THE OECD SOCIAL CAPITAL QUESTION DATABANK USER GUIDE

1. Introduction

1.   The Social Capital Question Databank has been developed as a tool for researchers and statisticians interested in the measurement of social capital. Its compilation has been funded by a voluntary contribution from the European Commission Directorate-General for Employment. It consists of around 1300 questions deemed relevant for different interpretations of social capital, from over 50 national and international surveys, from both official and non-official sources. The purpose of the databank is to allow interested users to explore the different ways that aspects of social capital have been measured around the world, and to compare different types of question and response formulation.

2. How to Use

2.   The Databank has been compiled in Excel and consists of two worksheets, one entitled 'Questions', and one entitled 'Surveys'.

Questions

3.   The 'Questions' worksheet represents the core part of the databank, and is where all the individual questions are listed.

4.   Each question entry contains the following information in a separate column:

- Social Capital Theme 1
- Social Capital Theme 2
- Variable Category
- Question text
- Response text
- Name of the Survey that the question was taken from (including latest year)

- The name of the Responsible Organisation

- The Country or Region that the survey covers

- The number or code given to the question from the source survey.

5.   It is possible to search for different types of questions, by using the filter function in the first cell of each column – just click on the small box with the arrow in the appropriate column heading and then select the relevant categories from the drop-down box, as shown in the screen capture below.
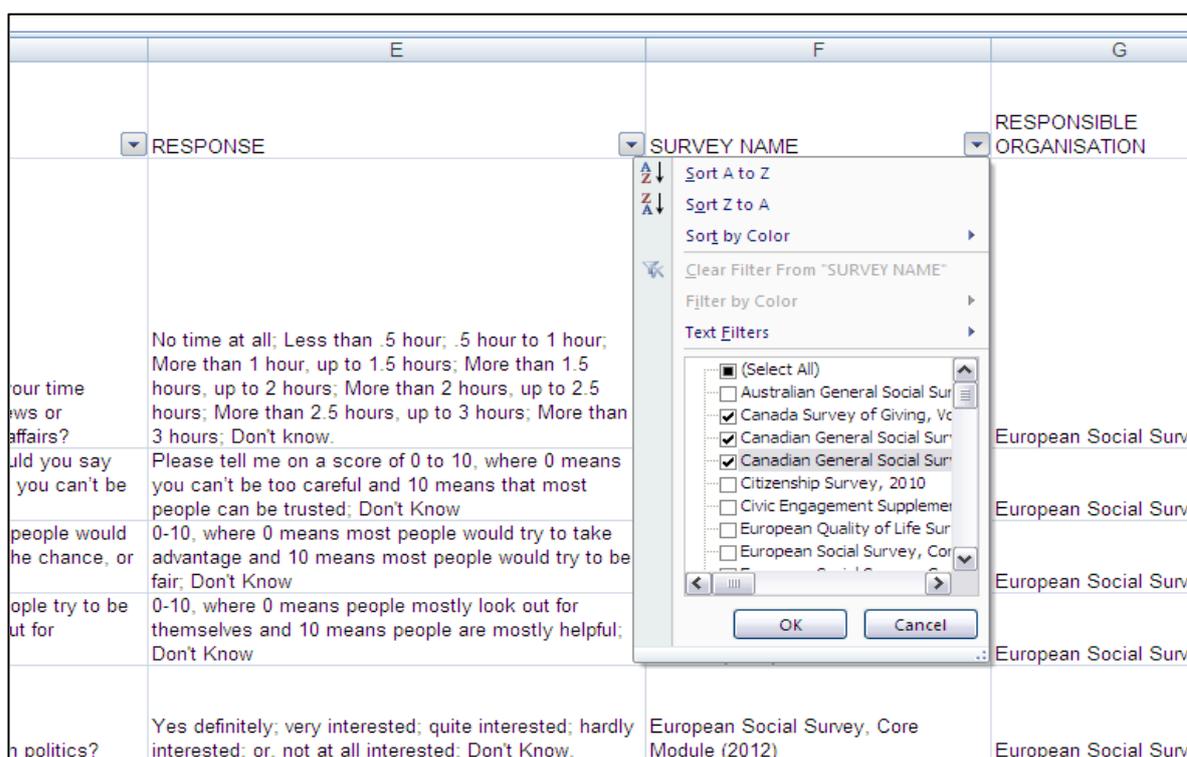
6.   'Social Capital Theme' refers to the framework of four interpretations of social capital, presented in a forthcoming OECD Working Paper. The four interpretations or 'themes' are as follows:

- *Personal relationships,* referring to the structure of people's networks (i.e. the people they know) and the social behaviours that contribute to establishing and maintaining those networks, such as spending time with others, or exchanging news by telephone or email.

- *Social network support*, which is a direct outcome of the nature of people's personal relationships, and refers to the resources – emotional, material, practical, financial, intellectual or professional - that are available to each individual through their personal social networks.

- *Civic engagement*, which comprises the activities and networks through which people contribute to civic and community life, such as volunteering, political participation, group membership and different forms of community action.

- Finally**, *trust and cooperative norms***, referring to the trust, social norms and shared values that underpin societal functioning and enable mutually beneficial cooperation. The concept primarily refers to different kinds of trust, as well as norms of reciprocity and non-

discrimination. The types of trust that are most often considered as forms of social capital are generalised trust (i.e. trust in 'others', including strangers) and institutional trust, which can refer to political institutions as well as the judiciary, police, the media or other institutions.

7.   The databank allows users to search by each of these interpretations or 'themes'. There are two columns because some types of measures will be relevant to more than one interpretation of social capital, and where necessary, another theme is included in the Social Capital Theme 2 column.[1]

8.   The third column includes a short classification of the 'category' to which the variable belongs, and allows for a more detailed filter option than the Social Capital Theme columns (see the last section of this document for descriptions of all of the variable categories.)

9.   Users can also search by survey name, responsible organisation, and country or region.

Surveys

10.   The 'Surveys' worksheet includes a full list of all the source surveys for the databank, classified by country or region, along with a link to a web page containing information on the survey and, in most cases, an electronic copy of the source questionnaire. For a few cases, the website was not available in English, and this has been noted in the list.

General Information

Missing information

11.   The entry 'N/A'((Not Available) has been given in the minority of cases where some information is missing from the question entry. This is the case for some question references and for a very few response texts.

Translation issues

12.   In most cases, translations from languages other than English are not official translations, and should not be reproduced without contacting the organisation responsible for the survey in question.

Paraphrasing

13.   Due to space considerations, it has not been possible to reproduce questions and answers in the exact same format as the source questionnaire. However, effort has been taken to use the same wording and phrasing and to keep the exact wording as close to possible to the original question.

Questions and comments

14.   For   any   questions   and   comments   on   the   databank,   please   contact Katherine.Scrivens@oecd.org, or STD.Contact@oecd.org .

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[1] Some types of measures may even be relevant within 3 or 4 'themes' or interpretations, but for the sake of convenience, only 2 columns were included in the databank.

3. Description of Variable Categories

15.   The 1300 questions have been loosely coded, resulting in 39 variable categories that allow users to group together questions of a similar nature. The table below provides a description for each variable category, as well as providing some key information on the coverage of the variable (i.e the number of questions, and associated surveys, that make reference to the variable), and an indication of the relevance to the four themes or interpretations of social capital, as identified by the forthcoming OECD Working Paper. PR = Personal Relationships; SNS = Social Network Support; CE = Civic Engagement; and, TCN = Trust & Cooperative Norms.

VARIABLE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	COVERAGE	RELEVANCE (WITHIN OECD FRAMEWORK)
Associational Involvement	Active or non-active (i.e. subscription or membership only) participation in associations, groups, clubs of any type.	160 questions; 30 surveys	CE
Attitudes and Beliefs, Community & Local Area	Feelings about the respondent's neighbourhood, community or local area, or about people living within that area.	37 questions; 8 surveys	TCN
Attitudes and Beliefs, Friends & Family	Values and expectations related to family and friendship in general (not restricted to the respondent's own family).	13 questions; 6 surveys	TCN, PR, SNS
Attitudes and Beliefs, Government & Society	Values and expectations about the performance of government and other societal institutions, of the respondent's own civic role within society.	32 questions; 12 surveys	TCN
Civic Actions (including Donations)	Actions of a civic nature, including monetary and non-monetary donations, recycling, etc.	72 questions; 8 surveys	CE
Community Engagement	Participation in community activities, events or decision-making, not necessarily within the context of an association or organised group.	34 questions; 10 surveys	CE
Cooperative Norms	Values and expectations related to the cooperative behaviour of	13 questions; 3 surveys	TCN

	the respondent and others.		
Experience of Corruption	Respondent's own experience of corrupt behaviour.	8 questions; 3 surveys	TCN
Experience of Discrimination	Respondent's own experience of discrimination or social exclusion.	5 questions; 3 surveys	TCN
Experience of Dishonesty	Respondent's own experience of cheating or other forms of dishonest behaviour on the part of others.	10 questions; 3 surveys	TCN
Feelings about Personal Relationships	The respondent's feelings and perceptions related to the quality of his or her own personal relationships with friends, family or other groups.	24 questions; 12 surveys	PR, SNS
Generalised Trust	Trust in 'most' or other people 'in general'	22 questions; 19 surveys	TCN
Honesty of Respondent	The respondent's own level of honesty or dishonesty.	8 questions; 2 surveys	TCN
Identity and Belonging	Feelings of belonging or pride in a certain group, location or nationality.	19 questions; 8 surveys	TCN
Interest in Politics and Current Affairs	The respondent's level of interest in politics or current affairs.	35 questions; 15 surveys	CE
Network Diversity	Questions related to the respondent's contact or acquaintance with people from different social groups to the respondent's own (e.g. ethnicity, income-level, etc.)	68 questions; 6 surveys	PR
Network Size	Questions related to the number of friends a respondent has, usually qualified in some way, e.g. 'number of close friends', 'number of colleagues see out of work', etc.	13 questions; 3 surveys	PR, SNS
News Readership (or Watching/Listening)	The time or frequency with which the respondent reads (or watches or listens to) news or	2 questions; 2 surveys	CE

	current affairs.		
Perceived Corruption	The respondent's perception of corruption in their country or local area.	10 questions; 4 surveys	TCN
Perceived Fairness	Whether the respondent feels that most people will try to be fair (close to generalised trust, but does not actually include the word trust in the question).	9 questions; 7 surveys	TCN
Perceived Helpfulness (Generalised Reciprocity)	The extent to which the respondent feels that other people will 'try to be helpful' (close to the concept of generalised reciprocity).	5 questions; 5 surveys	
Perceived Safety	Feelings of safety in local area or in general.	18 questions; 11 surveys	TCN
Perceived Support	Whether the respondent feels that he or she has someone to count on or not for various types of social network support.	42 questions; 18 surveys	SNS, PR
Political Engagement	The respondent's participation in political activities or within organisations of a political purpose.	54 questions; 19 surveys	CE
Religious Participation	The respondent's participation in group religious activities or within religious organisations..	9 questions; 8 surveys	CE
Social Contact (all)	Questions that refer to social contact, without specifying whether face-to-face or non face-to-face.	12 questions; 7 surveys	PR
Social Contact (face-to-face)	The respondent's time spent meeting or socialising with others.	62 questions; 23 surveys	PR
Social Contact (non face-to-face)	The respondent's time spent in other forms of non face-to-face contact such as Internet, telephone, writing letters, etc.	53 questions; 17 surveys	PR
Social Isolation &	Feelings of isolation and	3 questions; 3 surveys	PR, SNS

Loneliness	loneliness.		
Sources of Personal Relationships	The places or activities through which respondents meet people and establish personal relationships.	16 questions; 4 surveys	PR
Sources of Support	The people on whom respondents can count on for different kinds of social network support.	27 questions; 7 surveys	SNS, PR
Support Provided (including Unpaid Work)	The different types of unpaid work or other forms of support (e.g. financial, emotional) provided to people in the respondent's own network. Un paid work in this context is distinct from voluntary work, which is understood as unpaid work provided in the context of associations and organised voluntary groups.	65 questions; 18 surveys	SNS, PR, CE, TCN
Support Received	Actual types of social network support received by the respondent.	5 questions; 3 surveys	SNS, PR, CE, TCN
Tolerance and Discrimination	Questions that measure either directly or indirectly, respondent's attitudes of tolerance and discrimination towards specific groups, or in general.	79 questions; 13 surveys	TCN
Trust in Institutions	Trust in different state and non-state institutions such as government, media, the police, etc.	71 questions; 19 surveys	TCN
Trust in Specified Groups/Individuals	Trust in specified groups or individuals e.g. people of a certain ethnic group or people in the local neighbourhood.	28 questions; 11 surveys	TCN, SNS
Voluntary Work	The respondent's participation in voluntary work in the context of associations or organised groups, as well as reasons for doing so.	122 questions; 16 surveys	CE

Voluntary Work, Skills & Contacts	The skills and opportunities that a respondent feels he or she has gained from participation in voluntary work.	10 questions; 2 surveys	CE
Voting	The respondent's electoral participation.	5 questions; 5 surveys	CE