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EVALUATION OF SURVEY MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS FOR MEASURING SOCIAL NETWORKS

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, 1999

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Empirical research in the social sciences presupposes data of a certain quality; data have, at the least, to be valid and reliable. Analysis of ego-centred survey network data quality is quite rare, owing to the complex "nested design" where each respondent (ego) reports about her/his connections with several other individuals (alters). Analyses of complete network data quality are even less frequent. This dissertation focuses on the quality of commonly used ego-centred network generators within complete networks. As matrices are the result of the measurement of complete networks, vectors or variables representing social support relations are obtained by matrix vectorisation. Therefore, the classical approaches to evaluating the measurement quality of attitudinal data could be used for complete network data.

Among several approaches to evaluating measurement quality, the true score MTMM model proposed by Saris and Andrews (1991) was selected, owing to its ability to estimate reliability, validity and method effect of each variable separately. On the basis of theoretical and empirical findings, four network generators were designed to measure four theoretically firmly established social support dimensions. The contents of network generators measuring social companionship and material, informational, and emotional support exchange were adjusted to the characteristics of the experimental groups — eight third-year classes in a secondary school in Ljubljana.

A complex experimental design to study the effects of measurement instruments on the measurement quality was proposed. Experimental variations included the provision of four response scales, two data collection techniques, two directions of support exchange and varying elapsed times between repeated measurements.

Estimates of measurement quality were obtained in all eight classes for all four social support dimensions. As validity estimates were all very high and almost invariant, only reliability estimates were included in meta-analyses. Using the Multiple Classification Analysis we found that predictor variables describing the characteristics of experimental and MTMM design explained almost 45% of the variability of reliability estimates. The most important predictor variables are the time between repetitions of the measurement instrument and the response scale. When a measure is presented first, its reliability is the worst. When a measure is repeated after a short period of time (20 minutes), its reliability is much higher than that of a measure repeated after a week. Among measurement scales, the binary scale was the least reliable. The line drawing scale and two 5-point ordinal scales performed much better with regard to reliability. The 5-point ordinal scale with labels had the highest degree of reliability. The comparison of recognition to free recall data collection techniques and of original to reversed questions produced little or no difference in reliability. Nevertheless, the recognition data collection technique produced a much higher number of dyads than did free recall. However, significant interaction between the data collection techniques

and the measurement scales revealed that the binary scale is less reliable only when recognition data collection technique is used. In addition, the reliability of the binary scale was most affected by the length of time between presentations, as its reliability drops much more after one week than do the reliability scores of other scales.

Since mood is an important characteristic of an individual, their effect on measurement quality was observed at the level of individual respondents and not at the level of complete networks as was the procedure for reliability. As the number of units was substantially reduced, the MTMM design could not be used. A matching procedure was used to obtain two measures of instability, which require two repetitions of the same measurement instrument. Therefore, only four classes were selected in which two 5-point ordinal scales were present. Relationships were observed between changes in respondents' moods and the two measures: difference in size of ego-centred network, and total error (difference in size of ego-centred networks plus changes in evaluating strengths of reported ties). The Affect Infusion Model (Forgas 1999) was used to locate factors affecting the relationship between the two error measures and changes in respondents' moods and to predict the presence or absence of such factors' effects.

Two relative measures of instability were obtained, whereby the absolute measures were divided by the average size of the ego-centred networks. In general, respondent's moods do not affect stability of measurement. However, on some occasions respondents' moods do have a substantial effect on the stability of measurement. Two meta-analyses revealed that the recognition data collection technique enhanced the relationship between changes in respondents' moods and the two relative measurement errors. The stronger the changes in respondents' moods, the stronger the relationship between the mood change and the relative measurement errors. Among the four dimensions of social support, the material support measure is the one most affected by changes in respondents' moods, whereas emotional support is the least affected. The type of question did not affect this relationship.

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COMMUNICATING CAPITALISM: A STUDY OF THE CONTEMPORARY TURKISH PRESS

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The main aim of this thesis is to explore the operation of the ideological discourse in Turkey that liberalisation in economy brings liberalisation in politics. This early claim of the modernisation theorists has been renewed in the age of globalisation with the assumption that the state is in decline; statism in the economy is coming to end and as a result of this; democracy, civil society and citizenship are flourishing. This ideological discourse, which appeared in the liberal environment of Turkey in the 1980s following the military coup, has been more visible in the 1990s with the added and emphasised elements of privatisation and European integration. The critical period in recent Turkish

history, in which the transfer of state economic enterprises to the private sector was legalised, is given particular attention as a case study in this management of political ideology.

In exploring how this link between liberal economy, declining state and democracy has arisen, this thesis traces the existence of discourses other than liberalism. Since the media are the major arena in which these discourses are represented, the thesis investigates them in the contemporary Turkish press through an examination of the ideological management of economic change.

The thesis traces the political and economic roots of these discourses on a national and global scale before analysing the operation of the ideology in the news, editorials and columns of the Turkish press. It investigates the structure of the media industries in which the meanings are produced, and explores the news production process by examining the daily practices of the media professionals.

By investigating how capitalism as an ideology is communicated and by showing how the media limits the availability of information by privileging some choices in the public debate about political economy, this thesis attempts to make a contribution to the ideas which aim to develop democracy and citizenship in Turkey.

The thesis has two parts and consists of eight chapters. After the introductory chapter (Chapter One), Chapter Two introduces the discussions of capitalism, state and democracy. It begins with the modernisation paradigm, and by pointing out the similarities and the differences between early modernisation and current globalisation theories, it turns to the approaches that advocate and criticise globalisation. One of the main assumptions of globalisation theorists, which is the crisis of the nation-state, is then dealt with by attempting to provide the responses against this claim from two main approaches.

In Chapter Three, an attempt is made to explain the story of Turkey's modernisation. This chapter does not provide a full account of modern Turkey; instead it prioritises the issues in relation to the problematic of the thesis. It starts with the official ideology of Turkey, Kemalism. It summarises the principles of Kemalism with a special focus on statism. This is followed by the so-called liberal period, with the DP government. The military coups following the DP government, and the military, are evaluated in a general sense as the guardians of Kemalism and as responses to crises of capital accumulation and hegemony. After providing this background information, the chapter deals with the post-1980 claims of liberalism. The general theoretical discussions, which are introduced in the second chapter, are applied to Turkey in this chapter and the general arguments of the thesis are established from the author's personal position.

Chapter Four introduces the media in Turkey and looks in detail at the developments that have taken place over the last decade. It maps the media scene considering the concentration and conglomeration of the media, with a developing advertising industry, and increasing competition mainly through promotion campaigns. It also examines the coalition of the big media groups for financial profit, and their alliance for national interests is considered by giving examples from the news. The pluralism and democracy claims of the 1980s are reiterated, but here focusing on the issue of the media, with the emergence of the private channels in the technologically developed world without frontiers. The state and market dichotomy which is introduced in the second chapter and continued in the third chapter, is considered here in terms of the commercial media environment and the positioning of the media themselves as multiple and diverse alternatives. The close relationship between the state elite and

the private sector is emphasised, and the common patterns and continuities of the Kemalists and the liberals, a theme introduced in an earlier chapter, are exemplified

Chapter Five is based on the analysis of the interviews conducted with the journalists and editors of the Turkish press. After an exploration of their description of the newspaper on which they work and their job in general, the chapter summarises their daily working routines under the titles of editorial control, self-censorship and professional values, using their own words. In this chapter, the criticism and resistance of the media professionals are also presented, however limited they may be.

Chapter Six presents the results of the empirical research into the news published in six Turkish newspapers six months before and after the enactment of the law on privatisation. The data is organised by focusing on the actors and the themes of the news.

Chapter Seven explores the ideological formulations in the columns and the editorials. It analyses the sample data by tracing the common and different themes and the ways in which they are constructed, and by giving quotations to illustrate the themes which appeared. The role of the media elites in politics and their relationship with the parliament before, during and after a legislative process is taken into account.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis by bringing together the general arguments and the findings of the empirical research. It reflects on democracy in Turkey in general and on the democratic media environment. In conclusion, it offers suggestions for the development of democracy in Turkey and in the Turkish media environment, and for further research, which needs to be carried out in the area.