

PREFACE

The appreciation of forms of capital other than those understood in economic terms—symbolic, cultural, social—is now relatively widespread among students of society and culture. The papers in this issue shed new dimensions into our understanding of social capital and raise new questions on the potentials of social capital in bringing about social change and development. By bringing attention to its specific forms in particular contexts, certain factors explain why the foundations, dynamics, and consequences of social capital may vary from one group or social setting to another.

Definitions of social capital invariably emphasize the value of networks, trust, and community. Social capital refers to “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1993:35) and reflects one’s ability to secure resources by virtue of membership in social networks or in larger social structures. Trust, social networks and the reciprocities that arise from these social relationships and the value of these in achieving mutual goals among members of particular groups have become central in scholarly as well as development discourses. For the past decade or so, social capital has been associated with initiatives towards community development and economic renewal (Schuller et al. 1997). It has also been associated with providing the foundations for democratic institutions and economic development (Putnam 1993).

Ricardo G. Abad’s study points out that Filipinos possess an abundance of bonding social capital among family, relatives, and friends (i.e., trust and reciprocities among horizontal networks in the private sphere) but low on bridging/linking social capital with organizations/associations or institutions (i.e., vertical networks/contacts in the public sphere). And among those few who belong to associations or institutionally-based networks, they are likely to be male, older, have higher education, come from higher income families/households, and reside in cities or urban areas. Thus, the higher the socio-economic status of the person, the more likely that he has contacts and networks with institutions that can provide information, support or services. These findings reinforce Coleman’s (1990) thesis that social capital provide a particular avenue in understanding the relationship between education achievement and social inequality. Accordingly, those with access to economic, education, and other socio-cultural resources stay in power by virtue of their access to contacts and information with other powerful people (Bourdieu 1986).

Abad’s research is particularly significant because it suggests a strong linkage between social capital and the reproduction of social hierarchies and the unequal distribution of resources in Philippine society. Most contemporary works on social capital celebrates its potential in empowering marginalized groups and communities and increasing their claims on societal resources (e.g., Narayan 2000). These celebratory works on social capital mask its oppressive potentials in structuring patterns of social

relations such that it favor those in dominant positions and consequently shape the distribution of resources in a community/society. They ignore the fact that the construction and mobilization of social capital can be structured along gender, income, and education lines, in the process reproducing these social hierarchies. Abad's findings, then, unmask some of the negative potentials of social capital in reproducing social inequities. It alerts us to the social and political implications of uneven distribution of social capital and resources across socio-economic groups and its potentials for social conflict, social exclusion, and power in Philippine society.

Leslie V. Advincula-Lopez's adaptation of Portes and Sensenbrenner's (1993) concept of social capital and Porio's (2006) articulation of global householding shows the role of remittances in creating and mobilizing social capital in households and communities of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Refusing to uncritically subscribe to prevailing notions that OFWs' patterns of consumption and investments do not significantly contribute to national development, Lopez argues on the basis of existing case studies that the "seemingly irrational investment decisions made by migrant workers make much more sense when goals other than economic are considered." Rather, she points out that the group's consumption patterns are strongly mediated by the need of migrant households and communities to construct, reinforce, and expand their social capital among family members, relatives and other community members both in the place of origin and destination. Investments in housing, household appliances, education of family members, micro-enterprises, and the purchase of vehicles enable migrant workers to generate gratitude and indebtedness among family and friends, which the migrant worker and his/her family can mobilize for future help or assistance. As a form of transnational philanthropy, funds given by migrant workers for community activities such as sports festivals and beauty contests, and improvement of the town's infrastructure (e.g., public school, plaza, chapel) likewise enable a migrant worker to uplift his or her status within the family and in the community. Mutually reinforcing each other, migrant workers' understandings of social capital therefore create particular forms of consumption and investments. Advincula-Lopez reminds us of the significance of resources spent by Filipinos in constructing bonding social capital (e.g., blow-outs for birthdays and drinking sprees, sponsorships in baptisms/weddings) and the paucity of investments in linking/bridging social capital (vertical networks with associations and institutions). Among migrants, the construction of social capital follow along educational, occupational, and destination lines. Filipino migrants in the United States who are mostly from the professional class send more remittances (and therefore have more potential for mobilizing social capital) compared to those working the Middle East and East Asia (Porio 2006).

Like Lopez, **Corazon B. Lamug** reminds us that sociological phenomena are locally accomplished by members' practices and actions. By looking at how fisherfolks create community through the practice and culture of sharing, Lamug shows ethnomethodology's contribution to the understanding of social action in any context. Fishing communities, which provide access to the sea and its resources, underscore a main point in the nature of social capital: one's membership in a community requires

that one acts according to principles of generosity, fairness, and interdependence, and implies the ability to draw on social resources that behave like monetary capital in coping with risk and future needs. Thus, the practice of sharing the resources of the sea, sharing the catch with fishing companions and with people on the shore after a fishing trip, and commensality after a successful fishing trip indicate that in the case of the fishers, structures of the community and processes of community-building both complement and exclude each other.

Aileen Toohey provides a detailed description of the role of social capital and civil society in the peace-making process in Southern Philippines. Drawing on contemporary debates on social capital and civil society, Toohey interrogates the relationships of civil society organizations (CSOs), the state, and combatant groups in Mindanao. She argues that their relationships have transformed, and in turn, being changed by the dynamics of the Philippine peace movement. She raises questions on the role of civil society interventions in the peace negotiations and the peace-building process and their effectiveness in conflict prevention. She also hints that social capital among civil society actors has structured the flows of development assistance to CSOs associated with peace and development. Despite the growth of CSOs in the Philippines, their role in effecting positively the outcomes of the peace-process is not clearly discernible.

All these articles point to the “thickness” of social capital among Filipinos with their friends, families, and allied networks and the paucity of their contacts and networks with associations and other institution-based networks. Despite the growth and expansion of state institutions and CSOs during the last few decades, Filipinos still have to construct trust and reciprocity networks beyond their immediate kin and kindred groups. Is it because these institutions have yet to demonstrate their reliability for support when Filipinos really need them?

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