

Peer Review

# Review of: "Social Capital and National Innovativeness – The Influence of Trust and Tolerance on the National Capacity to Innovate"

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**Title:** *Social Capital and National Innovativeness – The Influence of Trust and Tolerance on the National Capacity to Innovate*

Overall, this is a good (and interesting) scientific paper. The authors have conducted a study on social factors influencing a country's (or economy's) ability to innovate. They analyze the relationship between social capital, trust, and tolerance versus the average GII (Global Innovation Index) for 2020. It can be deduced that descriptive statistics were applied to 131 countries (see page 13, Data and Methodology section) or to about 50 countries listed in the annex (the annex listing is unclear). In my opinion, the study is well documented and can remain in its current form. However, there are some possible directions for improvement-

## Content aspects

First of all, I think the authors should number the sections of the study as follows:

- Introduction
- Literature Review (three subsections, pp. 3–6)
- Model of Social Capital (separate section)
- Social Capital and Innovativeness (two subsections, pp. 8–11)
- Data and Methodology (pp. 11–14)

- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions

### **Argument**

Confusion arises in the current form, and the reader must deduce the study's structure and the connections between different topics.

The authors indicate in the appendix (pp. 21–22) a list of about 50 countries (Algeria, Argentina, Germany, USA, etc.) and values from the WVS for the period 2010–2014, based on which they selected the values for trust and tolerance. Clarification is needed on this point.

### **Argument**

The authors should clearly show the countries selected and included in the study, either in the introductory part or in the social capital model (pp. 6–8). In the current form, it is not clear from the beginning which countries are considered; this can only be deduced post facto. I did not identify any clear reference to the annex when they refer to the WVS (see p. 13). At minimum, a table in this part of the study showing the countries analyzed, the social capital values, the WVS values, and the average GII values for the 50 countries in the annex would be useful.

When presenting both social and trust capital in the literature review, I suggest the authors briefly present the LPI (Legatum Prosperity Index) ranking, calculated annually for about 130 countries based on the WVS. In the LPI, there are 9–12 pillars, one of which is “Social Capital,” which assesses several sub-pillars, including:

- *Institutional trust*
- Social norms
- etc.

### **Argument**

There are clear correlations between social capital and the LPI, suggesting that other social factors (besides those analyzed by the authors) directly influence a country's innovative capacity. Additionally, when presenting the model in Fig. 1, the authors should note that, besides the types of trust analyzed

based on the WVS, there are other types evaluated in the LPI framework (see *Institutional trust* above). The most complex type is “Systemic Trust,” for which various international rankings do not provide an evaluation methodology.

The authors list on p. 11 two or three hypotheses (the distinction between basic hypotheses and sub-hypotheses should be clearer). I suggest presenting a flow chart of the entire study to help the reader fully understand the main idea, the argumentation, and the results/conclusions.

I appreciate the Social Capital Index (Fig. 2) and the results presented in Table 1, Table 2, and the associated text. I compliment the authors on these findings.

In the Discussion section, when making comparative analyses between social capital and the culture of various countries or regions, the authors should be cautious and possibly extend the analysis by invoking the work of Geert Hofstede. Both concepts—“social capital” and “national culture”—refer to the same unit of analysis; they share some elements but differ in how they are defined in the international literature.

### **Formal aspects**

I should mention that I have carefully analyzed this study and read it repeatedly but did not identify any significant errors in the English language.

### **Final remarks**

As I said at the beginning of the report, this is a good study, based on correct statistical modeling and well-grounded in theory. The authors have carefully selected relevant books and articles on the topic; I compliment them! It is up to the authors whether to take these suggestions into account for improving the study.

### **Declarations**

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare. No interest !