Molta</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Politici	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Parlamento	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Governo nazionale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Enti locali	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

*Quale ruolo ha avuto nelle seguenti organizzazioni negli ultimi 12 mesi?*

	<i>Nessuno</i>	<i>Membro</i>	<i>Partecipante</i>	<i>Volontario</i>
Club sportivo?				
Organizzazione culturale?				
Sindacato?				
Associazione di categoria?				
Organizzazione per i diritti umani?				
Organizzazione per la tutela dell'ambiente o dei diritti degli animali?				
Organizzazione religiosa?				
Centro per giovani/pensionati/anziani/donne?				
Altro? se sì, specificare				

*In generale, crede di potersi fidare delle persone, oppure di dover fare attenzione?*

Ci si può fidare della maggior parte delle persone ( )  
 È rischioso dare troppa fiducia ( )

*Se si stesse prendendo cura di un bambino e dovesse assentarsi, chiederebbe a un vicino di sostituirla momentaneamente?*

Sì ( )  
 No ( )

# Appendix B: Descriptive Statistics

All completed questionnaires and SPSS dataset are available for consultation upon request.

(danielcarelli@hotmail.com)

<b>Age (all cities)</b>				
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16	2	.7	.7
	17	3	1.0	1.7
	18	13	4.4	6.1
	19	10	3.4	9.6
	20	21	7.2	16.7
	21	9	3.1	19.8
	22	18	6.1	25.9
	23	8	2.7	28.7
	24	9	3.1	31.7
	25	16	5.5	37.2
	26	13	4.4	41.6
	27	12	4.1	45.7
	28	4	1.4	47.1
	29	2	.7	47.8
	30	6	2.0	49.8
	31	7	2.4	52.2
	32	10	3.4	55.6
	33	7	2.4	58.0
	34	12	4.1	62.1
	35	5	1.7	63.8
	36	9	3.1	66.9
37	8	2.7	69.6	
38	8	2.7	72.4	
39	5	1.7	74.1	
40	7	2.4	76.5	
41	4	1.4	77.8	
42	9	3.1	80.9	
43	5	1.7	82.6	
44	2	.7	83.3	

45	2	.7	84.0
47	1	.3	84.3
50	8	2.7	87.0
51	1	.3	87.4
52	2	.7	88.1
53	5	1.7	89.8
55	1	.3	90.1
57	6	2.0	92.2
58	2	.7	92.8
59	1	.3	93.2
60	3	1.0	94.2
61	1	.3	94.5
62	1	.3	94.9
63	1	.3	95.2
65	1	.3	95.6
66	4	1.4	96.9
67	3	1.0	98.0
68	2	.7	98.6
70	3	1.0	99.7
72	1	.3	100.0
Total	293	100.0	

City of residence						
		Bologna	Modena	Reggio nell'Emilia	Parma	Total
Age grouped	16-24	33	18	21	21	93
		37.1%	24.0%	32.3%	32.8%	31.7%
25-34	27	28	11	23	89	
		30.3%	37.3%	16.9%	35.9%	30.4%
35-49	19	19	18	9	65	
		21.3%	25.3%	27.7%	14.1%	22.2%
50-64	7	8	11	6	32	
		7.9%	10.7%	16.9%	9.4%	10.9%
65-	3	2	4	5	14	
		3.4%	2.7%	6.2%	7.8%	4.8%
Total	89	75	65	64	293	
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<b>City of residence</b>						
		Bologna	Modena	Reggio nell'Emilia	Parma	Total
<b>Sex</b>	Female	45	36	30	33	144
		50.6%	48.0%	46.2%	51.6%	49.1%
	Male	44	39	35	31	149
		49.4%	52.0%	53.8%	48.4%	50.9%
	Total	89	75	65	64	293
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<b>City of residence</b>						
		Bologna	Modena	Reggio nell'Emilia	Parma	Total
<b>Highest education</b>	Lower secondary school	8	11	8	14	41
		9.1%	14.7%	12.3%	24.6%	14.4%
	Upper secondary school	35	22	28	15	100
		39.8%	29.3%	43.1%	26.3%	35.1%
	University and higher education	45	42	29	28	144
		51.1%	56.0%	44.6%	49.1%	50.5%
	Total	88	75	65	57	285
		100.0 %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%