

BRIEF REPORT

TITLE OF THE PAPER

The Relationship between Social Capital and Health in China

Overall evaluation of the paper

This paper might be considered for publication in *Economics* because it provides some results on a topic which is of interest for the economists, and because it employs accurate methods to investigate the problem of endogeneity. However, the results in themselves do not add much to the literature. A better presentation of the topic and of the results could help the reader to appreciate the paper.

Comments

The paper mentions the bonding/bridging distinction in the relationship between social capital and health when it reviews the literature, but it does not contribute to the issue. Yet, Meng and Chen (2014) addressed the issue for China, and they found interesting results (the paper cites these authors, but for other reasons). Gannon and Roberts (2014) have even found that bonding ties are negatively related with health. The issue is interesting in general, because bonding and bridging social capital have been found with different effects on a variety of interesting variables in the literature that follows the seminal work of Banfield (1958; see Alesina and Giuliano 2011). Other studies show that different effects on self-reported well-being are obtained by distinguishing between trust in the family and in strangers (e.g., Leung et al. 2011), and between participation in associations for extrinsic and intrinsic interests (e.g., Bartolini et al. 2014).

The paper seems to have the data to make the bonding/bridging distinction. But it prefers the distinction in social trust, social relationships, social participation, and social networks, by mixing together close and weak ties. The paper should justify this choice, and why, instead, it did not adopt some statistical procedures, such as factor analysis, to select the proxies for social capital from the original available data.

The paper does not introduce the key variable of self-reported health in relation with objective health and with self-reported well-being. While the subjective/objective health seems to be a weak relationship (Deaton 2008), the self-reported health/well-being seems to be a strong relationship (Helliwell 2003). A discussion of these aspects would enable the reader to better interpret the results of the paper.

References

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