

## Social Capital and Relational Coordination in General Practices in Denmark

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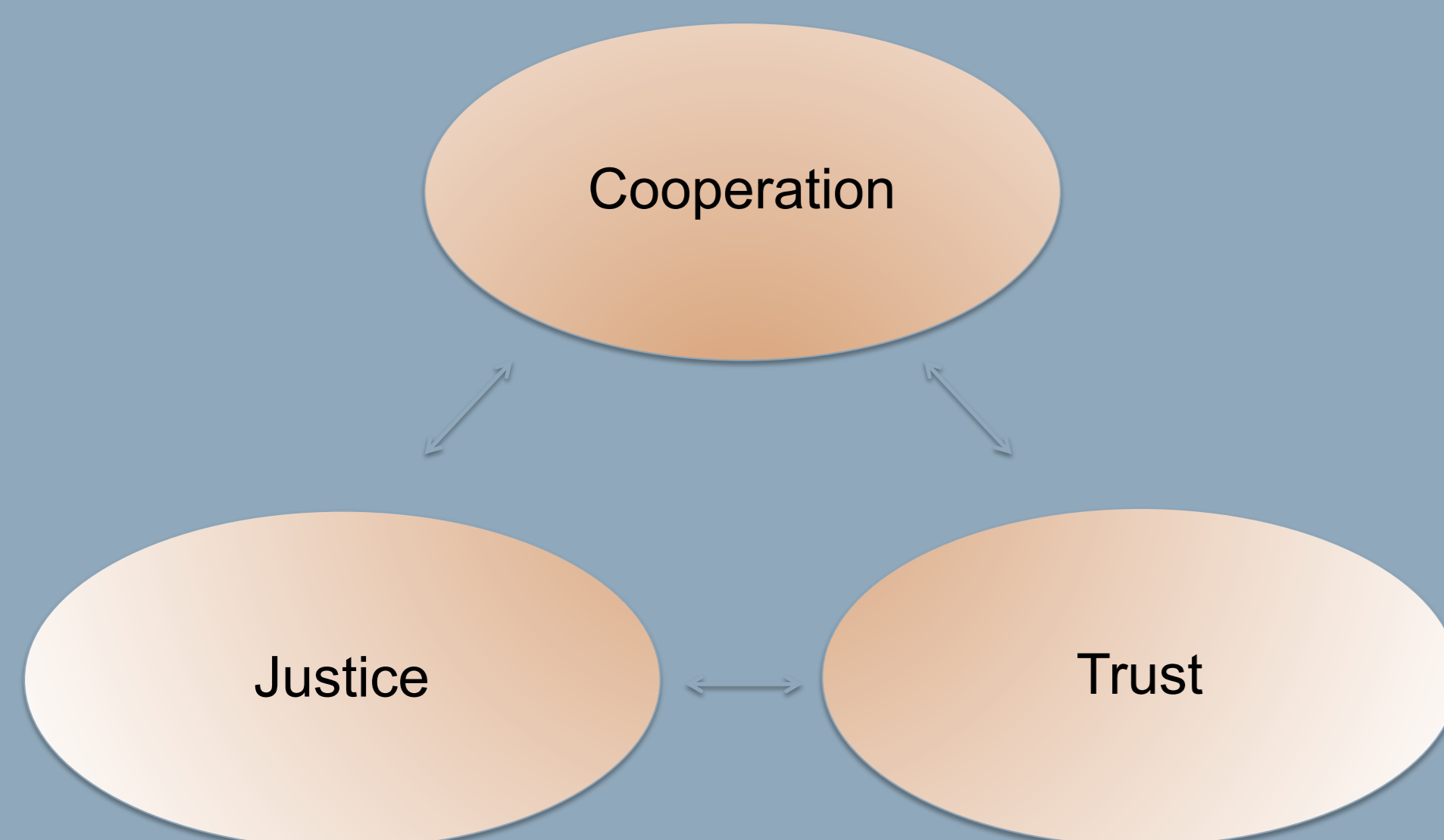
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## Objectives

Aim of the Ph.D. project is to investigate social capital and relational coordination in general practices in Denmark. In particular which mechanisms influence social capital and relational coordination in general practices, as well as the correlation between them. Social capital and relational coordination is two complementary theories for understanding the psychosocial work environment and coordination work. We propose that social capital and relational coordination can boost the effectiveness, performance and quality of general practices.

## Social Capital



The key dimensions of organizational social capital are justice, trust and cooperation. These three characteristics go together and are all necessary to explain and understand the concept. In practice, the average score for justice and trust is used to operationalize a measure for organizational social capital. Organizational social capital is defined as:

*"Organizational social capital is the ability of the members of the organization to collaborate when solving the key tasks of the organization. In order to solve the key tasks it is necessary that members master collaboration and that this collaboration is based on a high level of trust and justice" (Olesen et al. n.d.)*

## Research Design

The SCORE (Social Capital, Organization, Relation and Edification in General Practice) questionnaire survey consist of questions concerning relational coordination and social capital. The SCORE questionnaire have been validated through pilot testing and consulting an expert panel. The questionnaire has been sent to every Danish general practices (2074 general practices) asking all GPs and their staff, including administrative staff, to answer the questionnaire. Altogether 11.034 questionnaires have been sent out and they are being collected in the period June – August 2011.

Based on the results from the SCORE questionnaire a number of extreme cases will be selected for further investigation. Interview studies will be conducted to understand why some general practices have high social capital and relational coordination while others have low.

## SCORE Questionnaire

### The 7 Relational Coordination Questions

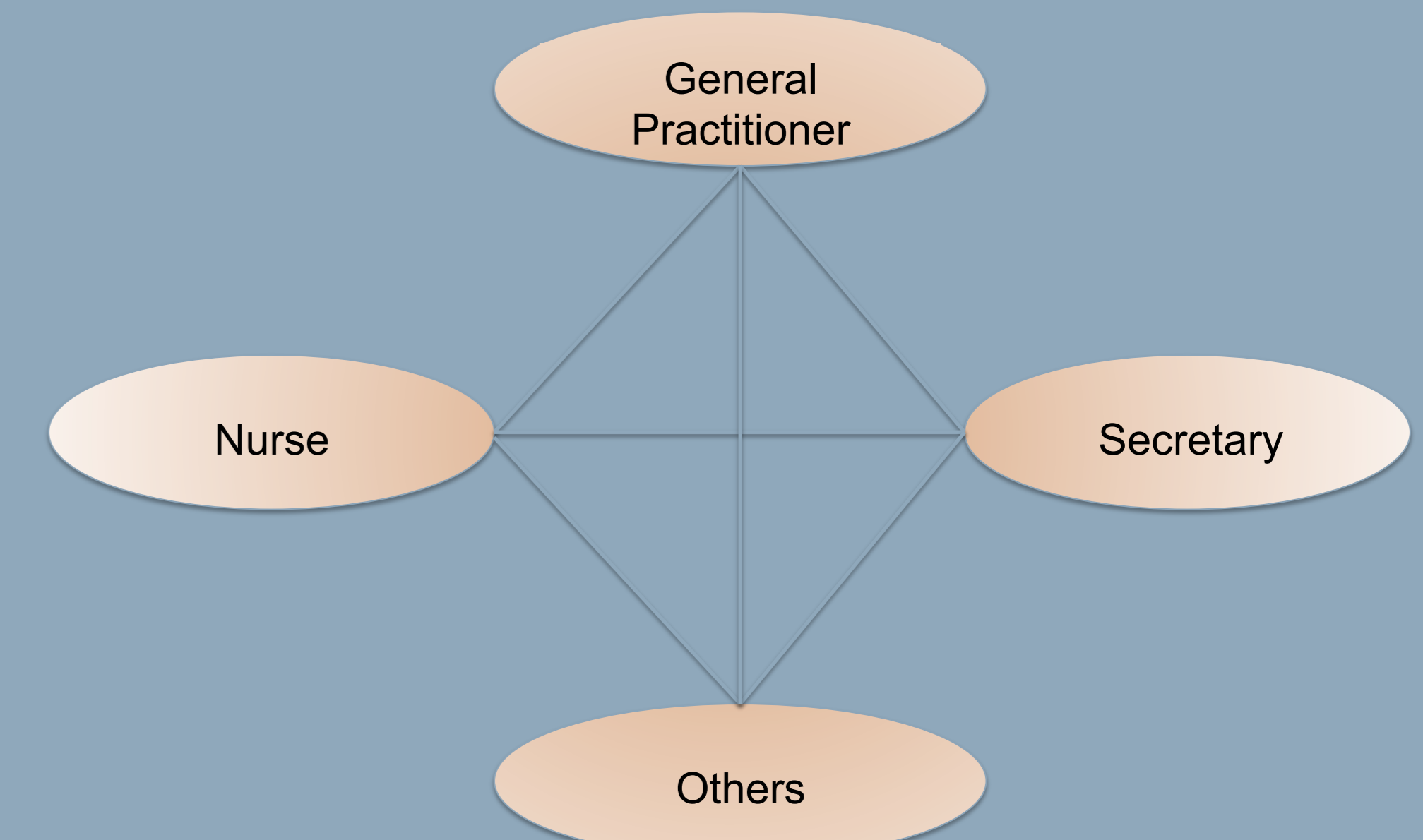
RC dimensions	Survey questions
Frequent communication	How frequently do people in each of these groups communicates with you about _____?
Timely communication	Do people in these groups communicate with you in a timely way about _____?
Accurate communication	Do people in these groups communicate with you accurately about _____?
Problem solving communication	When problems occurs with _____, do the people in these groups blame others or work with you to solve the problem.
Shared goals	How much do people in these groups share your goals regarding _____?
Shared knowledge	How much do people in each of these groups <i>know</i> about the work you do with _____?
Mutual respect	How much do people in these groups <i>respect</i> the work you do with _____?

### Questions from the The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire

COPSOQ Scale	Survey questions
Mutual trust between employees	Do the employees withhold information from each others?
Trust Regarding management	Does the manager trust the employees to do their work well?
Justice	Are conflicts resolved in a fair way?
Social community at work	Do you feel part of a community at your place of work?

## Relational Coordination

Relational coordination is a theory for understanding the relational dynamics of coordination work. The coordination that occurs through frequent, high quality communication supported by relationships of shared goals, shared knowledge and mutual respect enables organizations to better achieve their desired outcomes. Specifically, relational coordination is a mutually reinforcing process of interaction between communication and relationships carried out for the purpose of task integration.



## Perspectives

We expect the social capital to be higher in general practices then in other organizations such as production companies. We also predict a positive correlation between social capital and relational coordination. We would like to develop practical methods for improving social capital and relational coordination in general practices.

In the end the idea is that the general practices should become more effective, have a higher quality of treatment, and at the same time get more happy and satisfied coworkers without making the operational cost higher.

## Litteratur

Gittel, J. H. 2009. *High performance healthcare: Using the power of relationships to achieve quality, efficiency and resilience*. McGraw Hill Professional.  
 Pejtersen, Jan Hyld, Tage Søndergaard Kristensen, Vilhelm Borg, and Jakob Bue Bjorner. 2010. "The second version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire." *Scand J Public Health* 38:8-24.