The Social Capacity to Develop a Community

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Abstract: The basic purpose of the research is to assess the concept of social capital, community development and relationship that exist between them. A community is constituted by the relationships in which people interact on an everyday basis. In order for people of the same community to have shared norms, values and interests, they need to have the capacity to come together, share, relate, and talk about their norms, values and interests. This capacity is social capital. Social capital is the means by which individual of community interrelate together. Community development is the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united to improve the quality and quantity of life of the community. The main issue of this paper is “group of people with the high stock of social capital is characterized by trust, norms, values and interests that lead to development of the community and then enable to resolve its problems.” This paper is theoretical in nature and the review is based on secondary materials. Findings show in any community, it is necessary that there be social trust, norms, and networks that people can draw upon to community development to solve their common problems.

Key words: Community development, network, norm, value, social capital, trust

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the study is to deliberate a community with high indexes of social capital like cooperation, trust, reciprocity, networks, norms and values will be empowered to resolve its problems based on community development. This study discuss about social capital and community development. Social capital which is slowly eroding in the context of contemporary community needs to be revived and revisited as foundation for community development.

RESULTS

The increasing popularity of social capital theories led to a new focus in community development in the last decade. This new interest was spurred largely by the work of Putnam (1995) and Coleman (1988) in (Frisch and Servon, 2006). The social capital concept has been seen to increase in use within current community development circles. In international development, the term is already well used: for example, World Bank operates a website for those interested in understanding and applying social capital for sustainable social and economic development. Recent work of Saegert et al. (2001) has discussed the relevance of social capital to community development in the developed world. And yet, an appreciation of the diversity of community development approaches is fundamental to understanding the relevance and implications of social capital concepts (Wakefield and Poland, 2005).

There is considerable evidence that high levels of social capital may well be a prerequisite for the process of reconciliation between the ecological, the social and economic imperatives as discussed by Putnam (1993) and World Bank (2006). As mentioned by Portes (1998) social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures. Many analysts have emphasized the centrality of two factors to social capital: trust and social networks as stated by Portes (1998), Putnam (1993) and Fukuyama (1995). Whereby homogeneous networks built upon tight local bonds, exclude segments of the community and create barriers to change and innovation as mentioned by Zacharakis and Flora (2005) ; Newman and Dale (2005) or as stated by Garguilo and Benassi (2000) whereby the normative environment created by cohesive networks creates an inertia that restricts potential opportunities through structural hole connections (Edwards and Onyx, 2007).

Using Bourdieu’s analysis, these studies show that communities or groups possessing many strong bonds culturally reproduce old power structures that control and maintain the status quo, isolating segments of the community or restricting connections with other groups to inhibit change. Others have found that strong local ties are fundamental for the development of entrepreneurship in local rural communities in Scotland as stated by
Jack (2005). Therefore it is important to consider the purpose and outcomes of different ties within their individual contexts. In regard to the function of the tie, bonds serve a different purpose in progressive communities (Edwards and Onyx, 2007). Community development is based on the agreement of more than two individuals to work together for a common goal, on collective action. Community development needs social capital needs the trust, needs the equity provided by the rights and needs the willingness to work together. Community development, like social capital, is built on relationships, relationships between individuals [bonding], between groups [banding] and between movements [mobilizing] (Prasetyo, 2002).

Community development combines the idea of community with development. Community development relies on interaction between people and joint action, rather than individual activity as stated by Flora and Flora (1993). Development is a process that increases choices. Development involves change, improvement and vitality—a directed attempt to improve participation, flexibility, equity, attitudes, the function of institutions and the quality of life. As stated by Shaffer (1989) it is the creation of wealth—wealth meaning the things people value, not just dollars (Cavaye, 2007). Putting the two terms together—community development—means that a community itself engages in a process aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental situation of the community. The community itself takes action and participates together. It is through this action that the community becomes more vital, not just economically but as a strong functioning community in itself. Community development improves the ability of communities to collectively make better decisions about the use of resources such as infrastructure, labor and knowledge. Some key descriptions of community development that can be summarized from the various authors mentioned earlier are as follows:

As a group: Community development is a group of people in a community reaching a decision to initiate a social action process to change their economic, social, cultural and environmental situation.

Work together: For community development to occur, people in a community must believe working together can make a difference and organize to address their shared needs collectively.

Unite: Community development is a process where people are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities and communities are integrated into the life of the nation enabling them to contribute fully to national progress.

According to Schneider (2006), there are several actions that strategically use different forms of social capital and could facilitate community development activities:

People and organizations: Identify people and organizations in local neighborhoods that already serve as bridging agents, or have the potential to build bridges among closed networks, and engage these individuals and institutions in expanding closed social capital and beginning strategies to build bridging social capital within these communities and between the community and city wide resources.

Networks: Identify closed social capital networks within targeted communities and work with these networks to clarify available resources.

Local cultural patterns: Pay careful attention to local cultural patterns that indicate established community strategies, respecting these cues when developing initiatives, community development staff working with local groups should be particularly careful to identify cultural patterns that distinguish insiders and outsiders, avoiding behaviors or messages that could alienate key constituencies.

Local agents: Rely on local bridging agents to foster multicultural bridging social capital among residents and those participating in specific community development initiatives.

Modeling and mentoring: Use modeling, mentoring, communities of practice, technical assistance, and other methods that simultaneously build bridging social and cultural capital to build capacity in local organizations.

DISCUSSION

Social capital is probably the foundation that is missing in many studies on community development and new approaches in the studies of community development must consider social capital as an element to be considered. Social capital has become an organizing concept in the social sciences, but it has not been embraced uniformly across all disciplines (Frisch and Servon, 2006). Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrues to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition as stated by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992). Social capital can be understood quite simply as networks of social relations characterized by norms of trust and reciprocity. The essence of social capital is quality social relations (Bullen, 2007).
Social capital is generally conceptualized in one of two ways. The first focuses on the benefits that individuals accrue from membership in social networks or from contacts, whereas the second conceptualization focuses on individual relationships of trust that facilitate reciprocal exchange (Beard, 2007). A concurrently developed theory of social capital came from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu used the term social capital as an explicit attempt to understand the production of classes and class divisions. Coleman defined different sets of actions, outcomes, and relationships as social capital. Social capital is therefore not a mechanism, a thing, or an outcome, but simultaneously any or all of them (De Filippis, 2001). The current popularity of social capital can be traced to Putnam (1993) text making democracy work: civic traditions in modern Italy. In this book, social capital was defined as the networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit. He asserts that societies with high levels of interpersonal trust, prosocial norms, and interpersonal networks that emphasize reciprocity are more likely to experience positive economic, political, and social development than those lacking these characteristics. He suggests that when individuals develop connections with each other (however weak), these linkages help to promote prosocial behaviors and attitudes (e.g., sharing, trust) (Wakefield and Poland, 2005). Social capital can be considered as a set of social relations of which a single subject (for instance, an entrepreneur or a worker) or a collective subject (either private or public) can make use at any given moment (Trigilia, 2001). Social capital is recognized as the glue that keeps society together (whether it is positive or negative). Social capital has been recognized as:

**Norms, networks and values:** As stated by Putnam, which are based on the conventional sociological concepts of shared behavior patterns, relationships with others and shared belief systems, respectively. He believes that these three contribute to a higher level of trust and interaction (Prasetyo, 2002).

**Bonding, bridging and linking:** As stated by Woolcock, where bonding is perceived as the relationships between individuals internal to a group; Bridging is the horizontal relationships between groups, while linking is the term used to describe vertical or diagonal relationships with other groups or movements. Closed or bonding, bridging, and linking are three kinds of social capital. The term closed social capital is used to indicate social capital networks among homogenous groups of individuals or institutions such as race and class-based groups (Schneider, 2006).

**Trust, cooperation and reciprocity:** As stated by Fukuyama, he gives particular emphasis to the ideas that our motivation is based on reciprocity of behavior (Prasetyo, 2002).

Community development is one field that has begun to connect social capital explicitly with its work of Perkins, Hughey and Speer; Flora and Allen; Bridger and Alter, and Agnitsch, Flora and Ryan (Frisch and Servon, 2006). According to Ravitz, community development began as the active involvement of people at the level of the local community in resisting or supporting some cause or issues that interests them. Many community development efforts are essentially efforts to help community residents understand what is happening and recognize some of the choices they face in order to achieve the future community they desire as mentioned by Shafer. Hence, community development is the capacity of people to work collectively in addressing their common interests (Bullen, 2007). Putnam and his arguments have rapidly become central to the research and practice of community development in the United States. Much work in community development is broadly accepting Putnam’s arguments about the importance of social capital, understood as voluntary associations and civic trust, in the promotion of economic growth and prosperity (Prasetyo, 2002).

**CONCLUSION**

Social capital is a prerequisite for community development processes. Without social capital, community development processes could not operate. If there is strong level of social capital amongst of individuals of community, we will expect to fulfill the process of community development as well as it is possible. Where there are high levels of social capital people will feel they are part of the community and feel useful and be able to make a real contribution to the community. They not only will participate in community networks, but also will help together for the common good. Community development processes will be much easier to develop with high levels of social capital than with low levels of social capital. Community development is based on the agreement of individuals to work together to improve the conditions of community life. If there is no or low social capital in the community, it will not be possible for those people to work together for the common good. There would be no community development, when people would not trust each other, and there will not be any reciprocal relationships.

**REFERENCES**


