Social Capital

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Health Behavior Change at the Individual, Household and Community Levels
224.689
Types of Capital

- **Economic**
  - $$$, property, material wealth

- **Symbolic**
  - fame, respect, famous landmarks

- **Human**
  - education, ability, personal attributes

- **Physical**
  - objects that get the job done (not for trading)
Social Capital

- Key element is cooperative social networks
- Social capital is high when people:
  - **Participate** in and **contribute** to these networks
  - **Trust** in the good intentions of others in these networks
  - **Access** information, material and social support from these networks
  - Gain a sense of **identity** and **shared purpose** from participation in networks
SC interventions

- An evolution of the Community Development approach, much overlap
- Acknowledge conflict and factionalism, tries to address it early rather than pretend it isn’t there
- Tend to be more systematic than previous efforts, with specific objectives related to building sense of community, increasing trust, creating structures to sustain the intervention
Past work on 'community' from many other disciplines is now being discussed in the “new and improved” terms of Social Capital.
Social Capital

- Move away from past dichotomies like Gemeinschaft vs. Gesellschaft
- Recognition that characteristics of communities exist along continuums
  Communities can have a *mixture* of characteristics e.g. urban community with rural characteristics, rural community with urban characteristics
- This has contributed to emphasis on *measurement* in current work on SC
Measurement of Social Capital

- Should SC be measured at individual or community level?
- When measuring SC, which factors should count toward social capital:
  - structural (social networks; what people do) or
  - cognitive (trust, perceived support; what people feel)?
Measurement example #1

- Measurement of SC in a study on HIV prevention in South Africa
Measurement example #1

- Structural SC
  - Membership in 18 groups x intensity of membership in each

- Cognitive SC
  - Perceived reciprocity and social support
  - Perceived solidarity in a crisis
  - Participation in collective action
Measures of cognitive SC from Pronyk et al. 2008, Table 1

*Cognitive/CSC*

**Perceived Reciprocity and Community support (Positive response: yes to any or all)**
- If a community project does not directly benefit your neighbor but has benefits for others in the village/neighborhood, do you think your neighbor would contribute time for this project? *Yes or no*
- If a community project does not directly benefit your neighbor but has benefits for others in the village/neighborhood, would your neighbor contribute money (say about 10R) for this project? *Yes or no*
- If there were a problem that affected the entire village/neighborhood, for instance lack of water or electricity or a major flood, which scenario do you think would best describe who would work together to deal with the situation? *Yes if the entire village would work together to solve the problem*

**Perceived Solidarity in a Crisis (Positive response: yes to any or all)**
- If your house has been destroyed by fire who could you turn to for shelter for 2 weeks? *Yes if you could turn to people you do not know at all*
- If your house has been destroyed by fire who could you turn to for (money) R50 ($7US) to help you buy clothes after the fire? *Yes if you could turn to people you do not know at all*
- How confident are you that you alone could raise enough money to feed your family for four weeks? — this could be for example by working, selling things that you own, or by borrowing money (from people you know or from a bank or money lender)? *Yes if very confident*
- Would you say that your household’s ability to survive this kind of crisis is better, the same or worse as it was 2 years ago? *Better or worse/same*

**Collective action (Positive response: yes to one or both)**
- In the past 2 years, have you participated in a meeting, march, rally or gathering around HIV/AIDS awareness? *Yes or no*
- Have you ever been involved in the organization of such a meeting or gathering? *Yes or no*
Questions

- Is this “capital”?
- How is measurement of social capital different from measurement of individual wealth/economic status?
Measurement example #2

- 42 items grouped into 10 components
10 components in Chen et al. scale

Questions asked about people in six categories: Family members, relatives, neighbors, friends, coworkers, other acquaintances/old classmates

1. Number of people in each category
2. Number of people with whom respondent maintains routine contact
3. Number of people respondent reports she/he can trust
4. Number of people who will provide help upon request
5. Resources controlled by people in each category
10 components in Chen et al. scale

6. Number of community groups/organizations
7. Participation in community groups/orgs.
8. Number of community groups/orgs. perceived to serve person rights/interests
9. Number of community groups/orgs. that would provide help upon request
10. Power and influence of different groups and organizations
Question 4 in today’s discussion

- Does San Pedro la Laguna have high or low social capital?
  - How is ‘community’ defined?
  - What type(s) of social capital are we talking about?
- One approach: Administer the SC measures of Pronyk et al. and Chen et al. to hypothetical residents of San Pedro la Laguna
Recap: Differences between social capital and past theories/concepts

- Move away from dichotomizing, recognition that dichotomies often are poor descriptions of complex realities
  - Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft (van Tønnies)
  - Mechanical and Organic Solidarity (Durkheim)
- Emphasis on measurement
  - Measurement of community indicators
  - Social network analysis
Constructions of Social Capital

- Process by which SC developed and maintained is not clearly identified
- No consensus on standardized measurement methodology
  - Each school of thought or construction has different approach
  - Makes it difficult to compare results across studies
Constructions of Social Capital

- **Peter Evans** - creating synergies between public agents and citizens, thus achieving more together than separately (1996)
- **Pierre Bourdieu** - resources linked to the possession of durable networks of acquaintance and recognition. (1986)
Communitarian Construction of SC

- Connections and linkages with each other promote prosocial behaviors and attitudes
  - more willing to assist others anticipating generalized reciprocity
- Promoting networks and norms of behavior through group participation leads to broader social cohesion and cooperation
  - Bowling league
  - Street gangs
Communitarian Construction of SC

- In public health, communitarian SC is most frequently discussed (Moore 2005)
- Societies with high interpersonal networks emphasizing reciprocity are more likely to have positive economic, political and social development.

**Bonding SC**: dense network of close ties among socially homogeneous group

**Bridging SC**: looser ties between socially heterogeneous groups

According to Putnam, Bonding SC is easier to attain and dangerous if not balanced by Bridging SC
Communitarian Construction of SC: Application to Sonagachi Project

- Original intervention for sex workers
  - Behavior change communication
  - Condom distribution
  - Management of sexually-transmitted infections

- Came to see that was insufficient, also needed to address
  - Powerlessness & exclusion of sex workers
  - Lack of access to resources
Communitarian Construction of SC: Application to Sonagachi Project

- New areas added
  - Facilitating sense of community among sex workers
  - Decreasing perceived powerlessness and insecurity
  - Increase control over material resources
  - Increase social participation
  - Increase social acceptance
- Replication in Brazil (Kerrigan et al.) included same areas
Communitarian Construction of SC: Application to Sonagachi Project

- **Bonding SC**: Building ties between commercial sex workers, creating local organizational structures to sustain changes resulting from the project

- **Bridging SC**: Building ties with groups with other interests: Government, politicians, police, other residents living in the immediate area
  - Big part of this is reducing stigma, demonstrating that sex workers are workers with legitimate interests
Navarro’s Critique of SC

- Importance has been over-exaggerated
- Lack of “togetherness” may be rooted precisely in the existence of capitalism and competitiveness and its alienating effects
- Class-related political factors – absent from social epidemiology and public health – might be key determinants of population health

Social Capital perspective on health workers in Scenario #1

Clinical uncertainty
- Variable course of labor, variable presentation of malaria
- Uncertainty with tests
- Uncertain treatment effects

Social uncertainty
- How well do I know my colleagues?
- Can I trust their work?
- Will colleagues stand up for me if there is a problem?

Efforts to decrease uncertainty
- Treatments and procedures that decrease or eliminate uncertainty
Social Capital perspective on health workers in Scenario #1

- Social capital of health workers as a group
  - Do they belong to a professional organization? If not, create one?
  - Is there trust among health workers and trust in health institutions?
  - Can health workers identify people they can go to for help or support?
  - Do they have control over resources and decision-making power?

- Could behavior change be facilitated by increasing social capital?
Social Capital perspective on Scenario #3: Energy

- Is there a local organization that promotes environmental sustainability? How many people belong to it? Do they trust it? Does it have decision-making power?
- Is there support for people working to reduce energy use?
- Can people get help when they encounter problems with energy-saving technology?