DIFFERENT NETWORKS, DIFFERENT RESOURCES?  
The ethnic inequality in the access to social capital in Belgium

Pieter-Paul Verhaeghe

PhD. Student Sociology (FWO)  
Ghent University, Belgium
Social capital theory

- Individual social capital
  resources embedded in social networks that can be used or accessed for actions

- Ethnic inequality in social capital

- Ethnic bridging ties > ethnic bonding ties
Measuring social capital?

• Traditional measures:
  - Ethnic composition of the friendship network
  - Membership of voluntary organisations

  = Social network measures
  = PROXIES for social capital resources

ANY ALTERNATIVE???
Asks whether the respondent “knows” anyone having an occupation from a systematic list of 10-30 different occupations

- Different measures: volume, composition, range...

- Disadvantage: time-consuming

- **Ethnic inequality in social capital?**
  - Research is scarce
  - The evidence is **mixed**
Research questions

1. Ethnic inequality in the access to social capital resources?
   - Inequality in the volume of the network resources
   - Inequality in the composition of the network resources

2. Assess social network measures adequately social capital resources?
   - Bridging vs. bonding friendship (informal network)
   - Membership of voluntary organisations (formal network)
WHAT?
- 1296 last-year vocational high school students from 22 schools in two multi-ethnic cities in Belgium
- 962 natives and 334 ethnic minorities
= clustered data → multilevel-analyses

WHY?
- best moment in life course to catch ethnic inequality in social capital
- representativity is very high

DISADVANTAGES?
- few respondents in each ethnic minority group
- cross-sectional
→ the second cohort and the second wave have just been collected
= the future
A list of 24 occupations
4 social capital measures

- **Volume**
  total number of known occupations (range: 0-24)

- **High class social capital**
  total number of known occupations from the high class (range: 0-9)
  e.g. lawyer, farm manager, head of a firm, doctor, foreman...

- **Middle class social capital**
  total number of known occupations from the middle class (range: 0-6)
  e.g. accountant, nurse, musician, teacher...

- **Low class social capital**
  total number of known occupations from the low class (range: 0-9)
  e.g. mechanic, cleaner, construction worker, hairdresser, cook...
RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Ethnic inequality in the access to social capital resources?
RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Assess social network measures adequately social capital resources?


**NETWORK MEASURES I**

- **Ethnic composition of the friendship networks**
  - Proportion of Belgian friends in school
  - Proportion of Belgian friends outside the school
  - Proportion of Belgian friends in the neighbourhood

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Proportion of Belgian friends (centred)

Volume of social capital (centred)

Male natives

Female natives

High class social capital (centred)

Middle class social capital (centred)

Low class social capital (centred)
### Membership of voluntary organizations

- Gender and culture neutral
- E.g. Sport club, music band, student organization, church or mosque group...

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Conclusions

1. Ethnic inequality in the access to social capital resources?
   - ECM have less volume of social capital and less high and middle class social capital than male natives
   - Gender inequality > ethnic inequality
   - Socio-economic inequality → ethnic inequality

2. Assess social network measures adequately social capital resources?
   - Male ECM: ethnic bridging friendship ties
     → more volume of social capital and more high class social capital
   - Female ECM: active membership of voluntary organizations
     → more social capital (in all the aspects)