

FOUR APPROACHES TO DEFINING SOCIAL CAPITAL

by

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Four Approaches to Defining Social Capital

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### **ABSTRACT**

The concept of social capital, which enjoys wide-spread usage, is handicapped by various problems including the lack of a universally agreed upon definition, measurement problems, challenges to claims of causality, and circular reasoning. Through this study a conceptual map which encapsulated the expansive number of existing definitions of social capital became apparent. The resultant conceptual map consists of four approaches, understood from an external perspective of structure and form, which have been labeled *discrete*, *composite*, *reductionist*, and *social energy*. This conceptual map is offered as a possible tool and preliminary step to aid in the summarization of existing definitions of social capital, as a means to facilitate subsequent scholarly dialogue, investigation and accelerating the adoption by consensus of a universal definition for social capital.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend its publication.

Approved: Akihiko Hirose

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

What is the role and value of the concept of social capital within social science research? In observing its usage by a wide spectrum of social scientist researchers and would argue that this applicability alone provides a credible basis for the continued use of the concept. Flap (1988, 2002) declares that social capital theory represents a new frontier in network studies, due to its ability to incorporate the dimension of the motivating goals in relationship to human interactions, when compared to the dominant structural approach. Uphoff (1992, 2000) strongly supports its usage as a tool to promote economic and social prosperity in developing societies because it encompasses the following human factors: “. . . values, norms, culture, motivation, and solidarity. . .” (Uphoff 2000:215). From a different perspective, Nahapiet, Gratton, and Rocha suggest that the concepts concern with the dimension of motivation and access for personal relationships makes it a valuable tool for firms concerned with developing cooperative relationships. They posit that the concept of social capital, due to its inclusion of resources such as trust and reciprocating identity, can function to introduce new sets of assumptions beyond the current dominance of instrumental or enlightened self-interest, crucial to enabling cooperative practices (2005:3–14). However, Schuller, Baron, and Field (2000) suggest that, in addition to its interdisciplinary applicability, the concept’s ability to shift the focus away from the individual agent towards the social unit; its ability to link micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of research; its introduction of values into social

science research; and its heuristic value as compelling characteristics that would argue for its continued use in social science research (pp. 35–38).

Social capital is becoming a more significant social concept as seen through the growing body of work utilizing this concept. In a cursory search (as of February 23, 2014) using the topic of “social capital” in the Web of Science Core Collection (v.5.13.1, Science and Social Sciences Citation index, 1975-present), 7,477 documents were located. Despite its popularity, the concept carries with it many theoretical handicaps, including the lack of a clear understanding of what it is, how to measure it, its role in causing desired outcomes, and the presence of circular reasoning. For example, scholars have been unsuccessful in identifying a universally agreed upon definition that could be ascribed to by a broad coalition of social capital theorists (Schuller, Baron, and Field 2000; Robison, Schmid, and Siles 2002; Adam and Rončević 2003). In relation to that weakness, Adam and Rončević assert that social capital is characterized by a “plethora of definitions” (2003:158), and Uslander and Dekker suggest that “we don’t have a clear-cut idea of what it is” (2001:179). Further, Dasgupta (2000) and Woolcock and Narayan (2000) allude to difficulties in constructing a reliable instrument to measure the concept. There is also a tendency for current studies to overlook and omit causal factors. As an example of this problem, Hooghe and Stolle (2003) and Campbell (2009) argue that Putnam’s (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) dependence on associational life, seen as a form of social capital, as the solution to America’s supposed loss of civic engagement, ignore the contributions to civic behavior of childhood socialization and adolescent peer groups. In addition, Portes (2000) and Schuller, Baron, and Field (2000) include circular logic as an additional problem that can occur in conjunction with the concept’s usage. Schuller,

Baron, and Field (2000) find the concept to have value and promise, they characterize social capital as an immature concept which stands at an evolutionary cross-roads, one whose current theoretical integrity is under attack and whose future potential questionable.

One area of theoretical work urgently needed to allow social capital to move past its current definitional log-jam and to facilitate the fostering of a common understanding of the concept, is the discovery of a simple, effective, and comprehensive systematization which will allow for the categorization of existing definitions and dynamics within of social capital. A systemization of this type, by being able to simply display and sum up the types and spread of existing social capital definitions, could act as a reference point as well as function as a catalyst to encourage scholars, after a period of dialog and debate, to arrive at a universally agreed upon definition for the concept of social capital. Efforts to sketch an synopsis of social capital have been attempted by past scholars, including Portes (1998, 2000), Wall, Ferrazzi, and Schryer (1998), Foley and Edwards (1999), Serageldin and Grootaert (2000), Portes and Landolt (2000), Schuller, Baron, and Field (2000), Adler and Kwon (2002), Smith and Kulynych (2002), Adam and Rončević (2003), Claridge (2004), Thomson (2005), and Fine (2007), with less than definitive results. Although these and other assessment studies have provided valid insights, they were often as or even more complex than the concept they sought to explain, unable to decrease the definitional disunity surrounding the concept, explained only a narrow aspect of it, and thus far have been unable to neither stem the continuing momentum of definitional confusion nor spark consensus efforts. As a result of my study of social capital literature, it became clear to me that an assessment and organizational tool with



the potential to change the current definitional dysfunctionality could be quite useful. If the community of social capital scholars is ever going to get past the problem of the disunity of definitions, a preliminary step must be made to produce a systemization whereby current definitions can be comprehended and systematized. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to present a conceptual map I developed as a result of my study of existing social capital literature that I feel has the potential to accelerate the process of breaking through the concept's definitional impasse; a streamlined tool which clarifies and identifies four distinct approaches that are being used to define the concept. This tool accomplishes that task through utilizing an external perspective of structure, format, and content. The conceptual map presented in this paper is being advanced as a means to enable the reorganization of the field of social capital through facilitating future definitional unity.

It seems prudent at this point to affirm what we already know about social capital; it is a concept whose playing field includes individual and collective social relationships; is concerned with the impact of various social resources; and includes structures, norms, values and attitudes,. For example, Ostrom and Ahn (2003) suggest that social capital studies introduced the study of such factors as “. . . trust and norms of reciprocity, networks and forms of civic engagement, and both formal and informal institution . . . as *causes* of behavior and collective social outcomes” that had previously been overlooked and bypassed by neo-classical and rational choice theorists (p. xii). Also, Nahapiet (2009) suggests that social capital provides strong theoretical support for collaboration and thus competitive advantage within firms:

. . . it demonstrates empirically the strategic significance of social connections, it explains various factors that produce high and low levels of social capital, and it elucidates the core constructs underpinning both social connections and collaborative advantage: embeddedness, reciprocity, appropriability, latency and convertibility. (2009:210)

However, although these summarizations are helpful in advancing a basic understanding of the concept, they do not begin to convey, comprehend, or deal with the sheer number and complexity of existing attempts that have been made in order to answer that elusive question of what social capital is. To respond to that challenge, I would suggest the urgency of and need for a comprehensive identification of general definitional patterns that underlie the current number of existing definitions must be identified, systematized, formulated, and explained, in order for students of social capital to ever hope to achieve a clearer understanding of the elusive concept.

Following is a brief summarization each of the four approaches that make up the core of my conceptual map of existing social capital definitions, although I will go into more depth, providing examples for each of these approaches in the third chapter of this paper. The four approaches that I suggest are utilized to define social capital are as follows: (1) the *discrete* approach, which consists of scholars utilizing and relabeling as social capitals, various and autonomous social resources. Lin (2001) includes the following examples of empirical social resources: land, money, honorific degrees, job referrals, and being a member of the nobility (Lin 2001:43–45). (2) the *composite* approach consists of social resources that have been combined and subsumed into one overarching resource in one of the following five ways: (a) various social resources that have been organized according to categories and subcategories; (b) lists of resources that vary according to context and ability to be accessed; (c) a fixed list of social resources;

(d) blending of the first, second, and third options; or (e) utilizing any or all of the first four options as well as highlighting a resources that is created by those for options. I have used the label stock and flow, terminology that was introduced by Krishna (2000:73), to describe this version with stock referring to a set number of resources while flow refers to resources that are fostered by the stock resources; (3) in the *reductionist* approach, scholars designate one resource as social capital; and (4) in the *social energy* (a term introduced by Hirschman in 1984) approach, social capital is understood as the energy generated between actors in a social relationship.

As mentioned earlier, the raw material and common denominator found in every one of the four approaches in my conceptual map are social resources, specifically those resources that are generated by, attributed to, found within, or utilized connected to social relationships. Social resources are crucial to my conceptual map of the four definitional approaches because they are the elements that are being manipulated, structured, and acted upon in the process of constructing definitions. These social resources include, but are not limited to, roles, rules, precedents, norms, values, attitudes, conventions, and behaviors. Within social capital literature, social types of resources are considered to be a new form of capital assets, generated within and by social relationships, joining the ranks of existing capitals such as physical, material, human (Schultz 1961, Becker 1993), and cultural (Bourdieu 1977, 1986). This perspective is clarified by the following quote:

All forms of capital can be understood as assets of various kinds, however they were created. Assets are things that yield streams of benefit that make future productive processes more efficient, more effective, more innovative, or simply expanded. (Uphoff 2000:216)

In this perspective, social resources are understood, metaphorically speaking, to be assets, in like manner to capital goods, as shown in the following definition of the term capital:

“Capital (or capital goods) consists of those durable produced goods that are in turn used as productive inputs for further production (Samuelson and Nordhaus 2005:267).

Samuelson and Nordhaus (2005) goes on to state that the durability of capital goods varies and reasserted that they function as both an input and output (p. 267). There are three major categories of capital goods: “. . . structures (such as factories and homes), equipment (consumer durable goods . . .and producer durable equipment . . .), and inventories of inputs and outputs (such as cars in dealer’s lots) (Samuelson and Nordhaus 2005:267). Thus, capital goods can be manipulated, acted upon, produced, harvested from, and invested. Applying the concept of capital to social resources found within and in the context of social relationships implies that they can be acted upon in a similar fashion.

Characterizing social resources as types of capital was an approach that was systematized beginning in the 1980s by a small cadre of theorists; Lin (1982, 2001), Flap and DeGraff (1986), Coleman (1987, 1988, 1990), and Flap (1988, 2002). As asserted by Flap (1988, 2002), social resources were compared metaphorically to capital and thought of as substantial entities that could be manipulated to further an actor’s instrumental interests.

The logical thing to do is to interpret personal networks as resources, analogous to these other resources, to treat them as a sort of capital that is instrumental in reaching general goals. (Flap 2002:34)

After social capital was relegated to the level of and equated with social resources subsequent social capital literature has continued to follow this protocol resulting in it being the assumption of choice in the majority of contemporary definitions of social capital.

## Guide to the Chapters Contained in this Paper

The second chapter of this paper will begin with of a literature review of early scholarly works that feature either the concept of social capital, beginning with the works of Marx ([1953]1973, [1867]1976). These initial uses were sporadic and lacked uniformity in their understanding and application of the concept. The first attempt to systemize the concept was done by Bourdieu (1977, 1986) and his work will be examined in some depth. Beginning in the 1980s, subsequent to Bourdieu's scholarship (1977, 1986), a usage pattern emerged where scholars defined and explained social capital from either a utilitarian or cooperative perspective, a pattern that continues to be present in social capital scholarship. I tracked the presence of these two focuses within the literature and identified and then applied them to two distinctive tracks that I have labeled the utilitarian or cooperative track, the labels being assigned from the perspective of the motivation for the use of social resources. In addition to summarizing literature that occurred in the initial phase of the concept, this chapter will examine a sampling of literature that exemplifies these two tracks.

In the third chapter, I will analyze and give examples of the four approaches to defining social capital that I have identified as *discrete*, *composite*, *reductionist*, and *social energy* (Hirschman 1984). I developed these approaches using the paradigms of structure, form, and content, which allowed me to discern and develop a conceptual map in which I categorize social capital definitions based on the manner in which social resources are organized. Social resources are understood to be a social type of capital in like manner to physical, material, human (Schultz 1961, Becker 1993), and cultural

(Bourdieu 1977, 1986) capital; capital assets that can be produced, utilized, or invested for desired outcomes.

The fourth chapter will consist of a discussion section and a conclusion. The discussion section will begin with a cursory look at possible scenarios that might unfold related to efforts to achieve a definitional consensus for the concept of social capital; including the option of abandoning the assumption that links social resources with capital. Following this perusal, a more in-depth investigation of possible link between the problems of multiple definitions, measurement issues, causal factor omission errors, and tautology to the assumption that social capital is a resource will be undertaken. In the conclusion, after a brief recap and reflection related to the scope of this paper, I will also consider the direction the concept might take if it is re-designed to avoid tying social resources with capital. However, the most I will do is to make some alternative suggestions for that re-design, leaving the possible evolution of the concept and the empirical research that must surely be required to ground any viable alternative to future scholarly works

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF SOCIAL CAPITAL LITERATURE**

The purpose of this chapter will be to follow and also delve into the unfolding progression of social capital literature, beginning from the concepts inception and then taking the reader into current times. It will be broken into two sections, with the first one surveying the sketchy and initial uses of the concept of social capital that occurred from Marx ([1953]1973, [1867]1976) through Loury (1977, 1981, 1989), and second section probing into a particular and distinctive usage pattern that emerged from the 1980s forward, where scholarship was aligned within one of two tracks that I have labeled utilitarian and cooperative. This section will also chronicle the underlying assumptions that led to the proliferation of the types of social capital literature which fit within those two tracks.

Literature utilizing the concept of social capital covered in the first section of this chapter occurred on an infrequent and sporadic basis, carried no obviously discernable patterns of usage, and represented isolated theoretical attempts that they were not picked up and spread by their peers. There was minimal cooperation or collusion amongst social capital scholars throughout that time period. With hindsight, it can be conceded that these early works do contain certain underdeveloped and immature versions of themes and conceptualizations related to social capital that were later expanded upon by social capital theorists. However, at the time of their historical origins, none of the premises that were being advanced were extensively developed, expanded upon, nor even noticed within the greater academic community. These premises can perhaps stand as heralds of future

efforts but they were not appreciated very much at the time of their genesis. The following nine scholars constitute a fairly complete list of all existing works that I could uncover that utilized the concept of social capital prior to the 1980s: Marx ([1953]1973, [1867]1976), Dewey (1900, 1909, 1915, and 1934), Hanifan ([1920] 1990), Seeley, Sim, Loosley (1956), Dubé, Howes, and McQueen (1957), Jacobs (1961), Homans (1974), Bourdieu (1977, 1986), and Loury (1977, 1981, 1989). As is easily discernable, social capital was not a widely used or appreciated concept and it left a very small footprint in the arena of social theory. That pattern changed when Bourdieu (1977, 1986) introduced his capital theory which contained a triune version of capital consisting of economic, cultural, and social forms, and which represented the first attempts to systematize the concept. However, while Bourdieu's concept of multiple capitals captured the imagination of social scientists, his interpretation and definition of social capital has had a lesser impact on subsequent social capital scholarship. The honor and designation of having initiated the usage patterns which are prevalently featured in current social capital literature belongs to a small cadre of scholars including Lin (1982, 2001), Flap and DeGraff (1986), Coleman (1987, 1988, 1990), and Flap (1988, 2002). This chapter will delve into the progression that evolved and characteristics that exist within the social capital arena of social theory.

### **Initial Social Capital Literature**

One early use of the term social capital (*gesellschaftliche Kapital*), can be found in Marx's ([1953]1973, [1867]1976) *Capital Volume I*. Marx's use of the concept seems to refer to the accumulation of a society's wealth: "Finally, the average of all the average compositions in all branches of production gives us the composition of the total social



capital of a country . . .” ([1867] 1976:762–763). As well as referring to total social capital, Marx suggests that social capital is built up from individual capitals: “The growth of the social capital is accomplished through the growth of many individual capitals” ([1867] 1976:776). He defines individual capitals as: “Every individual capital is a larger or smaller concentration of means of production, with a corresponding command over a larger or smaller army of workers” ([1867] 1976:776). One additional point was that Marx suggests that accumulated subsections of social capital can be held by capitalists:

Secondly: the part of the social capital domiciled in each particular sphere of production is divided among many capitalists who confront each other as mutually independent and competitive commodity-producers . . . . In any given branch of industrial centralization would reach its extreme limit if all the individual capitals invested there were fused into a single capital. In a given society this limit would be reached only when the entire social capital was united in the hands of either a single capitalist or a single capitalist company. (1867] 1976:776–779)

This social fund or social accumulation of capital understanding of the concept of social capital was also advanced by political economists such as Clark, Sidgwick, Marshall, and Bellamy (Farr 2004:19–25).

As social capital is just one small part of Marx’s capital theory, I will briefly describe the basic flow of the theory to provide some for Marx’s capital theory, which includes multiple types of capital and functions at a variety of levels. Marx did not see capital as a thing but rather a concept and a process which contained many dimensions and facets. He states that the first form in which capital appears is money utilized in the exchanging of commodities present in merchant capital, what Samuelson and Nordhaus (2005:29) would call the products market, which he considers to be the most basic type of economic activity. “Commercial capital is only circulating capital, and circulating capital is the first form of capital; in which it *has as yet by no means become the foundation of*

*production*” (Marx, [1953]1973:253). Onto this basic foundation, Marx then adds industrial capital and incorporates the role of raw materials, instruments of labor or machinery, and human labour in the production process ending with the product:

The end of the process is the *product*, in which the raw material appears as bound up with labour, and in which the instrument of labour has, likewise, transposed itself from a mere possibility into a reality by having become a real conductor of labour . . . . All three moments of the process, the material, the instrument, and labour, coincide in the neutral result - the *product*. (Marx, [1953]1973:300)

Social capital is introduced when Marx scales his basics ideas to national and cross-national levels, which he is comfortable doing since he views capital as quite fluid:

“. . . capital is not a fixed magnitude, but a part of social wealth which is elastic, and constantly fluctuates with the division of surplus-value to revenue and additional capital” (Marx([1867] 1976:758). The presence of social capital in Marx’s theory, while minimal, does reflect, reinforce, and attest to the grand scope and capacity of his work.

Farr (2004) found that Dewey used the term social capital in four publications (1900, 1909, 1915 and 1934) and that those usages alluded to a society’s linearly accumulated intellectual and cultural knowledge (2004:17). The following quote is taken from writings of Dewey that were published in *The Elementary School Record* in 1900:

. . . these subjects are social in a double sense. They represent the tools which society has evolved in the past as the instruments of its intellectual pursuits. They [also] represent the keys which will unlock to the child the wealth of social capital which lies beyond the possible range of his limited individual experience. (Farr 2004:17)

Dewey advocated that leaders and educators must convey this knowledge to their community’s young people, especially those young people who are disenfranchised due to race or gender. He promoted a community based approach to education that would enmesh the student in cooperative learning rather than the traditional approach of

individualized mechanical memorization of reading, writing, and arithmetic (he preferred the terms of language, literature and numbers). He proclaimed that this new approach would allow each student to develop their innate interests and talents, characterized as underinvested capital, which would then be contributed for the betterment of society (Farr 2004).

Hanifan ([1920]1990) equates social capital with emotions such as good will, friendship, compassion, and brotherly love and saw it as a necessary catalyst in the development of community level service and benefits. In his view, when neighbors enjoy each other's company and participate in community gatherings such as agricultural fairs, school exhibits, dances, school improvement discussions, and Christmas parties, they generate social capital. Hanifan argues that once a community has bonded socially, it will naturally follow that their accumulated social capital can be directed towards projects such as agricultural and other adult education programs, contributing to a war campaign, or even collecting funds for rebuilding roads, efforts that will improve the lives of their neighbors and themselves. In the following quote, Hanifan uses the concept of social capital in the context of community development within rural West Virginia. Using the state of West Virginia as a model, he argues that social activities held in schools or community centers were needed to revive rural and village life and stem the tide of individual and family isolation, ineffective community cooperation and breakdown. He defines social capital as the emotional bonds such as sympathy and concern that people form through social interactions:

In the use of the phrase “social capital” no reference is made here to the usual acceptation of the term “capital,” except in a figurative sense. We do not refer to real estate or to personal property or to cash, but rather to that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of a people; namely, good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit, —the rural community, whose logical center in most cases is the school . . . . First, then, there must be an accumulation of community social capital . . . . then by skillful leadership this social capital may be directed towards the general improvement of the community well-being. (Hanifan [1920]1990:78)

He was particularly concerned with intangible types of social factors that adhered to and were generated by dynamic interrelationships.

The concept seemed to disappear from usage until 1956, when it was used in the book *Crestwood Heights: A Study of the Culture of Suburban Life* written by Seeley, Sim, and Loosley (1956). This case-study followed residents of an archetypal middle to upper middle class suburban community located somewhere in Canada. Seeley, Sim, and Loosley identify social capital as forms of status and prestige that were conferred or gained by community residents through their participation in social clubs, “The prestige of a given association appears to be in direct proportion to the number and position of the status-lenders who back it with their social capital” (Seeley, Sim and Loosley 1956:299). The process of status acquisition was governed by covert rules of engagement involving money, occupation and family reputation and was very hierarchical.

The Canadian utilization of the concept continued the following year in a royal commission report on housing written by Dubé, Howes, and McQueen (1957) where a capital asset was defined as “something durable which helps to produce something else” (p. 1). The authors then suggest that the “something else” could be either goods or services including those goods that can be consumed or assets, such as machinery, used in further production. The study further asserts that capital assets are divided into three

categories, industrial, housing and social, with social capital assets being institutions or infrastructure components such as schools, churches, hospitals, roads, airports, sewer/water systems, and government run department (1957:1–2). It can be understood that social capital, which can be built and operated by public or private funding, consist of those assets which provide services intended to benefit society as a whole, and that cannot be subsumed under the category of industrial nor the goods that they produce.

Jacobs (1961), an activist for urban life, views social capital as a force that is built up due to interpersonal and group dynamics as well as by the networks themselves, using it to describe its existence within multidimensional, intricate networks that she observed within city neighborhoods which then were activated to contribute to community based self-governance:

. . . if self-government in the place is to work, underlying any float of population must be a continuity of people who have forged neighborhood networks. These networks are a city's irreplaceable social capital. Whenever the capital is lost, from whatever cause, the income from it disappears, never to return until and unless new capital is slowly and chancily accumulated. (1961:138)

Jacobs lived on Hudson Street in New York City before her immigrating to Canada and championed the cause of urban community grass root street neighborhood associations, often in opposition to well-intended, bureaucratically designed urban renewal projects. Her book is peppered with stories of people and shop owners who insured the safety of their neighborhood streets and also neighborhood and district cooperation that were successful in thwarting potentially destructive neighborhood renewal projects through their lobbying campaigns.

Homans (1974) asserts that a successful transition from small groups to more complex groupings such as those found within a market based, industrial society required

the use of both financial and social capital. For Homans, capital refers to “. . . anything that allows them to postpone actions leading to some immediate reward in order to undertake others whose rewards, though potentially greater, are both uncertain and deferred” (p. 361). Although, Homans does differentiate between economic and social types of capital as seen in the following quote: “They never ask what capital—social or economic—enabled him to undertake the innovation . . .”, he also tends to blur the distinction between these two forms of capital in his usage of the concept social capital (p.365). The following quote elucidates his conceptualization of social capital, which interestingly, includes financial elements like money:

They require some form of social capital before men can attempt them at all for their payoffs at best are not immediate but deferred. The capital must increasingly take the form of generalized rewards like money or status, generalized in the sense that leaders can distribute them so as to induce people to perform some mix of a wide variety of activities. (1974:363)

Thus, Homans includes various resources that are created and exchanged in a social context in his conceptualization of social capital, such as well-disciplined soldiers, surplus land, food, status, money, goods, services and some form of moral code such as trust, sanctions, and norms. He suggests that social capital is required in order to entice individuals to move beyond their selfish nature to contribute to a society’s development or participate in social interaction. He reasons that if individuals can be assured that they will receive personal benefits and be rewarded for their actions, they will then be willing to make personal sacrifices or contribute to other benefiting projects at the civic level (1974).

Bourdieu’s (1977, 1986) capital theory utilizes the concept of social capital in a theoretical system which entertains the idea that there could be multiple capitals,

including forms that are usually considered to be outside of the traditional marketplace setting. Bourdieu's system introduces the notion that capital existed in three primary guises; economic, cultural and social capital, although economic capital was understood to be the root and fundamental guise amongst the three. From that perspective he argues that cultural and social capital could always be converted into economic capital, although the ease and process of this conversion may require subterfuge and diplomatic skill in order to avoid dismantling the structures and networks that give access to and possession of the immaterial forms of capital (1986).

Bourdieu's definition of social capital focuses on the aggregation of resources belonging to members of a group:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (1986:248–249)

Bourdieu views the social form of capital as a phenomenon that was directly tied to an individual's membership in a group or collective. A collective or group, usually understood to be exclusive and homogeneous in nature, could be formed on the basis of various intra-group exchanges, either material or symbolic, and also enhanced due to a variety of socially instituted elements such as “. . . the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or of a school, a party, etc . . .” (1986:249). As a result of this type of human aggregation, Bourdieu argues that all resources, including financial, cultural, and symbolic assets possessed by all members of that group, gave the group or class a symbolic and literal competitive advantage in acquiring monetary profits, goods, services, controlling scarce resources, and which could be converted into political and class power. Some examples

of a group's symbolic capital would include the group's trust, honor, prestige, rights, duties, physical strength, energy of social dynamics, solidarity, social position, power and ability to dominate and even exploit or be exploited, if the symbolic capital was weak. Exclusive groups such as alumni of an Ivy League university or extended members of the Kennedy family benefit from this type of status phenomena.

Bourdieu argues that social capital gives members of a group a credential that carries with it the potential for credit and benefit, the quantity or volume being dependent on the size of the network and the assets held within that network. This aggregation of resources is of an interesting nature, a sort of conceptual and thereafter symbolic consolidation of financial, symbolic, and cultural assets rather than the literal grouping of all of a group's member's assets into a single bank account, partnership, or place. Thus, just through an agent's membership in a group or network of connections, that agent's personal worth is substantially multiplied in value, because they can also benefit from their cohort's contributions and quantity of resources (1986). Thus, new immigrants with no personal credit history could have access to loans from wealthier members of their specific ethnic or cultural group. Another example of these phenomena would be the social expectation of status and wealth for the British peerage, even if individual peers might actually be impoverished. This is also the idea behind the good-old boys' political network or that one's connections will facilitate access to prestigious schools or employment, reinforcing the idea that it's who you know that counts in getting ahead personally and professionally.

Loury (1977, 1981, 1989) utilizes the concept of social capital in the context of racial discrimination and equal opportunity legislative politics/policies and judicial



actions, asserting that such actions and policies do not address the wider community bias and intergenerational impact on the development of marketable skill acquisition within the black community. For Loury, social capital represents the socio-economic advantages of kin that influence the kinds of professional training and opportunities pursued by succeeding generations. This refers to types of educational and professional training pursued and achieved by parents. In the case of minorities, while personal factors such as talent, initiative, and ambitions are all relevant, the impact and influence of intergenerational inheritance as well as the attitudes and behaviors of the dominant social majority, especially if imbued with bigotry, must not be underestimated.

Persons begin life with endowments of what might be called “social capital”, nontransferable advantages of birth that are conveyed by parental behaviors bearing on later-life productivity. (1989:272)

Loury contends that equal opportunity politics or policies do not counterbalance the socioeconomic backstory of historical and community based racial bigotry for members of a minority social group. His socioeconomic model of income determination tracks the correlation of parental income, education and the father’s occupational status as well as the presence of racial bias at the community level, with investments in human capital (Schultz 1961, Becker 1993) and the acquisition of market-valued characteristics, especially during the socialization and educational phase of an individual’s life. Human capital (Schultz 1961, Becker 1993) refers to human investments in their own educating and skills training that result in long term impact on their professional and job positioning, wages, and individual financial gains.

## **The Utilitarian and Cooperative Tracks**

From the 1980s a conceptualization emerged that advanced the construction of an interface between the realms of the social and the economic, in the case of social capital this was done through linking capital with social resources. Although the works of Hanifan ([1920]1990), Jacobs (1961), and Homans (1974) may have influenced the rise of this approach in later social capital research, it is also likely that work within in the greater social science community also had an impact. This influence could include social anthropologists such as Kapferer, and Boissevain (Flap 2002:32), Granovetter's (1973, 1985) works on the importance of strong and weak ties in relationship job searches and the embeddedness of economic action within social relationships, and Williamson's (1981) Transaction Cost approach, all of whom investigated various types of interfaces between realm of the economic and the realm of the social. Whether or not a theoretical link to past social capital or social science research can be ascertained, it can be documented that a small cadre of social capital theorists; Lin (1982, 2001), Flap and DeGraff (1986), Coleman (1987, 1988, 1990), and Flap (1988, 2002) did develop an economic-social link through their association of capital with social resources, and it this conceptualization has since emerged as a dominant player in the field:

The logical thing to do is to interpret personal networks as resources, analogous to these other resources, to treat them as a sort of capital that is instrumental in reaching general goals. (Flap 2002:34)

The definition of capital that I will use in this paper is a generic one found in the eighteenth edition of an economics textbook by Samuelson and Nordhaus (2005) which claims that capital refers to goods that are used in the process of production:

Capital (or capital goods) consists of those durable produced goods that are in turn used as productive inputs for further production . . . . There are three major categories of capital goods: structures (such as factories and homes), equipment (consumer durable goods like automobiles and producer durable equipment like machine tools and computers), and inventories or inputs and outputs (such as cars in dealers' lots). (Samuelson and Nordhaus, 2005:267)

Social capital theorists who link capital and social resources assert that social resources are a type of asset or capital good found within and produced by social relationships that can be utilized for immediate consumption or reinvested in those relationships for the sake of future production.

From the 1980s I observed a variety of economic-social interface which linked capital with social resources. I also noticed that there was a tendency for scholars to identify with one of two types of motivations for the acquisition and use of those capital-like social resources resulting in works that, by in large, aligned under one of those two approaches. One motivation suggested utilitarianism and competition while the other suggested that actors sought to use social resources to further cooperative ventures and public good outcomes. Utilitarianism refers to a theory developed by Bernoulli and Bentham that assumes actors as consumers who are rational beings that, if given a choice, will always choose to pursue their optimum benefit (Samuelson and Nordhaus 2005:86–87). The cooperative motivation assumed norms of reciprocation, was other oriented, and included the possibility a self-benefit denying altruism. By cooperative, I am referring to both the action of two or more people or groups working together for some common purpose and also a willingness to work together with others. By public good, I am referring to a good that supersedes the level of the individual and provides benefits to a collective or the public. This type of good can be provided by governments and also by individual and group activities such as volunteer programs, cooperatives, and

philanthropy. Examples would include roads, national defense, firework displays, fresh air and water, and safer neighborhoods due to neighborhood watch programs. In this section, as well as summarizing social capital literature post 1980, I will also align the works I review under one of two tracks, utilitarian or cooperative.

The works that I describe in this chapter were chosen because they were either written by scholars who are recognized as having made significant contributions to the field of social capital, were selected as representative examples of the utilitarian and cooperative tracks, or both. In relationship to the utilitarian and cooperative tracks, the articles I choose to present in this chapter were drawn from a sample of articles that I reviewed (N=90). I assigned an article to the utilitarian track if the use of social capital referred to actors utilizing social capital acquired from within their social interactions and networks for the purpose of securing some personal, organizational, or group benefit. Aligning an article within the cooperative track was indicated if social capital was seen to refer to the utilization of social capital in order to produce some desired collective action and benefit, or the production of a public good(s). Within my sample, I did find that the two tracks were fairly balanced, with the ratio of 41 percent of author's whose scholarship which seem to fit within the utilitarian track to 54 percent for those scholars who's works seemed to fit within the cooperative track. As a disclaimer, these results are based on my personal and subjective review, assessment, and categorization of the articles I sampled and the results can only provide a general picture of the spread and alignment of articles that can be found in existing social capital literature.

Lin (1982, 2001), suggests that social capital is indeed a form of capital and that it consisted of resources that are converted into capital as the result of action-filled

processes that resulted in produced profits (2001:55). I aligned his work with the utilitarian track because he argues that actions are driven by rationalism, or the desire to acquire returns that fulfill either instrumental or expressive personal needs. Examples of instrumental needs would include wealth, power and reputation and expressive needs would include physical and mental health, and life satisfaction (Lin 2001:246). For Lin, social resources are valued goods that include positional resources, symbolic goods, and political resources; are understood to be embedded in an actor's network and associations; and influenced and constrained by various structural ingredients (2001:43–45). Social resources are transformed into social capital through interactive processes, utilizing instrumental or expressive motivations to produce instrumental or expressive returns. Instrumental motivations cause an actor to seek resources for additional gain, while expressive motivations cause an actor to maintain their existing resources (2001:45–46). In both cases, social capitals are understood in relationship to their use value. Lin suggests that expressive motivations follow a homophily principle where actors tend to engage with others who are in a similar social group or position in a hierarchical structure to gain support and sympathetic interactions. Instrumental motivations are typically asymmetric, between those situated in lower or higher positions within a hierarchical structure. Exchanges from lower to higher positions are usually instigated by an actor seeking to gain social resources beyond those they already control, such as gaining a new job or advancing their social stature. Exchanges that go from a higher positioned to a lower one may be undertaken in order to reinforce an existing power base; legitimate an actor's social prestige, reputation, and esteem; seek to elevate the lower positioned actor in order to converting them to an equilateral position with the

formerly higher positioned actor; all such actions would ultimately be to further protect the higher positioned actor's existing resources (homophily principle) through such exchanges (2001:55–77).

Lin argues that resources which belong to the category of social capital are not inherently capital but become social capital when they were utilized by an actor to acquire benefits. Lin suggests that hierarchical positioning, tie strength, homogeneous vs. heterogeneous group characteristics, and bridging are relevant structural elements that influence the capitalization process. Lin perceives social capital as both an outcome of production and a casual factor in that production process. He advances his argument by introducing a model for the capitalization of social resources which suggests the process occurs through three phases of: inequality, referring to the unequal distribution of resources due to structural and positional variations; capitalization, describing the role of human choice constrained by structure in accessing and mobilizing resources; and effects, referring to the instrumental and expressive outcomes and benefits that result from the capitalization process (2001:246-Figure 13.1). It is clear that Lin views efforts to acquire social capital as driven by utilitarian motivations.

I aligned the work of Flap and De Graaf's (1986) and Flap (1988, 2002) with the utilitarian track since they are concerned with how an individual actor's personal social network could be mobilized to enable them to acquire both material and immaterial resources. Their use of the concept was part of a research programme which broadened network theory beyond a structuralism perspective by allowing for internal motivators within an actor such as the drive to achieve personal goals, the primary one being to realize the socially conditioned good life or status and well-being. In line with this

perspective, they suggest that even within existing structural restraints, actors make instrumental choices to optimize their chances at achieving the goals of a good life. Resources factor into this dynamic due to the notion that actors who are richly endowed with resources (economic, political, symbolic or cultural, and social) are better equipped to realize their life goals (Flap 2002).

For Flap (1988, 2002), social capital consists of three elements that could be manipulated by the goal oriented actor for their personal ends:

Social capital is made up of at least three elements: the number of others prepared or obliged to help ego when called upon to do so, the extent to which they are ready to help, and what is at the other end of the tie". (2002:36)

The core of their social capital theory is grounded on two propositions; the social resources hypothesis and the investment hypothesis. The social resources hypothesis suggests that that the quantity of an actor's social capital directly correlates with that actor's ability to achieve their desired outcomes. The investment hypothesis suggests that people invest in social capital when it allows them to achieve instrumental ends. Social networks are seen as pivotal assets which are crucial in enabling actors to achieve their instrumental goals (2002:33–34).

Coleman's (1987, 1988, 1990) work is allied within the utilitarian track because of his assertion that actors act independently, are purpose driven to maximize utility and self-interest, and that this motivation drives actors to utilize social resources, or social capital, found within relationships and networks in order to gain personal benefits. He stresses that actors continually negotiated and re-negotiated within hierarchical, flat or subordinate relationships and collectives, mindful of normative values and possible sanctions, resulting in compromise, dominance by and or success in pursuit of the

maximum achievement of their personal interests and benefits. The definition given by Coleman for social capital was:

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure . . . social capital inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons. (1990:302)

Coleman's social capitals, while probably not limited to, included the following resources: obligations and expectations, information potential, norms and effective sanctions, authority relations/rights of control and public good. Further, Coleman posits that social capital can be created and reinforced by closure due to trust, stability, investment and ideology (such as religious altruistic mandates) while affluence and government directed social services or aid can depreciate social capital. Coleman does not specify the specific interests of actors that can be achieved through the use of various social capitals, although the implication is that they could be quite broad, subjective, or objective (1990:300–321).

Putnam's (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) work has had a significant impact on the popularization of social capital scholarship. It is characterized by a decided focus on cooperative social relationships which is why I have aligned his work with the cooperative track. He asserts that social capital is composed of trustworthiness and norms, created through and by networks, and social connectedness, also seen as a form of social capital, leads to citizens' civic involvement and activism:

. . . the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value . . . social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue”. The difference is that “social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. (2000:18–19)



One of Putnam's prevalent themes is that social capital is produced through social networks and associations, whether of the homogeneous sort based on kinship or friendship or the preferred type of associational affiliations that cut across religious, ethnic, racial, or community differences. Social capital is understood to be a resource with restorative power, likened to a panacea that binds a society together, providing the catalyst for vibrant citizen involvement in the greater civil society. He sees value in many forms of community and social interaction, suggesting that kin, friend and neighbor connections provided stepping stones to broader civic involvement.

Putnam paints an alarming picture of an American society faltering due to its diminishing stock of social capital, a state which he traced to the decline of socializing by the individual: picture an individual retreating from associations and fellowships of all sorts, perched on a sofa in front of a glowing TV screen, entirely alone. In *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam is concerned with showing, based on a massive amount of empirical data, that America is experiencing escalating deficits of social capital due to its citizens' swing towards the privatization of their once active social-time, that it is moving away from kin or friendship based gatherings, associational membership and community involvement. He dedicates a section of that book to determining why this trend exists and suggests that the pressure of time and money, suburban sprawl, electronic entertainment, especially TV, generational lifestyle changes, and other miscellaneous causes, as possible culprits.

Putnam takes a prescriptive stance in his use of the concept of social capital, and he is known for actively championing the need for America to build up its social fabric of associational life so that it can build up its stock of social capital. ". . . we need to create new structures and policies (public and private) to facilitate renewed civic engagement"

(Putnam 2000:403). He showcases the pervasive civic activism found in America's Progressive Era and suggests that period's civic enthusiasm was grounded on the large number of associations that also existed during that era. Putnam pointed to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century proliferation of social clubs and civic associations at every level of the American society. Further, he refers to examples of informal and non-political groups associations that morphed and redefined themselves as organizations of social reform such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs (1890) which began as a woman's reading group but which subsequently adopted a social agenda which included projects where members "campaign for government food inspection, stricter housing codes, safer drinking water, workplace protection for women, and services for the poor, sick, disabled, and children" (2000:396). The outputs or goals that Putnam suggests could be achieved due to a wealth of social capital include: high quality educational systems, educational and social health and welfare of children; safe and productive neighborhoods; economic prosperity; health and happiness; and a vibrant democratic society characterized by the civic engagement of its citizens.

Colletta and Cullen's (2000) work studied the concept of social capital in relationship to violent conflicts in developing nations. The purpose of their study was to find a way to prevent or hasten recovery from such destructive occurrences due to the insights gleaned from that concept. I aligned it with the cooperative track as it advocated for the application of social capital as a way to foster the rebuilding of decimated societies in former war-torn nations through community and governmental cooperation. Field studies that were conducted in Cambodia, Rwanda, Guatemala, and Somalia were re-examined with the benefit of a social capital framework derived from the theoretical

work of Granovetter (1973), Coleman (1988), Fukuyama (1995), Uphoff (2000), Putnam(1993), and Woolcock (1998), among others. The definition of social capital that Colletta and Cullen utilize at includes both a vertical component for state and community interconnectivity and horizontal component which emphasizes the necessity of horizontal community connectedness:

. . . the norms, values, and social relations that bond communities together as well as the bridges between communal groups (civil society) and the state . . . systems that lead to or result from social and economic organization, such as worldviews, trust, reciprocity, informational and economic exchange, and informal and formal groups and associations. (2000:4–6).

On the basis of their study, the authors argue that modern day peace-builders must develop strategies for restoring social capital, including social cohesion, strong social bonds, and trust as well as considering how to bridge social divisions and other forms of social polarization and disparities. They recommend that national and community rebuilding efforts need to be inclusive of both vertical and horizontal social factors to ensure institutional and organizational integrity within an at-risk society, including the re-establishment of legal and social norms, a fair and independent judiciary and media; and cooperative and balanced social mechanisms between the state and local community governance, what they term vertical and horizontal social capital (2000).

A key concept in this study was social cohesion, which they consider to be an overset of social capital. They suggest that social cohesion requires the minimization of unequal social divisions, social resources such as trust and norms of reciprocity, as well as the presence of a government that will mitigate social discord:

Social cohesion refers to two broader intertwined features of society: (1) the absence of latent conflict whether in the form of income/wealth inequality, racial/ethnic tensions, disparities in political participation, or other forms of polarization and (2) the presence of strong social bonds—measured by levels of trust and norms of reciprocity, the abundance of associations that bridge social divisions (civic society), and the presence of institutions of conflict management, e.g., responsive democracy, an independent judiciary, and an independent media. (2000:12)

The authors' propose that the intersection between vertical social capital, consisting of the state vs communities/individuals, and horizontal social capital, consisting of homogenous bonding vs. cross-cutting ties, represents the optimum model for social cohesion, a proactive approach to shield vulnerable societies from violent conflict (2000:14). The 1994 genocide in Rwanda, where 800,000 died over a three-month time period, was cited as an example of the breakdown of the optimum model. This genocide was traced to the presence of extreme tribal animosities which existed between the Tutsi and Hutu that were fanned by invasive interference of the state. One example of this type of interference given was the *Radio et Television Libre des Mille Collines* broadcasts which put public pressure on the *Genocidaires* to do the work of killing Tutsi, propagandized as their civic duty (p. 42). According to these authors, recovery from Rwanda genocide or other atrocities, must involve rebuilding a democratic, balanced and unbiased, political, legal, and communications infrastructure that utilize vertical social capital and also the re-development of civil society fabric through the promotion of cross-cutting linking through utilizing horizontal social capital.

Ostrom and Ahn (2003), whose work I also placed in the cooperative track, suggest that the concept of social capital should be linked to collective action issues. Their definition and usage of the concept seemed to locate them squarely within the cooperative track. That definition suggests that the three core social resources that make

up social capital are trustworthiness, networks, and formal and informal rules or institutions:

We have selected three broad forms of social capital that are particularly important in the study of collective action: (1) trustworthiness, (2) networks, and (3) formal and informal rules or institutions. We view social capital as an attribute of individuals and of their relationships that enhances their ability to solve collective-action problems. (2003:xiv)

Ostrom and Ahn argue that a viable theory of social capital must be grounded on what they label as second-generation theories of collective action, or theories that acknowledge a wider spectrum of human motivation beyond the universal selfishness presuppositions. They labeled them second-generation theories because they were developed subsequent to initial collective action theories that were grounded in rationalism and utilitarian motivations. They point to a body of empirical research carried out in the field and through experiments that reject the universal selfishness assumption, noting that actors have been found to exhibit various degrees and amounts of concern for the benefit of others, thus exhibiting “non-selfish utility functions” (2003:xv).

Much of the article discusses the three forms of social capital included in the author’s definition, which they stress are needed to foster solutions to collective action problems, and to encourage substantiated collective action. They see trust, which they consider an outcome of social capital, as a pivotal link between forms of social capital and successful collective action. They draw on Gambetta’s definition of trust: “a particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assess that another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action” (2003:xvi). For trust to emerge, they note that a trustor must be and have the reputation of behaving in a trustworthy manner, an internal characteristic of a particular actor, leading to mutual trust between the trustee

and trustor. Ostrom and Ahn consider trust and trustworthiness to be significant elements for the norm of reciprocity. The analysis implies that for reciprocity to prevail as a pattern of social interaction trustworthy individuals must band together: “When trustworthy individuals who are willing to cooperate with others constitute only a small minority of a society’s whole population, one condition for them to survive, prosper, and spread is to establish a network among them” (2003:xxi). This type of network would also be considered a form of social capital.

Ostrom and Ahn also consider institutions, which they define as formal and informal rules of a game, to be a form of social capital. They include, under the category of formal rules: “written laws, administrative regulations, and court decisions, and so forth are formal rules written on paper and enforced by public authority” (2003:xxii). Informal rules refer to rules-in-use that are devised at the grassroots level, and take into account: “. . . environmental conditions, cultural traditions, monitoring, sanctioning, and conflict resolution mechanism” (2003:xxiii). The authors point to irrigation systems in Nepal that were successful due to the deployment of this type of rule, giving as an example farmer-participant who worked out incentive problems through vigilant monitoring, and the application of sanctions, factors often not effectively dealt with by a purely vertical and technical approach. Successful social action projects usually involve a blending of both types of rules, with both playing important roles in fostering and sustaining social cooperation.

Knoke’s (2009) article examines the impact of corporate level social capital generated by patterns of corporate alliances and was especially concerned with how these alliances increased business advantage. I aligned this article with the utilitarian track even

though it is concerned with cooperation and corporate alliances, because the motivation and purpose behind those alliances was individual and organizational profits and benefits.

Knoke's definition of corporate social capital is:

*The set of resources, tangible or virtual, that accrue to a corporate player through the player's social relationships, facilitating the attainment of goals.* (Knoke 2009:1694).

Some of the suggested and potential resources that could be garnered through formal partnerships included the following:

Partners' resources may include financial assets and extension of credit; timely information, scientific knowledge, or expert advice, proprietary technologies or patents; marketing expertise or penetration into new countries and cultures; organizational prestige, status, or corporate or brand reputations; and trustworthiness and low risk (moral hazards). (Knoke 2009:1696)

This article identified cooperative behaviors that could be occur between corporate partnerships and addressed the importance of partners minimizing behaviors that would undermine direct, indirect, formal, and informal corporate connections. Some cooperative behaviors could include: “. . . to conduct basic research, develop new products, integrate existing products, expand into international markets, formulate industry standards, and even undertake collective political actions . . .” (2009:1696). Behaviors that needed to be minimized included intra-company illegitimate liability that might stem from abuses and misuses occurring at the individual level such as management opportunism or bullying, in order to reinforce inter-partner solidarity and trust. That would also include minimizing corporate level selfish actions, at least at the point of interface, as well as requiring that social resources such as intentions grounded on norms of reciprocity, equity, cooperation, and trust must be present and shared.

Much of this study tracked patterns of alliance formation, citing a study that was carried out between the years of 1991 and 2000. The parameters for partnerships and alliance studied required that the arrangements be made between at least two partners that maintained their legal integrity, shared tasks, management, and benefits, and technological or product advances in their particular industry (p. 1695). They looked at 145 companies in what they labeled the “Global Information Sector” that included the following industries: “publishing, motion pictures and sound recording, broadcasting and telecommunications, information services and data-processing services, manufacturing industries, computers, electronic products, and semiconductor machinery (pp. 1698–1699) They found that there is indeed a trend towards strategic alliances, at least in the years and companies followed, with an increase in the mean number of alliances from 1.2 at the beginning of the study to 4.5 in the final year. What this tells us is that the trend towards social capital producing behaviors at the corporate level is cutting edge and relevant. Whether such a trend will continue remains to be seen, but one take-away could be enhancing the attractiveness of social capital theory to the meso-level, especially as a possible strategy for companies that want to enhance their performance and gain a competitive advantage in today’s marketplace.

One unexpected outcome of my review of social capital literature was the observation of the presence of two tracks within social capital scholarship, the utilitarian and cooperative tracks. The main purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the past and current usages of the concept of social capital, including a look at key scholars who have utilized the concept in their works. But, in addition, I have also used this chapter to highlight the two tracks of the literature, a pattern focused on the purposes



and motivations that propelled actors to utilize social resources. In the next chapter, I will turn my attention to the primary focus of this paper, that of presenting the four approaches that have been used by scholars in their efforts to define the concept of social capital.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **FOUR APPROACHES USED TO DEFINE SOCIAL CAPITAL**

The purpose of this chapter is to pursue an in-depth explanation of the conceptual map of the four approaches used to define social capital that became apparent to me during the process of my investigation of social capital literature. As a result of that perusal I experienced firsthand the massive number of seemingly dissimilar and divisive definitions of social capital which brought into sharp focus the substantial problem of definitional disunity that plagued the concept. As I endeavored to make sense of the variety and quantity of definitions that from the outset had no seeming unifying elements, a conceptual map began to emerge. This conceptual map began to develop as a result of my isolating a basic conceptual premise which assumed that social resources were the new form of capital, cousins to physical, material, human (Schultz 1961, Becker 1993), and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1986) which was henceforth labeled as social capital and became the target of any and all definitional efforts. From this point forward definitional effort set about to describe, explain, understand, and act upon the social resource or resources known as social capital. Taking this premise into consideration, I observed and later isolated specific processes and elements that I found in all social capital definitions constructed since the 1980s. Considering these observations, I then utilized the paradigms of structure, form, and to some degree content to design my conceptual map. I used those paradigms because I deemed them to be flexible and detached enough as a basis to detect and reveal repeated usage patterns found in the formation and construction of social capital definitions. Of pivotal importance in my

analysis was the clarification that the basic raw material used in the construction of social capital definitions were social resources, especially since it is seen as a new form of capital likened to physical, material, human (Schultz 1961, Becker 1993), and cultural (Bourdieu 1977, 1986) capital. By raw material I mean that social resources are the common elements that are being structured, manipulated, formed, and acted upon within all social capital definitions. In this chapter I will identify and describe in more detail each of the four approaches in my conceptual map through utilizing examples from social capital literature. While this conceptual map does not limit the number of existing definitions, I do see it as a necessary preliminary step required to achieve that outcome. Certainly until the scholarly community can get a handle on the massive and ever increasing number of definitions for social capital it will be impossible to arrive at any definitional consensus or common understanding.

The conceptual map of four approaches used to define social capital suggests that existing definitions of social capital have generally been formulated utilizing four distinct approaches that I have labeled *discrete*, *composite*, *reductionist*, and *social energy* (Hirschman 1984). The *discrete* approach contains various material and immaterial resources that have been relabeled as social capital. These numerous social capitals are isolated from each other, with each resource being considered autonomous and independent from each other. The *composite* approach consists of social resources that have been combined or subsumed into one overarching resource, that has been subsequently labeled as social capital, in one of the following five ways: (1) various social resources are organized according to categories and subcategories; (2) an overarching resource that contains multiple resources that vary according to context and

ability to be accessed; (3) an overarching resources that contains a fixed number of social resources that are listed in the definition; (4) blend of the first, second, and third options; or (5) a resource that I labeled as stock, referring to a set number of social resources, and flow, referring to social resources that are created by the stock social resources, version (Krishna 2000:73). In the reductionist approach one solitary social resource has been culled from the existing array of multiple social resources and that one social resource has been designated to be social capital. The *social energy* (Hirschman 1984) version suggests that social capital is a form of energy that emanates from the giving and receiving action between social actors. The examples gleaned from within social capital literature that will be found in this chapter will cover social capital scholarship from the 1980s going forward, since this was the point when the conceptualization of social capital as a resource began in earnest. The synopsis of the four approaches to defining social capital is summarized in the table found below.

**TABLE 3.1: FOUR APPROACHES TO DEFINING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

<b><i>DISCRETE</i></b>	This approach features a varying number of autonomous, discernable and distinct resources.
<b><i>COMPOSITE</i></b>	In this approach, resources are subsumed into one overarching resource. It features the following versions: (1) Resources are organized according to categories and subcategories; (2) List of varying resources; (3) List of fixed resources; (4) Blending of a list and categories; (5) Stock (set list) and Flow (emergent).
<b><i>REDUCTIONIST</i></b>	Social Capital is reduced to one resource.
<b><i>SOCIAL ENERGY</i></b>	Social Capital is a form of <i>social energy</i> .

### **First Approach: *Discrete***

Examples of the first approach of the social capital, which I have labeled as *discrete*, can be found in the scholarship of Lin (1982, 2001), Coleman (1987, 1988, 1990), and de Souza Briggs (1997). This approach refers to an approach where various resources, including but not limited to structures, environments, and processes are considered independently. Scholars who used this approach took care to re-label every unique social resource they identified as social capital. For example, in this approach, trust, norms of reciprocity, status, and obligations would all be labeled as social capitals and considered separately, as autonomous, stand-alone, unconnected, and totally self-contained elements. It would also be accurate to describe this approach as one that identifies and utilizes a multitude of detached social capitals.

In Lin's (1982, 2001) works, he asserts that various social resources assume a capital like nature and become social capital when utilitarian action applied to them in a marketplace setting and when a return is expected. The capitalization process requires three elements: (1) resources are attributed with value, (2) resources are structurally embedded in society based on positions, authority, rules, and agents, (3), resources are capitalized after they were activated by being acted upon in a marketplace-like setting and a return was generated (2001:29). The following is a partial list of social resources that Lin considers to be social capitals: prestige, authority, material goods, knowledge, education, reputation, fame, club membership, family name, power, and social networks (2001:43–45). Lin sees social capitals as assets created through individual interactions

found in both asymmetric and symmetric networks, although he excludes resources such as culture, trust and norms, from the concept (2001).

Following is a list of social capitals identified by Coleman (1987, 1988, 1990) as resources found within social relations that foster obligations and expectations; enhance information potential; produce norms and effective sanctions; an actor's authority rights and responsibilities; and public good, which is a unique type of resources considered to be an unexpected by-product of directed action (1990:304–321). For example, an actor's knowledge of current political events could be a social capital resource when it is accessed by an actor in his network whose political knowledge is limited. Coleman also applies the label of social capital to any prescriptive norm that grants status, honor, or other benefits to those individuals who act to benefit the interest of a collective instead of pursuing their own self-benefit. In all cases, social capital resources can only be found within social relations where actors are located within hierarchical social structures, and those resources qualify as social capitals when their use results in valued outcomes to an actor or can be used to fulfill an actor's goals.

The work of de Souza Briggs (1997) provides us another example of this approach to social capital definitions. He suggests two basic uses for the resource: (1) a collection of resources likened to community support that could be accessed by people to get-by, and (2) a quantity of resources that could be accessed by people to get ahead, furthering their economic and social status. At the core of his approach is the premise that each social capital is a resource that can be utilized for a hoped for or expected benefit. His definition of social capital is:

The term *social capital* has been used for about forty years to describe resources that are neither traditional capital (money or the things money buys) nor human capital (skills or know-how). Social capital refers, then, to resources stored in human relationships, whether casual or close . . . . Social capital is the stuff we draw on all the time, through our connections to a system of human relationships, to accomplish things that matter to us and to solve everyday problems. (Pp. 111–112)

At the micro level, de Souza Briggs includes the following examples of autonomous and separated social capitals that could be used by actors to get by: shared caregiving tasks, rides to church, and kinship support and shoulders to cry upon. Mentors, scholarship aid, job referrals, and other forms of social influence, especially for those who have a deficit of advancement opportunities, would be examples of micro-level social capital resources that people access to get-ahead. At the meso level of organizations and systems of organizations, social capitals are autonomous resources generated within and between the actors within those organizations, such as trust and focused efforts which help developers, government agencies and foundations to stretch scarce dollars appropriated for affordable housing systems. The various resources that de Souza identifies and that I have included in the discrete approach are considered to be value neutral, with value being decided based on the purpose guiding the management of the resources.

### **Second Approach: *Composite***

I have assigned the *composite* label to the second approach to defining social capital. This approach describes a usage pattern in which numerous resources are bundled together to create a new, autonomous, and stand-alone resource identified as social capital. This approach consists of the following versions: (1) resources are systematized utilizing categories and subcategories (1) varying numbers of resources; (2) a fixed number of resources; (4) an approach which blends the first three approaches blending of

the lists and categories; or (5) an approach which blends the first four approaches and also contains a resource caused by those resources, a stock and flow approach (Krishna, 2000:73). The examples used in this section will include (1) Uphoff's (1992, 2000) understanding of social capital which consists of categories and subcategories; (2) Foley and Edwards (1999) version of social capital which consists of an entity whose component social resources vary depending on context; (3) Meadowcroft and Pennington's (2007) understanding of social capital as an entity composed of a fixed list of resources; (4) Nahapiet's (2009) conceptualization which combines the list approach with a complex organization of social resources; and (5) Putnam's (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) and Krishna's (2000) version social capital as both a cause and an effect.

I have identified two assumptions that I contend have contributed additional nuances to the *composite* approach. The first assumption suggests that social capital is a complex, multi-dimensional and faceted resource that in some cases is composed of various components. In this conceptualization, social capital is understood to be a resource that is constructed through the combination of various resources. The following quote from Flap (1988, 2002) speaks to this particular assumption:

The last issue is that social capital is not a one-dimensional all-purpose resource, but has distinguishable components that may be generally useful or goal-specific. (Flap 2002: 49)

An additional assumption attributes various social resources with the power to foster a resultant social capital resource, which speaks to the fifth version of this second approach. In this ontological approach, social capital is perceived of as an entity that exists in itself as continuant, fully existent in time without temporal parts and also as an



occurrent, unfolding with temporal parts (Jansen Forthcoming). From this perspective, social capital is both a causal entity and a created consequence.

Social capital is an entity, consisting of all expected future benefits derived, not from one's own labour, but from the connections with other persons. (Flap 2002:37)

I found this version reflected in Putnam's (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) works when he asserts that social capital is composed of networks, norms, and trustworthiness and it is also created by those networks, norms, and trustworthiness. The emergent form of social capital, which he conceives as a public good such as widespread civic engagement and civic virtue, is also understood to be an entity that can be collected in a reservoir or even taken to the bank. Putnam suggests that this resultant entity spills-over from informal (bowling leagues or block parties) and formal (civic and social activism) associational life.

The work of Uphoff's (1992, 2000) provides an example of the version of the *composite* approach where the social capital entity is organized according to categories and sub-categories, in this case those categories consist of structure and cognition. He defines social capital as “. . . an accumulation of various types of social, psychological, cultural, cognitive, institutional, and related assets that increase the amount (or probability) of mutually beneficial cooperative behavior” (2000:216). This approach asserts that social capital is a single resource composed of multiple resources that are subsumed, combined, and intricately organized within either a cognitive or structural categories. Those cognitive and structure categories consist of the following resources: (1) structural: such as roles, rules, procedures, precedents and networks that facilitate MBCA (mutually beneficial collective action) and, (2) cognitive: including norms,

values, attitudes and beliefs that predispose people towards MBCA (2000:240–242). In Uphoff's work, it takes time and effort for networks to buildup social capital and its usage increases the probability that cooperative action will occur, leading to outputs that comprehend common interests.

Uphoff (1992, 2000) illustrated social capital producing practices through a water management project in Gal Oya, Sri Lanka, where he worked as a consultant and organizer. The main strategy of the project consisted of the introduction of a structural component, a social infrastructure of farmer-representative and institutional organizers that organized a farmer driven management system, and a cognitive component, characterized by the project organizers and workers tapping into existing norms and attitudes that reinforced cooperation and service of others in order to activate MBCA. One such culturally shared cognitive norm was derive from a Buddhist tradition known as *Shramadana* which encouraged group labor because of the commonly held belief that it would provide spiritual merit. In this example, the tradition of *Shramadana* was applied by the project organizers to motivate irrigation canal users to clean and repair their dilapidated canal system and its use seemed to be one important factor that triggered an equitable system of water management and rotation. In post-project surveys, participants perceived that, as a result of the project, their community developed *ekemutekama* (a spirit of unity), which empowered the organization of farmers, improvement in the quality of life, and increased economic output and income stream. Acknowledging the role of preexisting individual leanings as well as culturally shared norms, Uphoff also suggested that social capital induced actions that were influenced by personal predispositions as well as the values and sanctions contained within social capital:

Knowing him as I do now, I think his basic personal value orientation was skewed toward generosity . . . . Yet by his own admission, for almost three decades he acted selfishly, like his neighbors, because that was the normative context in which he lived. (1992:340)

In the case cited, the outcome was quite positive, although the potential for a zero-sum outcome could have been a possibility, depending on the direction and effectiveness of a group's solidarity and if the presence of competition is accompanied with an underlying presence of trust, confidence, shared values, and investments in the wellbeing of the collective and each of its members. Throughout Uphoff's article, each one of the resources that have been included in his definition of social capital remains distinct and discernable.

Foley and Edwards (1999) also utilize a context, social structural/relational and access approach in their usage of social capital. Their definition for social capital is:

Social capital: resources accessible (mobilizable) to individual or collective actors in particular socio-historical contexts. Resources available for use. (1999:167)

Their work provides an example of the second version in the *composite* approach and includes attitudes, norms, generalized trust, organizations which mobilize economic resources, and an individual's willingness to watch out for neighborhood children. In this version, social resources are fluid and changeable, depending on the type of access an actor due to the structure of a network, an actor's place in that network, and the location of the network within a larger socio-economic setting. For example, an actor who occupies a fringe position in a network that is set in an economically depressed social sector will probably have access to less social resources than an actor in a fringe position in an economically prosperous social sector, although, since ties are developed one at a time, one tie might be all it takes to access a key resource.

Foley and Edwards argue that context matters, especially related to the composition of the social capital that can be accessed; that individual agency must not be undervalued; and a resource cannot be actually included within the entity known as social capital until it is accessed and utilized. Prior to their being accessed or utilized, resources are only considered as the raw material waiting to be included within or excluded from social capital. One aspect of this approach is that it recognizes the significance of an actor's position in a network, and asserts that resources that can be accessed are not equally distributed. In this approach, an accurate analysis of a social capital producing opportunity needs to determine whether actor(s) have knowledge of the presence of various social or economic resources, whether their situation in a network or the networks gives them access to resources, and what types of resources they are able to access. For example, an adolescent boy in India who helps support his family by doing whatever odd jobs he can pick-up, including occasionally driving an electric taxicab, may not have access to an individual who can link him with educational opportunities due to his lack of contacts that operate in an educational sphere or even the economic resources to pay for that opportunity even although he may be generally aware of their existence. Although social capital can be understood as resources that are utilized (mobilized) for particular purposes in specific situations, possession of social capital does not infer its mobilization, or if it is mobilized, that the actor will use their social capital wisely or well.

Meadowcroft and Pennington's (2007) approach to social capital exemplifies the third version of the *composite* approach where social capital is composed of fixed list of components. The authors' argue that they are rescuing the concept from what they consider theoretical abuses by the social democratic camp. The components attributed to

social capital consisted of: (1) generalized norms of trust and reciprocity, (2) networks of civic engagement “that exist at a societal or community-wide level, rather than the more particularistic relationships among families, friends, or work colleagues.” (Meadowcroft and Pennington 2007:21). Meadowcroft and Pennington also make a distinction between bonding (intra-group) and bridging (inter-group) forms of social capital in their treatises.

The authors’ found fault with arguments advanced by social democrats that a free market economic system undermined and leached social capital from personal interrelationships such as the family, kinship system, and associational liaisons. According to the authors, social democrats argue that market-based impersonal and thin morality, including private property rights, a common language, contracts, and respect for others which characterizes open markets, destroying social capital generated by intra-group dynamics and trust. They claim this was due to differences in religious, cultural, and emotive norms, intra-group connections, and particular and generalized trust. The authors’, however, contend that families and associations can and do positively coexist within and even support commercial exchanges. They suggest that citizens can and regularly do easily function on multiple levels, recognizing that commercial exchanges are built upon a unique type of morality that doesn’t require actors to sacrifice their particular ethnic, religious, and family level beliefs, principles, or tight relationships. They also point out that through the socialization process, families and schools help their members gain crucial skills to interact with and gain resources from their greater society. The authors argue that citizens are actually quite skilled at moving in and out of various associations, inter-personal groupings, and even employment, while at the same time maintaining their close-knit connections found in personal and family relationships.

Finally, the authors recognize that marketplace settings have evolved a particular set of instruments to respond to the need for trust in such an impersonal setting including brand names, franchises, money-back guarantees, credit ratings, licensing bodies, and professional associations.

The authors' also suggest that a society characterized by open markets and associational liaisons is not in need of a Third Way, big brother forms of interventionist governmental policies to reinforce its social capital. Advocates of this perspective to governmental micro-management and policy development suggest that social capital building processes need to use governmental intervention and policies to enable civic participation and reinforce associational and intra-group life, as a means of providing an alternative to a welfare-type state for social arenas such as housing, medical needs, and human suffering. Meadowcroft and Pennington argue, however, that governmental policies must, necessarily, be based on very time consuming and imprecise majority rule and consensus processes or decisions made by elected officials who are hard-put to be unbiased, which usually stifle innovation, creativity, and incremental responsiveness based on quick-feedback found within the supply, demand, and prices systems present in a marketplace. In their arguments, they suggest that governments should focus their interventions and develop policies which target areas that are usually outside the scope of civic participation or commerce, such as defense, foreign policy, and public works, or especially egregious incidents of abuse in the public arena, to shore up democratic processes.

Nahapiet's (2009) definition and further usage of the concept of social capital describes an entity that combines a fixed list approach and number of dimensions and

categories. For this reasons I included it as an example of the fourth version of the *composite* approach. Nahapiet's definition for social capital includes an infinite number of resources (all actual and potential resources) as well as the network these resources are derived from:

We define social capital as: the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. Social capital comprises both the network and the assets that may be mobilized through that network. (2009:208)

In the body of her article, however, Nahapiet moves beyond simply listing the components of social capital and goes on to describe and organize the contents of that resource. She describes an entity that consists of three dimensions or facets, the structural (patterns of ties such as bridging, bonding or future), the relational (trust, trustworthiness, reputation, processes such as face-to-face time), and the cognitive (shared values, identity, knowledge). She further suggests that social capital contributes to collaborative advantage due to its embeddedness, reciprocity (norm), appropriability, latency (potential for activation) and convertibility (pp. 209–219). To further elaborate on these components, embeddedness refers to the understanding that exchanges take place within social setting, appropriability refers to the understanding that social connections can be useful in a variety of settings, and convertibility refers to the potential of social capital to be converted into other types of capital.

In the “stock and flow” version (Krishna 2000:73) of the *composite* approach, social capital is understood to be composed of various components and also features a type of resource that is created by the resources contained within the entity. An example of the resultant or flow resources would be a ‘favor bank’ derived from civic engagement, or social connectedness (Putnam 2000:20). This version implies that a

resultant resource is fostered from resources found within the compounded entity.

Scholars who use this version also suggest that social capital can be collected in pools or that a society can possess a stockpile of social capital. In this usage, the problem of circular reasoning is an ever present danger since social capital is seen both as a cause and an effect (Putnam, 2000:294).

An additional example of this version can be found in the works of Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000). Putnam's definition of social capital suggests that it is an entity composed of trustworthiness, norms of reciprocity and civic virtue, and social networks, but then further asserts that these resources create a form of social capital, seen as a spillover public good, such as civic engagement and social connectedness (2000:20, 403). Putnam does seem to have borrowed some of his understanding from L.J. Hanifan's characterization of social capital as tangible substances that result from social intercourse, ". . . namely good will, fellowship, and sympathy . . ." (Putnam 2000:19). This subsequent and created social capital is likened to an entity that can be accumulated in a type of social bank account, stored in reservoirs, and eroded, thus leading to a deficit of social capital. In Putnam's book *Bowling Alone*, published in 2000, we find references to this capacity of social capital to be stockpiled on pages 28, 290, 323, 341, 368, 401, 406, 403, 404, 406, 408, and 413.

Another example of the fifth version of the *composite* approach can be found in the work of Krishna (2000), who views social capital terms of a stock and a flow, a resource that can be accumulated, forming a society's bank account of said resource: "Social capital can be understood most simply as a category for various kinds of social asset that yield streams of benefits. These assets comprise the stock of social capital,



while the benefits constitute the flow” (2000:73). From this perspective, social capital resources, such as trust, cooperation, rules, norms, and institutional precedents, are manipulated or engaged in order to produce or foster social capital, such as achieved cooperation and solidarity, to fulfill a common need, to solve collective problems, and other mutually beneficial outcomes. Krishna suggests that a society’s stock of social capital consists of two forms, institutional and relational. He gives the example of a community’s response to one of its member’s loss of a barn: (1) in the institutional form of social capital, community leaders would activate commonly recognized procedures and rules to rebuild the structure, while (2) in the relational form of social capital, shared trust, goodwill, values, beliefs, and ideologies will galvanize an emotive outpouring within the community based on perceived appropriate behavior, also resulting in an outpouring of effort to rebuild the structure. In both cases, the flow form of social capital would be the social action of rebuilding the missing barn. Krishna suggests that activating either forms, through utilizing existing social roles and relationships or creating new organizing infrastructures, will result in social capital that has sustainability and longevity. In his article, Krishna argues from the perspective that a society’s quantity and quality of social capital can be built-up or destroyed and that it is a vibrant resource situated within ever-changing and dynamic processes.

### **Third Approach: *Reductionist***

I have labeled the third approach to defining social capital as reductionist because within it, scholars have tried to discern, from amongst the multiple social capitals available, the fundamental and essential resource worthy of being designated as social capital. It’s not a widely used approach but I did come across three examples in my

literature sample, Robison, Schmid, and Stiles (2002), Robison and Flora (2003), and Davis and Bartkus (2009) that I will review in this section.

Robison, Schmid, and Stiles (2002) suggest that the current definitional confusion surrounding the concept of social capital stems from scholars erroneously trying to answer a variety of peripheral questions such as where social capital exists, its uses, or how it can be produced, instead of getting down to the basic question of what it is. For Robison, Schmid, and Stiles, the answer to the essential question of social capital's ontology is that social capital is sympathy:

Social capital is a person's or group's sympathy toward another person or group that may produce a potential benefit, advantage, and preferential treatment for another person or group of persons beyond that expected in an exchange relationship. (2002:6)

They arrived at this conclusion based on their understanding of the nature of capital as a resource, such as equipment or structures that is used in the process of transforming raw material into a desired output or product. As part of their effort to apply the capital metaphor to the concept of social capital, they sifted through a multitude of existing social resources, and determined that sympathy best met their criteria of being the essential social resource which could compel and motivate an actor to move beyond their own utility maximization in their social interactions, producing outcomes that were social or cooperative in nature and benefit, which the author's consider to be the distinctive arena for the concept. Examples of the transformative function of sympathy given included a mother's providing benefit for her child because of her sympathy, love, and care; because of an alumni's loyalty to their school, they will mentor recent graduates; or in sympathetic response to the plight of victims of a disaster, an actor will contribute to a relief fund. Thus, the authors' consider sympathy as the one true form of social capital

because of its indispensable usefulness, in conjunction with other forms of capital, to compel actors to participate in and maintain persistent social relationships that produce benefits for said actor and those they interact with.

Robison and Flora (2003), utilizing the definition of social capital advanced by Robison, Schmid, and Siles (2002), also reduce the concept of social capital to sympathy, and suggest that sympathy, which they suggest can be conveyed through the exchange of gifts, volunteer service, informal family celebrations, or care giving rituals, means “. . . to ‘feel with’ or to internalize (experience vicariously) changes in the well-being of others” (2003:1188). The bulk of this article consists of a discussion related to the role and nature of socio-emotional goods in transactions, suggesting they represent a relevant dimension to exchanges that have been under scrutinized. The definition for socio-economic goods provided by the authors is: “Socio-emotional goods are expressed emotions between persons that validate, express caring, or provide information that increase self-awareness and self-regard” (2003:1188). Robison and Flora suppose that interpersonal types of exchanges are other concerning and while they may be used for the acquisition of physical goods and services, they are immersed within the dimension of socio-emotional goods (i.e., emotions) such as a sense of self-worth, emotion well-being, social approval, or distinction for all parties involved in a relationship. They suggest that this dimension has been under analyzed and is significant due to the value it attaches to economic transactions or goods being exchanged. When socio-emotional goods are exchanged, a phenomenon identified as attachment value occurs and emotions associated with the person or context related to the exchange increase the value of the object, such as a letter from a friend or a diploma, for the new owner of the object:

The social capital paradigm introduces a new form of capital. This new form of capital produces a flow of social-emotional goods that have value. Moreover, these socio-emotional goods can attach themselves to the objects used to convey them and change their value and meaning. This change in value and meaning, we define as attachment values. (2003:1192)

The author's suggest that their understanding of social capital as a socio-emotional capital resource represents a unique contribution to the analysis of human social interactions.

Davis and Bartkus (2009) weigh in on the question of the relationship of trust, specifically organizational trust, and social capital and I have aligned them with the third approach to defining social capital since they reduce social capital to goodwill. In this article, organizational trust is defined as:

We define organizational trust as: the cumulative willingness of members of a group to be vulnerable to the actions of that group, to be vulnerable, even if they do not know all the members of the group and even if the actions of other members cannot be monitored or controlled. (2009:320)

They mapped out a correlation between organizational trust and social capital through a model which posits the following factors as antecedents to organizational trust and social capital: (1) a bounded group that has a sense of shared fate and vulnerability, (2) an organizational culture which embodies formal and informal norms such as benevolence and reciprocity and also values openness and cooperation, (3) membership consists of actors who possess competency in their task-related skills (2009:322–325). They further suggest that organizational trust functions as an antecedent to social capital. Social capital, which they have reduced to goodwill found in relationships between members of a risk-taking community or group, is understood to generate and cause outcomes, including collective action and individual citizen behavior. The sequence of network strength, norms, and ability; organizational trust; social capital; and outcomes in the

authors' model also generates a feedback loop which, overtime, builds up intellectual capital, knowledge, and expertise within an organization, providing an organization with competitive advantage (pp. 320-326). The authors developed this model to demonstrate that social capital has the power to provide individual and collective outcomes.

#### **Fourth Approach: *Social Energy***

I have labeled the fourth approach to defining social capital as *social energy*, a term that was coined by Hirschman (1984), since this is the imagery invoked by the scholars who advance such an approach. This version seems to harken back to the idea of Manna, collective consciousness, and effervesces as described in Emile Durkheim's ([1912]1995) ethnography of indigenous Australian tribes in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Durkheim describes the Totemic Principle as an impersonal yet tangible force that is also a moral power. This moral aspect, which compelled actors towards an improved reality, was derived from an individual's personal dimension and social interaction. Durkheim's description of the Totemic Principle suggests that it is not material and yet it can be revealed through physical force or power as a result of actions performed by men, creatures, physical phenomena, and further that the tribe or individuals connected through the totem to that energy. Durkheim explains that one of the reasons for collective gatherings and rites is to excite the production, maintenance and then to reinforce the collective connection, feelings, intense effervescence and ideas. Durkheim asserts that social phenomena are creations emanating from the social dimension of life, based on his belief that the combination of a group's collective energy and morality can have a substantially felt psychic manifestation. He explains that this force is collectively created from that supra individual that is society, a collective

consciousness also understood to be the supreme form of the human psychic. I have gone into some depth related to Durkheim's theory of collective consciousness because this view appears quite similar to the imagery invoked by the social capital scholars that assert social capital is a form of *social energy* (Hirschman 1984).

Although this version is rarely utilized, I did find it in the works of Paxton (1999), Lewandowski (2007) and Stickel, Mayer, and Sitkin (2009), and thus have included it as one of the four approaches. In the works of each of these scholars, social capital is understood to be an ether-like entity that is generated through social interaction, being both substantial and material (a form of energy) while at the same time ethereal and immaterial.

One example of the *social energy* (Hirschman 1984) approach can be found in the work of Paxton (1999), who views social capital prior to being activated as a type of potential energy:

When social capital is present, it increases the capacity for action and facilitates the production of some good. When active, it facilitates various ends for the members of a group and for the group as a whole. Social capital could, however, remain latent within the group and be viewed as potential energy. (1999:93)

Her full definition of social capital suggests that it consists of two components which could facilitate the production of individual, private-level and also group-level benefits, which she calls goods. Those two components include: “. . . objective associations between individuals . . . [and] . . . a subjective type of tie.—The ties between individuals must be of a particular type—reciprocal, trusting, and involving positive emotion” (1999:93). Examples of private-level goods would be child care between friends, while group-level goods are those which are produced through group action characterized by tight levels of trust and that are shared by all. Informal business exchanges of diamonds

between diamond traders, because of their shared religious and ethnic affiliation, would be examples of this type.

Paxton indicates the presence of high or low levels of social capital at the individual and community as well both the micro and macro social level, utilizing a 2 x 2 table which tracks connection or association between individuals or groups and juxtapositions them to the presence of trust, reciprocity and positive emotions, with the suggestion that this approach could also be applied to more macro levels such as between nations between group and associations ties juxtaposed with high levels of intra-group generalized trust. Paxton's article includes the idea of aggregated social capital or and social trust, the combination of generalized trust at the community level from all those within that community. This type of community level social capital can be a positive, especially when it includes a high level of "enlightened self-interest" that moves beyond the individual good to the public good and promotes a common identity and shared responsibility (1999:103). She proposes that a positive aggregate level social capital is a prerequisite for the maintenance of democracy and also that increased communication, information flow and cooperation can be achieved when a society maintains high level cross-cutting connections. She also entertains the possibility of negative uses of social capital caused when associational energy is applied towards destructive ends such as crime or when intra-group social capital excludes benefits for the larger community. (Paxton 1999).

Lewandowski (2007), links social capital to sociability, which he defines as: ". . . human association in its aesthetically distilled or formally concentrated state; it is inchoate *social energy*" (2007:25). He then goes on to define social capital as the ". . . the

harnessed or capitalized form of that energy” (2007:26). Thus Lewandowski sees social capital as a substantial resource formed by the conversion of an embryonic and emergent form of *social energy* (Hirschman 1984). Lewandowski suggests that this harnessed sociability approach to the concept of social capital has the potential to foster a viable theoretical basis for the concept; however I could not discern a formed theoretical perspective in this approach. Instead I found an argument which proposed the necessity of ethnographic studies being undertaken which study the cooperative dance which is inherent in the dynamics occurring in the space located between actors. The author suggests that a theoretical perspective for the concept would evolve as a result of such studies being undertaken. Supposedly, when theoreticians and ethnographers focus their efforts on recording a grand number of particular interactions, patterns and explanations for the phenomenon of sociability and those studies pass a certain tipping point, the said focused theorist will be able to discern a feasible elucidation of the concept.

Stickel, Mayer, and Sitkin’s (2009) article, which I categorized as part of the *social energy* (Hirschman 1984) approach, explored the supposed decreases in social capital, questioning why actors would choose to invest in or withdraw from investing in social capital, especially pointing to trust and decisions to take risks as significant factors underlying such withdrawals. The author’s definition of social capital likens it to potential energy that precedes action, and sees it as an energy-like resource that is positioned between various social resources and outcomes:

Our conceptualization of social capital is the bridge between variables like values, networks, and trust, and outcomes they facilitate — cooperative and helping behaviors . . . social capital is the socially derived potential for actions that contribute to the collective . . . distinct from both how it is created and how it is use . . . Like potential energy in physics, social capital is the capacity to produce action, whether or not any action is produced. (2009:305)



Since the authors define social capital as potential energy, I aligned their scholarship with the *social energy* (Hirschman 1984) approach to social capital. In the authors' view, values, networks, and trust are causal antecedents to social capital, with the presence or loss of trust being a core factor that will either trigger or dissuade actors from acting in a cooperative fashion or contributing to the public good. Their definition of trust is: "... a willingness to be vulnerable to another party which cannot be monitored or controlled based on the expectation that the party will perform a particular action important to the trustor" (2009:306–307). They argue that there are three qualities that encourage trust: (1) ability or whether an trustee possess specific skills and abilities to perform an action or task, (2) benevolence meaning the perception that a trustee actually cares about the trustor, (3) integrity which is a the trustor's perception that the trustee is bound by values and rules that the trustor recognizes as valid (2009:307).

The four approaches used in defining social capital can be found in the works of scores of authors in their efforts to understand the concept of social capital. Their prevalence suggests that strenuous efforts have been made within the discipline to discern an optimum definition and understanding of social capital. Due to the massive number of definitions currently existing, however, it appears to me that these efforts have actually backfired and rather than clarifying the concept have resulted in the current chaotic and convoluted lack of understanding. Within the sample of articles that I reviewed (N=90) sample, related to these four approaches, I also found the majority utilized the *discrete* (30 percent) and *composite* approach (63 percent). As a disclaimer, these results are based on my personal and subjective review, assessment, and categorization of the sample of articles, and the results can only provide a general picture of the spread and

alignment of articles that can be found in existing social capital literature. In assigning an article to one of the approaches, the *discrete* approach was indicated if the resources identified were portrayed as autonomous and unconnected, the *composite* approach was indicated if I perceived that various resources were being bundled together or, collected, and subsumed within a compounded entity that was then conceptualized as social capital; the *reductionist* approach was chosen if the authors reduced social capital to one resource; and the *social energy* (Hirschman 1984) approach was chosen if social capital was likened to energy located within social relationships.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Discussion**

In this paper I have identified and introduced a conceptual map consisting of four approaches to defining social, a tool which I suggest can be of service to support efforts to organize and make sense of the vast array of varied and seemingly irreconcilable understandings concerning the nature of social capital. The basic premise behind these four approaches suggests that the target of inquiry for social capital definitions is social resources because they are currently equated with capital. From this perspective, social capital definitions are merely attempts to describe the characteristics, contents, and function of that social resource(s) as accurately as possible. The four approaches are offered in a simple and straightforward manner, as a potential tool to aid in categorizing social capital definitions using an external perspective of structure and forms, thus giving a birds-eye feel to the analysis. My purpose in introducing this conceptual map is to provide a preliminary tool which I hope can function as a first step towards the ultimate goal of reaching a definition for social capital that can be agreed upon and adopted by a consensus of scholars.

It is at this point that I would like to consider how the required next steps in the process of determining a commonly agreed upon definition would go forward. I would posit that through written or face-to-face dialogue, discussion, and debate one of the four approaches should be favored. For this to occur, it would require that scholars determine which definition best describes social capital or come up with an agreeable compromise.

To progress to such a stage would surely to be daunting and perhaps would take years, but I envision no other option but that such an outcome be pursued if scholars are insure the integrity and usefulness of the concept.

I, however, would like to propose one possible path that could be taken to achieve a common understanding and universal definition for social capital. This alternative route would involve discontinuing the practice of equating capital with social resources, a choice that would totally alter the dynamic within and future trajectory of the concept. I am suggesting this option because of the various downsides and problems that currently afflict the concept. Although social capital scholarship is seemingly locked into this tact having used it for over three decades, the fact that the scholar who systematize the concept, Bourdieu (1977, 1986), did not utilize such an approach, leads me to the conclusion that other options for the concept could be considered. To recap, Bourdieu (1977, 1986) uses the concept to describe the virtual amalgamation of various economic, cultural, and symbolic assets that could be accessed by an individual by virtue of their membership in a group or collective and which augmented or had a multiplier effect on any assets that individuals may possess in her own right. Further, this virtual combination of assets was understood to contribute to that group and its member's abilities to garner scarce resources or wield power and control in their greater society. Bourdieu did not focus on specific resources but rather defined the term as the aggregation of economic, cultural, and symbolic assets. This is probably because his concern was with how the phenomena of social capital contributed to exploitations and the uneven power brokering which was prevalent in the classed society of his time.

Scholarly criticism of the approach that equates social capital with social resources can be found in the works of scholars such as Arrow (2000), Solow (2000), and Bowles and Gintis (2002). For example, Arrow (2000) urges abandonment of the metaphor of capital and the term social capital in the analysis of social networks, because it doesn't conform to the basic aspects of capital. The aspects he cites are: "(a) extension in time; (b) deliberate sacrifices in the present for future benefit; and (c) alienability" (2000:4). Although Solow (2000) agrees that social factors such as shared norms, institutions, and behaviors that affect the performance of an economy or society are worthy of study, he doubts that combining these factors with the concept of capital as prudent. For Solow, capital stands for produced or natural factors that will yield benefits over time (2000:6). He states that the concept of social capital refers to ". . . trust, the willingness and capacity to cooperate and coordinate, the habit of contributing to a common effort even if no one is watching . . ." and comparing such behavioral patterns to capital ". . . is an attempt to gain conviction from a bad analogy" (Solow 2000:7). Bowles and Gintis (2002) suggest that while the ideas invoked in the network/trust approach targeted by social capital literature are worthy of study, the use of the term capital, which they suggest refers to things people own, to describe social relationships, is problematic and inappropriate.

### **Problems Related to Conceptualizing Social Capital as a Resource**

The first problem that has already been identified with the usage pattern that considers social capital to be a social resource is the lack of a universally agreed upon definition and understanding of the concept. According to this paper, the currently favored approach which assumes a resource or resources exist that are known as social

capital has given rise to four approaches to defining social capital, with each approach consisting of numerous attempts to arrive at the optimum definition. I have observed that scholars seem to be compelled to come up with an increasing number of definitions and understandings regarding the nature of social capital, a pattern also noted by Adam and Rončević (2003). Adam and Rončević (2003) observe that authors using the concept first reference its historical uses and then either adopt an existing definition or advance their own definition. The latter option seems to be quite prevalent and has only added to the current definitional confusion, leaving the possibility of a united definition elusive at best. I have no definitive explanation for this explosion of definitions that seems to characterize the concept except that the current approach seems to lend itself to this outpouring. If social capital scholars wish to find a way out of this dilemma, one suggestion would be to limit the condition which seemingly encourages scholars to continually devise new definitions for the concept. If scholars no longer conceptualize social capital as a specific entity or a resource that requires extensive efforts to locate and define, perhaps the temptation to do so would no longer exist.

The second problem that I attribute to the conceptualization of social capital as a capital resource relates to measurement issues. From my perspective, when critics attack the concept of social capital related to measure issues, I perceive those critics as asserting the resource approach to social capital has resulted in an entity that is extremely difficult to measure. Typical methods used look to indirect indicators such as civic participation, safer streets and newspaper readership (Putnam 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) to identify this elusive target. One obvious critique that can be leveled at these types of empirical

efforts is their appropriateness and rigor or whether such indicators are actually measuring social capital.

Scholars who point out the measurement problems associated with the current conceptualization of social capital include Fukuyama (1995, 2000), Dasgupta (2000) and Woolcock and Narayan (2000). For example, Fukuyama cites three limiting factors for arriving at a comprehensive measurement of American's social capital, which he defines as “. . . an instantiated set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits them to cooperate with one another” (Fukuyama 2000:98). Those three factors are: (1) the inherent difficulty in quantifying the different qualitative dimensions of collective action found in broadly different groups such as the U.S. Marine Corp and a bowling league, (2) difficulty in measuring the types and quantity of shared trust in less homogeneous, mail-order style groups, like American Association of Retired People (AARP) or National Rifle Association (NRA), that lack face-to-face collaborative experiences for the large majority of their members, and (3) difficulties in including and measuring the negative externalities of groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan or the Michigan Militia, who promote values that are the antithesis to those that would build social capital (Fukuyama 2000:98–102).

Along a similar tact, scholars including Dasgupta (2000) and Woolcock and Narayan (2000) also point to the difficulty in constructing an instrument that can reliably measure the social capital concept. In his article, Dasgupta (2000) entertains a number of options or approaches to measuring social capital. One was to examine wages and salaries or total factor productivity, but he rejects this because he knew of “. . . no data set that would enable one to determine which of the three macroeconomic formulations of

social networks is most compelling” (2000:396). He suggests that difficulties exist when scholars attempt to factor in such features as horizontal, vertical, benign or destructive networks. Ultimately, however, he suggests that the problem can be reduced to difficulty in determining prices that can be used to estimate or assign value since so much of the nature of social capital does not occur in a market setting. Woolcock and Naran suggest that that any efforts to obtain one measure of social capital are currently at an impasse:

Obtaining a single, true measure of social capital is probably not possible, for several reasons. First, the most comprehensive definitions of social capital are multidimensional, incorporating different levels and units of analysis. Second, the nature and forms of social capital change over time, as the balance shifts between informal organizations and formal institutions. And third, because no long-standing cross-country surveys were initially designed to measure social capital, contemporary researchers have had to compile indexes from a range of approximate items (measures of trust, confidence in government, voting trends, social mobility, and so on. (Woolcock and Naran 1999:239-240)

It is my observation that scholars who attempt to construct indexes to measure social capital quickly find those indexes becoming obsolete due to the continual expansion of the types and numbers of resources thought to be encompassed within the concept.

A third weakness found with the concept is the propensity to omit relevant causal factors. It is my observation that this tendency can be largely found in the *composite* approach where scholars attribute this type of social capital with causality, the consequence being that they inadvertently limit considerations of other causal resources that have been excluded from their definition. One example of this problem is found in Putnam’s (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) learning model theory which hypothesizes that civic engagement, norms of reciprocity and civic virtue, and generalized reciprocity, are learned and practiced due to progressive affiliation from homogeneous to heterogeneous associations. Putnam’s (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) approach to social capital, however,



does not take into account the findings of various scholars related to the role of childhood socialization and other institutional influences as possible sources for section bias related to heterogeneous association membership, a potential error of omitted capital resources. It is noteworthy that Dietlind Stolle's 1998 study of voluntary associations and generalized trust did not support Putnam's (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) learning model of trust due to the following findings:

First, longer periods of membership in diverse association do *not* make members more trusting...this suggests that people self-select into more or less diverse groups, depending on their original trust level . . . [and] . . . Second, the longer members experience high-trust groups, the weaker their generalized trust ( $\alpha=.05$ )". (Stolle 1998:516–518)

Unfortunately, Putnam's (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) scholarship, thus far, continues to disregard the significance of those causal social factors that have been pointed out by Stolle (1998).

Scholars such as Brehm and Rahn (1997), Hooghe and Stolle (2003), and Stolle and Hooghe (2004), and Campbell (2009) also argue that Putnam's (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) work leaves little consideration for other possible causes of civic engagement beyond the recognized one of associational life. In their examination of individual-level causes of social capital, Brehm and Rahn (1997) identified exogenous elements that influence the development of generalized trust such as: childhood environment including the family's economic status and stability; individual educational attainment; whether the individual has experienced loss due to criminal attack; and the person's racial and ethnic heritage. Hooghe and Stolle (2003) suggest that early childhood socialization found within the family is a significant contributing factor for voting norms and involvement in the public sphere. Stolle and Hooghe's (2004) study on the roots of social capital

advances the premise that social capital research needs to acknowledge, while considering existing political socialization literature, that childhood socialization and youth-originating peer associations are strong factors underlying the presence of generalized trust and civic participation, and therefore scholars should include these precursors in their research. Campbell (2009) found that norms modeled by school peer groups could be linked to the propensity to vote in later years. These findings lead us to the possible conclusion that Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) has prematurely concluded that associational life is the predominant cause for civic involvement, while overlooking the fact an individual's socializing experiences can also explain his or hers participation, or lack thereof, in public service. Although the correlation of associational life and civic participation has yet to be disproved, Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) has also not met the burden of proof for his claims that associational life is the main cause for civicism.

The criticism of tautology or circular reasoning has also been leveled at the concept of social capital due to scholars who claim it to be both a causal resource and also an effect, with proof of its existence linked to the presence of social outcomes attributed to the entity. For example, Coleman (1987, 1988, 1990) is guilty of the error of tautology in his 1998 study of social capital. In this study he argues that closure in relations between children and parents leads to higher academic achievement in those children because it produces the bonding type of social capital as well as increases in human capital (Schultz 1961, Becker 1993) and resultant social capital. Furthermore, he claims that we know social capital is responsible for the improved academic accomplishment because families with more closure can be statistically shown to have

higher achieving children. Putnam (1993, 1995s, 1995b, 2000) makes a similar mistake when he advances the idea that outcome such as safer streets, health, and happiness are both caused by and are indicators of social capital, a fact that involves circular logic. In his argument, Putnam (2000) asserts that associational interactions build up the *composite* capital resource he has labeled as social capital that has resulted in bonds of social solidarity within networks which automatically lead participants in those networks to greater civic involvement and behavior, and the generation of more social capital. Furthermore, we know this because societies that have strong associational traditions have greater civic involvement and greater stores of social capital, and round and round the argument goes.

It is true that not all social capital theorists make this mistake, one exception being Paxton (1999) who wisely avoided positioning social capital as both cause and effect; however the error of tautology is an easy one to commit related to the concept of social capital. For Paxton, social capital is a network structure linking actors that is characterized by positive affective emotions such as trust and a desire to reciprocation. She clearly differentiates between social capital and its effects, such as the flow of information or cross-cutting social connections that encourage the flow of information. However, the tendency to utilize circular reasons remains as a temptation as a means to prove the existence of this elusive entity.

It is my contention that the multitude of social capital definitions and meanings, measurement problems, omissions of relevant causal factors, and tautology can be closely linked to the practice of conceptualizing social capital as a resource. Further, it is my suggestion that if this practice is discontinued, many of the current problems associated

with the concept will be avoided or even overcome entirely. If this tact is chosen, the need to define the elusive concept which has resulted in a continually expanding number of definitions could be avoided, thereby greatly limiting the number of definitions advanced for the concept. In addition, the possibility of measuring those social factors or resources becomes infinitely less complicated. Related to the tendency to omit significant causal factors, if the definitions given for the concept that are found in the *composite* approach were to be unbundled, arguing for the merit or demerit of any one social resource thought to influence the valued output of civic engagement would be a straight forward process allowing for any gaps or omissions to be identified. In such an approach, the combined components of Putnam's (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) definition of social capital that are currently bundled, or trust, norms, and networks and the resulting civic engagement, would instead be considered separately. I would agree with Smith and Kulynych's point that instead of arguing or advocating for social capital, we should advocate for those resources that have been replaced by the terminology: "So we are left wondering, why not simply advocate health, wealth, and democracy rather than social capital" (2002:173)? This argues for the need to find an approach to the concept that avoids the practice of relabeling or applying the label of social capital to specific social resources or combining a vast number of resources into one unitary version. Surely there must be an alternate way to indicate that an actor is using a social factor for utilitarian purposes than to attach the label of capital to it, or to build more and more complex definitions of the concept. As well, an argument can be made regarding Putnam's (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) propensity to engage in circular reasoning, for when capital

resources are clearly identifiable, tautology becomes much easier to detect and circumvent.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have outlined a conceptual map consisting of four approaches used to define social capital, when social capital is viewed as a social resource and a new type of capital. The purpose behind this paper has been to identify prominent usage patterns from an external perspective of structure and form within the social capital scholarship as a preliminary step towards achieving a common understanding of the concept. I have also faulted the operationalization of that approach, accomplished through relabeling existing social resources (such as trust, norms) as social capital; creating a unitary capital resource composed of a multitude of existing capital resources with some seen as causing a resultant social capital resource; specifying one social resource as social capital; or the idea that social capital refers to *social energy* (Hirschman 1984).

What would a revised social capital concept look like if it no longer referred to social resources as types of capital and how would the concept be operationalized? One possible alternative would be to utilize the label of social capital as descriptor of the concept. This tact would continue to use the social capital label for the concept, which I think will persist despite efforts to circumvent it. However, the concept of social capital would no longer continue to try to locate and then investigate the element or elements that share a supposed similar nature to capital goods. Instead, the term social capital would refer to a concept that investigates social interactions through utilizing elements that are currently found within social capital's toolkit such as structures, norms, values and attitudinal contents and would also examine the impact of

those factors on various outputs. Such an approach could conceivably free scholars to discontinue using the current label of social capital for social resources such as trust, norms, and structures, as suggested by Smith and Kulynych when they said: “So we are left wondering, why not simply advocate health, wealth, and democracy rather than social capital” (2002:173)? It would also undercut the propensity to bundle or combine social resources, which should result in more transparent quantitative and qualitative studies.

One additional issue that could possibly be resolved through conceptualizing social capital as a macro level descriptor is the inherent linguistic contradiction due to the juxtaposition of the social, referring to cooperative interrelationships, and the capital, which implies utilitarianism, independent action and reliance on the self, for that capital-like resource:

This is self-defeating and contradictory language . . . . Unfortunately; the contradictory juxtaposition of social (collaboration and interdependence) with capital (independence and self-reliance) allows us to continue to view the poor as not only in need of traditional individualistic values, but also as largely to blame for their lack of a “stock” of social power. (Smith and Kulynych 2002:172)

In addition to this linguistic imbalance, the usage of the concept introduced in the 1980s tended to operationalize and subsume normative resources under the capital analogy which contributed to the concept’s imbalance in favor of an economic approach. Using the label of social capital to describe a relational concept that encompassed both the social or cooperative and the capital or utilitarian dimensions found in interrelationships could provide a reasonable justification and explanation for the continued use of the label. If this tact is taken, I suggest that the terminology of resources also be adjusted in favor of a more neutral term, such as the term social factors as favored by Ostrom and

Ahn (2003), so as not to emphasize any instrumental usages that might be applied to those resources/factors.

In my literature sample I uncovered a few articles that I thought could function as concept pieces to aid in discovering a possible re-designed social capital concept that would get around any approach that would equate and define social resources as social capital. As none of these articles completely avoid all the problems referred to in my earlier discussion, they are offered only as concept pieces that might provide some positive elements which would benefit future re-design attempts. The first article, by Uslaner and Dekker (2001), rarely engages in examining social capitals as relabeled capital resources, utilitarian or other-directed in nature, choosing instead to refer to social resources using their commonly known names, such as trust or civic engagement. The second article, by Turner (2000), uses a macro, meso, and micro analytical ideal type approach to economic development, providing a broad social arena where social capital is understood as social forces. This approach seems amiable to fleshing out those social forces without relapsing into the technique of relabeling them as social capital or bundling them into one composite entity. In the third article by Uphoff (2000), his use of the resources that make up his *composite* version are so visible, reverting to the investigation of each resource's using their commonly known names would seem to be a doable tact. Although I would suspect that there are other articles that could be utilized, these articles did seem to be promising examples that might be helpful in any redesigning efforts along the tact that I am suggesting.

One question that needs to be addressed is whether the concept of social capital, with its current limitations and problems, is worth the effort that will be required to

revamp it. In this regard, I am in agreement with Flap (1988, 2002), Schuller, Baron, and Field, (2000), and Nahapiet (2009) that since social capital provides unique benefits to social science research, we should be wary of efforts to discard the concept completely. For example, Flap's assertion (1988, 2002) that current structural centered network research is unsatisfactory because it leaves no room for the consideration of motivational aspects of human nature which cause humans to act, such as preferences, needs, and goals, or the existence of unintended consequences presents a strong defense for continued use of the concept. Schuller, Baron, and Field's (2000) list of the five promises of social capital presents additional points that could also be taken into account, including:

*. . . it shifts the focus of analysis from the behavior of individual agents to the pattern of relations between agents, social units and institutions . . . to act as a link between mirco-, meso-, and macro-levels of analysis . . . [social capital is about] . . . multi-disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity . . . it reinserts issues of value into the heart of social science discourse . . . social capital's heuristic quality. (2000:35–36).*

We can also look at Nahapiet's (2009) argument that the concept should be utilized because of its capacity to be applied across levels with relationships, to function as a platform for relationships to be the prime unit of analysis, and the concept's consideration of the often separated dimensions of "the structural, the relational and the cognitive" within the social as well as being inclusive of social factors such as information, influence, social credentials and solidarity (2009:207–209). I agree with these and other scholars who have extensively evaluated the concept, that social capital has much to contribute to social science's understanding of social interactions. So, although the task of creating an approach that can overcome the limitations which I have elucidated in this paper will certainly be challenging, it is my hope that a redesigned concept that is



informed by my recommendations can be developed allowing the concept continual usage that is unfettered by its current limitations and problems and challenges to its integrity.

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