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## Social Capital: Easy Beauty or Meaningful Resource?

Xavier de Souza Briggs

How are we to avoid the risks entailed in shallow understanding of a big idea? This essay focuses on how social capital relates to economic inequality and political power, how planners can apply the concept in useful ways, and how we might develop more *practice* theories of social capital in formation rather than *effect* theories of what has already formed.

Xavier de Souza Briggs is an associate professor of public policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and Martin Luther King, Jr. Visiting Fellow in Urban Studies and Planning at MIT. His research focuses on collective problem solving in democratic societies and the links among place, race, and opportunity in urban areas.

One of the many enduring gifts rendered us by John Dewey's imaginative mind is the phrase “easy beauty.” Dewey used it to refer to something so appealing on first glance that we avoid the work of genuine understanding—the kind of understanding that reveals both the promise and the risk that tend to co-exist in most things significant enough to warrant society's close attention. Beyond social capital's “circus tent” quality that a number of us have lamented in recent years—the tendency to pile all things positive and civic beneath the social capital banner—one wonders if social capital has not, closer to the danger zones in public and private life, also taken on the qualities of easy beauty. If so, what might we do to avoid the risks entailed in a shallow understanding of a big, powerful idea?

True, thanks to political scientist Robert Putnam's (2000) encyclopedic *Bowling Alone*, we know more than ever how good social capital *can* be for us, if we get it in the right kinds for the right ills, whether crime, ineffective government, infant mortality, loneliness and depression, poor economic performance, or other problems. But America has long shown such a fundamental ambivalence about “community”—on one hand, an appetite for its supportiveness and we-feeling (belonging), and on the other, a wariness about all the demands it makes of us (obligation and sacrifice). What is more, communities are defined in part by their boundaries and power relations, and so biases and exclusion are necessarily at issue. Since social capital is often, in large part, a prescription for more

community of more kinds, we are obliged to wonder why mobilizing around *this* rendering of community, with planners and others in key roles, is likely to be of lasting value.

This essay summarizes in a critical way what I believe we have learned about how social capital works for individuals and groups and for what purposes—all with the aim of giving planning theory and practice some useful leverage on the concept, on how to make it work better and more often in the public interest. I will not attempt to review or assess Putnam's richly documented and compelling summary of social capital's *effects* on specific social and economic outcomes. Instead, I will focus on three persistent and troubling gaps in our social capital literacy: (1) how social capital relates to economic inequality in that not all social ties are created equal (i.e., not all "connections" connect us to resources that matter); (2) how the concept relates to political action and political power, including the possibility that some degree of parochialism and exclusion, whether conscious or unconscious, is nearly inevitable as planners and others work to build social capital with and within their communities; and (3) how—precisely—one is to take a *resource* concept such as social capital and make it *action-able*.

The last gap is particularly crucial for planning, policy, and public action, since social theorists who have so eagerly developed social capital—the concept—have thus far shown limited capacity to develop systematic ideas about action-taking that would likely generate more social capital—the real thing—a situation that Putnam and a few others have loudly and consistently bemoaned. One could say that we now need more *practice* theories of social capital in formation, in a wide variety of action sectors and corners of the globe, more than new *effect* theories of social capital already formed. We need "handles" for developing more of this blessed stuff for society's benefit, not just ways of measuring social capital's powers at whatever level that social forces, over time, happen to have bestowed the stuff upon us or upon some group we care about.

## The Faces of Social Capital

To understand how social capital works in a way that gives us leverage to action the concept, we need to recognize social capital in its various guises. In the shorthand of economics, in which defining and blending different types of capital is a central concern, there are two faces of social capital relevant to planning theory and practice worldwide:

social capital as an individual good and a collective good (Briggs, 2003b; Putnam, 2000).

### The Personal Face: Social Capital as an Individual Good

First, closest to our everyday experience, there is social capital as an *individual good*—a resource that helps us and our constituents act to solve problems, from the everyday to the crisis level, reaching out along networks, drawing on norms of trust and reciprocity and other social bonds through which so much of our lives are informally organized. We have learned to distinguish social resources that help us to get by or cope with particular challenges (*social support*) from those that help us to acquire something valuable and scarce—as material goods tend to be—in order to change our opportunity set and get ahead in life (*social leverage*; Briggs, 1998a). A key motive for getting *ahead*, let us note, is to escape some of the regular calamities that drain us and our support networks if we have no choice but to stay where we are, socially and economically, and cope. Anthropologist Carol Stack's (1974) classic *All Our Kin*, an ethnographic study of chronically poor African American families surviving along networks composed of mostly poor people, attests to the supportive but also draining qualities of such social ties. A vast body of research on youth gangs also illustrates the mix of benefits and burdens that gang networks bestow on members—apart from the costs those networks impose on society.

Both support and leverage are viable aspects of social capital in use, but we often turn to very different social connections when looking for these two types of aid. This fact is crucial for understanding urban inequality and the true dilemma facing socially isolated, geographically segregated, and very poor families trying to escape cycles of poverty and welfare dependency: Having supportive neighbors who are also disconnected from work can only help in limited ways, so support-enhancing activities limited to making connections *within* high-poverty neighborhoods will invariably have limited impacts on poverty levels (the former *may* help people to cope better with chronic poverty). Missing in this picture, of course, are the "bridging" connections that provide more social leverage by connecting the poor to the non-poor, the inner-city to the suburb, and so on (Briggs, 2003a; Gittell & Vidal, 1998).

This simple but crucial support/leverage distinction matters for planners in their immediate professional milieu, not just for constituents living and working in the urban settings that planners have targeted for intervention. As sociologist Barry Wellman (2001) notes, "Although

people often view the world in terms of groups, they function in networks” (p. 1). Consider, for example, the difference between a social contact at work who can provide me with emotional support and everyday favors (a ride, a small cash loan) but little else versus another contact who can help me quickly get a crucial new idea, or news of impending disaster, in front of the mayor—providing *access*, that scarce and precious “good” in any political or managerial context. Both contacts, and both of the types of capital that flow along them, are valuable to me, though I may secure and sustain one of these relationships in ways that differ profoundly from the ways in which I manage the other.

For planners confronting a world of rapid technological change, smaller and more decentralized government, and explosive growth in “partnerships” and network-driven planning and problem solving, as well as in the scale and variety of nonprofit and private sector roles in pursuing public purposes, the concept of social capital highlights the value of managing personal and professional networks that span the three sectors of public life (public, private, nonprofit), as well as social borders of many kinds (race/ethnicity, class, gender, etc.). Such networks can provide planners with greater information, legitimacy, access to financial resources, political influence, and other vital goods for accomplishing the goals of planning, as distinct from merely creating plans.

### The Community Face: Social Capital as a Collective Good

The risky underside of social capital<sup>1</sup>—the potential for exclusion in particular—becomes even clearer on the second face of the concept: Social capital as a *collective good* or resource possessed by a social system that helps the system as a whole to solve problems. Much of the recent popularity of the concept was generated here, on what might seem the more high-minded community value, rather than individual value, of social capital as resource for action. “Collective efficacy” is one shorthand (Sampson et al., 1997). As Putnam (2000) and others instruct, communities that are rich in civic participation and relatively high levels of social trust are rich in social capital in this collective sense: It is a resource that may benefit many members of the community, even those who do not themselves participate actively or trust much (“free riders”). And communities rich in this magical stuff can better organize to solve shared problems, from managing a scarce and fragile resource (environmental commons) to tackling uncomfortable problems that seem to challenge community mem-

bers’ values and beliefs, as well as their relationships to government (e.g., AIDS or youth crime).

Broad references to “community” may remind us why we like social capital at first glance. They do not illuminate these subtleties of how our lives are organized (or not) to draw aid from the social environment around us and, more specifically, from support and leverage-providing social networks. Furthermore, with planners and the growing social diversity of their communities in mind, we should recognize that merely invoking community, a concept treasured across boundaries of culture and class, does not equate with understanding the ways in which culture and class tend to *organize* and limit the meanings of community and the development and use of social capital.

Here are a few examples of how culture and class distinctions do this:

- by regulating the *formation* and *use* of particular social ties (Does a young person seek career advice from a school-based counselor or only from an uncle, community godparent, or other elder?);
- by providing *expectations* (norms) to indicate the obligations that certain relationships do or do not include (If a friend asks me, as a favor, not to hire a member of another ethnic group because it would offend her customers, how obliged should I feel to grant the request?);
- by further providing norms that regulate what I think of as “doing democracy up close,” i.e., in face-to-face public situations in which planners and their constituents must navigate subtle *social boundaries and communication styles* (How much visible anger is appropriate in a multicultural community planning meeting, how should it be expressed, and how should facilitators and other authority figures appropriately respond? What symbols convey the future we want to create together? What words should be used?);
- by closely relating “community” to religious beliefs and *symbols* or by strictly avoiding such links (Should images of the Virgin Mary be prominent at a public gathering, especially if a significant number of non-Catholics are expected to participate?); and
- by *bounding* community to include primarily members of one’s own ethnic group—community as *ethnic* community (On what levels can the white, Hmong, Mexican American, and African American residents of neighborhood X truly be said to share, or come to share, a “sense of community,” of shared fortunes in a shared place, that crosses ethnic and other lines?).

Does social capital often act to help communities solve “shared” problems? Consider contrasting scenarios in a sector important to many planners: local affordable housing production and community development. On one hand, as Keyes et al. (1996) showed in a study of nonprofit-based housing production activity in U.S. cities, social capital may be thought of as the resource that helps turn sets of actors with distinct interests and capabilities—banks, community development corporations, municipal agencies, foundations, and others—into effectively networked local *systems* that do the political and operational work needed to coproduce affordable housing (or play any other collective, public-serving “game”). Moreover, these researchers argue, social capital enables these systems to play the game at high levels of performance relative to cities that lack the needed resource. Beyond the formal structures that public policy and markets create, it is the informal social organization of such systems, grounded in shared norms and effective personal and professional networks that span the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, that will increasingly define the winning localities in a competitive era of federal devolution and downsized government.

In another scenario, as we rediscovered in a study of the social effects of community development (Briggs et al., 1997), social capital also inheres in bonds of community that, by setting boundaries, exclude some of those that we may think society is most obliged to protect or empower. Reflecting the parochialism that Putnam and others have identified with certain embodiments of social capital, this scenario illustrates the still-downplayed *political* implications of social capital. In a mixed-income, racially diverse, and revitalizing Minneapolis neighborhood we studied with resident surveys and ethnographic fieldwork over the course of one year, a community-based development organization with open board elections witnessed a board take-over by members of a large and disgruntled group of middle-income White homeowners (see also Goetz & Sidney, 1994). The new board leadership proceeded to dismantle the cooperatively managed multifamily housing that served many low-income African American families in the neighborhood—the very housing that had been a standout in our study of how community developers go about creating meaningful social connections and decision-making clout among the residents they serve.

The two subgroups in this neighborhood, defined by a difference in tenure (owner/renter) compounded by race, income, and other social differences, echo the Chicago School’s depiction of cities as “mosaics” of distinct social

worlds that coexist without connecting to one another (Park et al., 1925). In more contemporary terms, increasingly diverse cities are often home to groups that coexist without creating any meaningful degree of common identity or common narrative. Each of the two subgroups in our case study (White homeowners and African American renters) had social capital that bonded it internally but little capital to bridge it to the others’ interests or identity. Bridging ties are particularly crucial in diverse societies, for they expand social and civic identities, open up insular communities of interest, help contain ethnic and other intergroup conflicts, and reduce status differences among groups over time, for example by widening access to valuable information and conferring endorsements (vouching) from those who are “connected” and credible—at least in the eyes of opportunity brokers—to those who are not (Briggs, 2003a).

A more basic insight here, of course, has to do with power. Could it be that social capital is often important *because* of raw urban politics and political interests and not instead of them, that the mom-and-apple-pie magnetism of community and we-feeling notwithstanding, networks and norms are run through with political interests and with opportunities to exert political influence, to exercise political power? Planners and planning theorists would do well to recognize that social capital, a resource for interest-driven action, is logically bound up with political life—the actions and structures that define and advance interests—in cities. This fact is rather brutally apparent in our Minneapolis scenario but also important in the previous scenario about community development systems, particularly if one thinks for a moment about the government approvals and other “goods,” frequently competitive and controversial, that influence networks help to secure to get affordable housing built.

This loss of innocence, in which my use of some form of social capital may deprive your self-defined community of opportunities or fundamental civil rights—think of a socially cohesive and network-savvy group of discriminatory NIMBYs—defies simple conceptions of where the public interest in social capital, versus some set of more parochial interests, may lie. But then planners accustomed to questioning the rational and comprehensive planning ideal know the peril of such simple conceptions. We have learned that the public interest, at least in a democratic society, is constantly negotiated and open to reframing. This is true in both the deliberative activities that define the “publics” and their interests and the actions that deliver on interests, bringing them, tangibly, to life.

Social capital is both cause and effect of the political action that helps shape urban life and opportunity. As *cause*, social capital is crucial to the network and other influence strategies through which some political actors win goods more often and more richly than other actors. As *effect*, the politics that helps produce and sustain the segregated metropolis, its sprawl, and its pockets of concentrated poverty helps deprive our collective problem solving of the boundary-spanning, bridging relationships and greater social trust we could use to play the local political game more productively and more equitably.

## Building Social Capital in the Public Interest

I have thus far alluded to but not directly addressed the third shallow area in social capital literacy: *actioning* an idea that is not itself action but describes important social resources that *facilitate* action. Most of what we know about social capital is based on studies of social capital in use, of social capital already generated, sometimes unconsciously and informally, through purposeful social and economic action as well as historical accidents. Following Putnam's (2000) interest in understanding the lessons of Progressive Era civic organizing nearly a century ago for our declining social capital today, we clearly need to better understand social capital *under development*. For example, advocates for smart growth and regionalism invoke social capital, hoping to create new bonds of identity and felt interdependence across jurisdictional and social divides. Innovative public housing communities are organizing themselves to better support residents' efforts to find jobs, through norms and networks, even as employment and training programs, brokering intermediary institutions, and labor markets help connect residents to the jobs and stronger job networks that lie far beyond the borders of public housing complexes.<sup>2</sup> Many other efforts likewise seek to build particular forms of social capital, often on several levels (e.g., sublocal, local, regional, national, and even transnational). These efforts put social resources to work on behalf of urgent social needs.<sup>3</sup>

Let us consider specific ways in which planners and others have (1) taken innovative action to develop social capital and (2) studied such action to begin developing more practice theories of social capital. To illustrate these ideas, I will draw on a nationally recognized planning effort conducted as part of a community development demonstration in the South Bronx from 1992 to 1999

(Briggs et al., 1996; Donovan, 1999; Kingsley et al., 1997). Using their neighborhood networks as well as the hard-won trust of residents, government, and business partners, six nonprofit community development corporations (CDCs) each sponsored a broad-based planning process involving residents, merchants, and service providers in their target neighborhoods. But the CDCs also dispatched their planning consultants—as “shuttle diplomats”—to vet neighborhood-generated ideas with government officials, with whom the consultants had strong networks and credibility from prior work, and with foundation program officers. A nonprofit intermediary organization—an active broker of networks and agreements among the players involved—funded the planning effort and supported the CDCs with cross-site learning, advocacy at the city level, and needed technical assistance, as well as seed funds for “doing while planning.” All of this built confidence in the planning and, ultimately, in the plans.

The result was a set of plans with widespread support from neighborhood residents as well as city agencies and private social investors (foundations and businesses). New York's public agencies, like those in many cities, lack the resources and coordination to develop and implement effective plans at the neighborhood level. The CDC-sponsored plans were technically sound and well presented. In addition, the needed political support and legitimacy ensured early momentum and self-help for implementation *within* the neighborhood, as well as competitive fundraising, permits, and other approvals from *external* sources, both public and private. More controversially, the CDCs' rather unique networks and capacity also made them more *powerful* than other organizations with service provision and representation roles in the target neighborhoods.

Efforts like this one suggest at least four leverage points for developing more social capital in the contexts in which planners often work.

*First, change civic behavior—apply classic lessons of civic organizing in new ways to encourage behaviors that include joining, participating actively in, and leading new and renewed civic institutions that tackle tangible problems.* In the Bronx, the CDCs themselves were important neighborhood-based institutions, but many were at risk of becoming bureaucratic service providers or mere landlords with nonprofit status. The planning effort gave the CDCs a tangible, focused way to engage neighborhood constituents and citywide players, and the nonprofit intermediary created links across the neighborhoods as well as greater credibility with government. Social scientists have long studied causes and consequences of associational involve-

ment: what kinds of organizations particular groups of people join; how and why they participate; what benefits and costs of such participation are perceived (by joiners) to be; and why members stop participating or change the ways in which they participate (Fung, 2003). Now we need an updated, applied science of joining and “combining,” to use de Tocqueville’s word, that connects people to immediate problems they care about—and from those to wider social changes and concerns.<sup>4</sup>

*Second, help people acquire new civic skills, with special attention to the next civic generation (young people) and those with less status in the community.* The South Bronx effort included training and other support to help participants—including those with low incomes, little formal schooling, and even limited English-speaking ability—acquire and practice “public life” skills. These include running a meeting, defining a public issue, persuading others to act, deliberating with others, and participating in shared decision making. Working with the Interaction Institute for Social Change, the Boston Community Building Network delivers an innovative “Community Building Curriculum” with similar aims.<sup>5</sup> But many civic education associations, concerned foundations, and other groups are considering what the “new civics” (new competencies of effective citizenry) encompass in a changing society, as well as how those competencies should be taught and renewed over the life course.

*Third, build more extensive, boundary-spanning (bridging) and resource-rich networks to accomplish specific goals.* We tend to focus on informal ties among residents in “civil society,” but formal organizational ties, such as those among nonprofit groups (otherwise isolated in their neighborhoods) and between those groups and government, are also vitally important. Networks should relay important information and also be capable of endorsing (vouching for) those with limited access to money, political influence, and other scarce and closely guarded resources. In the South Bronx example, the intermediary group provided a vital set of links in several directions: (1) across neighborhoods and their CDCs; (2) between neighborhoods and government; and even (3) across public and private funders (public agencies and private, philanthropic foundations) with fairly typical, categorical priorities and little history of working together to revitalize neighborhoods comprehensively. But “link” suggests something quite passive: a bridge over which traffic flows. The intermediary was such a bridge, but in this case, it was also an active *broker* of attention, commitments, and agreement among the players whose learning and support was crucial.

*Fourth, build supportive new norms—a culture that values and enables collective efficacy.* Action to build helpful forms of social capital must include the cultivation of *norms* of mutual aid, broadly defined community responsibility and political engagement, and working through differences—helping us address the threads of ignorance, suspicion, parochialism, and exclusion that bonds of “community” often include. In the South Bronx, one of the most basic norms was that of cooperating and learning, rather than strictly competing, across neighborhoods. Competition for grants and other scarce resources persisted, of course, but the planning effort and other activities helped build powerful new habits among the nonprofit CDCs, such as gathering across neighborhoods and consulting with peers (fellow practitioners), before making big project decisions. Another norm reflected the CDC’s origins in grassroots engagement, which now entailed engaging non-experts in thinking through complex service delivery problems and resource allocation challenges.

Building stronger norms of collective action should not be confused with securing bottomless trust or making every decision by committee. Rather, small collective steps and direct encouragement of relationship building create the confidence needed for taking bigger, non-habitual risks, particularly in the context of a larger effort to build the “community capacity” needed to tackle shared problems (Chaskin et al., 2001). We should study and adapt well documented efforts, such as those in the field of organizational development, to strategically *change* culture. Culture change in organizations includes enabling new norms and new influential players to emerge, evolve, learn together, take calculated risks, and have an influence on the collective life and performance of the organization (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Features of culture are not intrinsically good or bad, but they can be distinguished as *functional* and *dysfunctional* vis-à-vis performance on the organization’s mission. Culture change cannot be fully controlled, but it *can* be influenced in positive directions. Furthermore, while many communities lack the discrete, unifying purposes and authority structures that characterize organizations, basic lessons on framing and enabling new norms are useful in any social system in which members are interdependent and face the need to adapt.

This last lens on actioning the social capital idea calls for special attention and care for several reasons. Culture, of which civic and not-so-civic norms are part, is all but absent in discussions of social capital, even the most theoretical. Culture organizes our basic ideas about joining and participating—why and how to do those things—in pow-

erful but mostly invisible, unspoken ways. Finally, culture “clashes” and cross-cultural confusion abound in some of the most well intentioned efforts to make diverse societies more civically engaged. Any planner or other public servant who has ever participated in a poorly structured participatory planning or decision-making process aimed at diverse stakeholders—diverse on any number of identity dimensions—can attest to this. And tackling cross-cultural competence—capacity to work across group identity boundaries, not to be confused with the narrower aim of improving inter-*ethnic* relations—is surely a core requirement for the new civics gradually emerging. For these reasons, it is also crucial to effective planning, as Leonie Sandercock and other observers of multicultural cities have argued (Briggs, 1998b; Sandercock, 1998).

However these four ingredients—new civic behaviors, skills, networks, and norms—are developed by social capital entrepreneurs, one hopes that by making social capital more understandable as well as more actionable by planners and others, we create more social resources that span traditional divides. Such bridging ties help make us, of many people, one community—or perhaps, at least to start, one neighborhood, city, or metropolitan region. This is a part of what we want in asking mayors and others to be *community* builders, not just monument builders, and to reach—recall Dewey’s warning—for more than easy beauty.

## Notes

1. A number of critical discussions of social capital have appeared in recent years, for example, Portes (1998), Foley and Edwards (1999), Baron et al. (2000), Edwards et al. (2001), Putnam (2002), and DeFilippis (2002).
2. Creating such “community supports for work” is a key component of Jobs-Plus and the Neighborhood Jobs Initiative, two national demonstrations managed by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) and designed by MDRC together with leading philanthropic funders and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The other components are financial incentives (in public assistance and public housing policies) to reward residents’ work and state-of-the-art employment and training and other services that “saturate” the residents’ housing complex. See [www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org).
3. A broad set of efforts, spanning politics and government, the arts, the workplace, youth, and other categories, is documented in *Better Together*, the final report of a working group led by Robert Putnam titled the Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America (2000) that met between 1997 and 2001 to develop promising action ideas.
4. A variety of such institutions are profiled in Sirianni and Friedland (2001). Also see special issues of the *National Civic Review* on the American “communities movement,” civic engagement in a digital age, and deliberation and civic participation (Fall/Spring 2001 and 2002) at [www.ncl.org/publications/ncl/](http://www.ncl.org/publications/ncl/).

5. A variety of tools for practitioners, consultants, and students, including tools for participatory planning, stakeholder organizing, and effective alliance building, are available at The Art and Science of Community Problem-Solving Project at Harvard University, at [www.community-problem-solving.net](http://www.community-problem-solving.net).

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## Building Social Capital through Community Development

William M. Rohe

Scholars applying the concept of social capital to community development have been using a number of different definitions and measures. This essay attempts to help scholars and practitioners arrive at a common understanding of the concept and develop reliable measures of social capital. With this insight we can ascertain how social capital can be developed at the neighborhood scale and expand its role in community revitalization. A case study neighborhood in Durham, NC, is analyzed to provide evidence for how these concepts may apply in practice.

**William M. Rohe** is a professor of city and regional planning and the director of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his Ph.D. and M.R.P. from Penn State University and has authored several books and more than 40 journal articles on the topics of housing and community development policy and practice.

Since James Coleman (1988) and Robert Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000) popularized the concept of social capital, scholars have been exploring its application to the field of community development. Gittell and Vidal (1998), for example, used the concept in gauging the im-

pacts of a program designed to create new community development corporations (CDCs) in cities that have little history of effective community development. Temkin and Rohe (1998) assessed the impact of social capital on neighborhood change in Pittsburgh. Briggs (1998) used the concept to analyze the impacts of a desegregation program on the youths involved in the program. Finally, Keyes et al. (1996) used the concept to assess the role of institutional networks that support community development corporations.

Each of these studies, however, employed a somewhat different definition of social capital and, following from these different definitions, employed a different measure of the concept. Given this situation, one has to ask whether they are really talking about and measuring the same things. The central argument of this essay is that if the concept of social capital is to be useful to the field of community development, we must agree on its essential elements and develop reliable measures of those elements. Furthermore, we will need to do more than simply measure social capital. We will need to know more about how social capital can be developed at the neighborhood level and its role in community revitalization.

Thus, this essay addresses three questions: (1) What are the essential elements of social capital at the neighborhood scale? (2) How can the level of social capital be measured at the neighborhood scale? and (3) Can social capital be developed at the neighborhood scale, and if so, how?

### What is Social Capital?

Social capital is not an entirely new concept for either sociologists or community development planners. Sociologists have been studying related concepts such as community and informal social control for many years (Warren, 1963; Wilson, 1975). For their part, community development planners have been trying to bring people together to pursue effective social change since the field was founded (Halprin, 1995).

This is not to say, however, that the concept of social capital doesn't contain new elements. A close analysis suggests that it is really a collection of constructs—a metaconstruct. Social capital can best be thought of as a model linking constructs that sociologists and community development planners have been talking about for a long time: citizen engagement, interpersonal trust, and effective collective action. In fact, it is the linking together of these concepts that makes the idea of social capital new and important.