

**MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN U.S. CITIES
AS AN AID TO COMMUNITY YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT:
AN ADAPTATION OF THE WORLD BANK'S
SOCIAL CAPITAL ASSESSMENT TOOL**

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INTRODUCTION

During the decade of the 90's, youth development thinking was profoundly reshaped by an increased recognition of, interest in, and subsequent focus on, the powerful influence that a child's environment can exert on his or her development on the way to adulthood. In earlier decades, the field was preoccupied by a focus on why kids fail. And it was convinced that providing services aimed at ameliorating the behaviors, risk factors, and other influences that cause kids to fail, would improve youth outcomes. But a growing dissatisfaction, with the disappointing results of these service-based intervention strategies and demonstrations,¹ led many in the field to ponder a different question early in the decade – and that is, How and why it is that some kids *succeed* where others fail?

This new way, of posing the question, led to an increasing interest in the youth resiliency literature and, consequently, to a profound change in the way the field now views the youth development challenge. Whether expressed in terms of risk and protective factors² or developmental assets,³ the field has begun to think beyond the confines of behavioral difficulties, and their antecedent conditions, to focus on the support systems available to youth and on the positive influences those systems can exert on a host of attributes important to youth development. The realization, that those support systems are bound in communities and neighborhoods, has given new impetus to efforts to further explore and better understand the roles that community influences and neighborhood effects play in the lives of young people.

Indeed, it has become clearer to all that youth resiliency is a function of youth environments. And if we hope to one day affect a "material" change in the status and success rates of our young people, we need to better understand how we might intercede in those environments to increase youth resiliency and thereby make neighborhoods and communities more nurturing, more supportive and more protective of positive youth development.

Why the Focus on Social Capital?

But how does one think about making an entire community more child friendly and youth supportive? The answer lies in the attitudes and behaviors of neighborhood residents toward their young people and in whether, within those neighborhoods, it is possible to enlist residents in collective efforts to create and maintain a normative structure of positive supports for children and youth. By that, we mean a culture of caring and an

¹ In the National Research Council's seminal 1993 report, its Panel on High Risk Youth proclaimed that inadequate attention to youth environments is the primary reason for the failures of our youth development interventions. See Panel on High Risk Youth. 1993. *Losing Generations: Adolescents in High Risk Settings*. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

² Benard, Bonnie. 1991. *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, School and Community*. San Francisco, CA: Northwest Regional Laboratory.

³ Benson, Peter L. 1997. *All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

expectation, among adult residents in particular, that the welfare of the neighborhood's children will be a matter of shared importance and communal attention. Unfortunately, in a recent report, *Spheres of Influence*,⁴ outlining a new framework for community youth development, James Hyman asserted that these positive Community Supports are the least well understood of the three spheres of influence on youth development.⁵

Community supports can be thought of as a function of a community's social capital – an intangible resource that exists in the relationships among persons.⁶ Social Capital takes specific form in the levels of trust within a social environment and the extent to which people feel connected and obligated to one another.⁷ Many social scientists now believe that this social capital is a major asset to the community improvement and neighborhood change strategies increasingly being pursued under the banner of community building.

In essence, social capital is about the assets (such as time, information, contacts, and skills, etc.) possessed by individuals that are embedded in and accessible through human relationships. But the concept presumes that certain levels of trust, interaction and engagement exist among community residents in order for it to function. As with other forms of capital, its utility is in the exchange. For instance the real utility of money is in its use as individuals exchange it for other things that they value. Consequently, social capital requires exchange in the context of individual relationships even if those relationships are only short term and for limited purpose. Its application on the scale of communities of people further presumes that a group of persons has a willingness and ability to act collectively in the greater interests of their community. Unfortunately, these presumptions fail in many communities, particularly in poor, urban ones; and particularly in regard to supporting their young people. Herein lies a major challenge for youth development.

Simply put, if "it takes a village to raise a child," you first have to have a village – a community that is, in many senses, "communal" – a place where adults share a set of common interests, beliefs and/or goals for themselves, for their young people, and/or for their community, and are willing to organize and maintain themselves, as a group, to pursue and preserve them; a place where residents feel, and can act upon, the connectedness and obligation they share toward one another for their mutual benefit.

Unfortunately, there is ample evidence, particularly in the distressed communities where at-risk young people live, that this village does not exist – that the social fabric and "neighboring behaviors" of these communities have been strained and torn by the ravages

⁴ Hyman, James B. 1999. *Spheres of Influence: A Strategic Synthesis and Framework for Community Youth Development*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Pg. X.

⁵ The other two spheres represent Programs and Services delivered to youth and families, and the Opportunity Structure that provides avenues for meaningful experiences, constructive use of time, participation and contribution.

⁶ Coleman, J.S. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," in *American Journal of Sociology*. 94: S95-S120.

⁷ Temkin, Kenneth and William Rohe. 1998. "Social Capital and Neighborhood Stability: An Empirical Investigation." *Housing Policy Debate* 9(1):61-88.

of increasingly concentrated poverty and isolation; and by the arrival of cheaper and more addictive drugs along with the rivalries, the violence and the fear that those drugs introduce. Still, if young people in these communities are to grow into positive adult roles, means must be found to help their communities become more supportive of that growth. Indeed, in *Spheres of Influence*, James Hyman concluded that, "strengthening the social fabric of communities may be the transformation most essential to improving the health and welfare of young people in distressed neighborhoods."⁸

Two questions loom large, however. The first is how do you do it – what precise strategies and initiatives would you mount to enhance the social ties and communal behaviors among neighborhood residents? The second is how would you know if you succeeded – what methods or indicators would you apply, pre and post, to measure the desired community change? The first question is the subject of a forthcoming report *Not Quite Chaos: Toward a More Disciplined Approach to Community Building*.⁹ The second is the topic of the discussion that follows.

But creating an impact variable is not the only, nor perhaps, even the primary reason to pursue a social capital measure. Such a measure would also be important to a better understanding of at least one dimension of what we mean by “community capacity.” Indeed, as an independent variable, a social capital measure would allow us to explore the contribution that community social organization may make to a wide array of measures of child, family and community well-being including youth development.

The Collaboration on the World Bank’s Model for Measuring Social Capital

What this measurement challenge needed was a body of well-reasoned theory on which to base its formulation. What is social capital? How is it manifest in communities? Are there things we can observe and quantify that will provide reasonable indications of its presence or absence and, beyond that, approximations of its relative strength? The experience and expertise necessary to these explorations were provided by Christiaan Grootaert, Senior Economist at The World Bank.

The World Bank has had a rich experience exploring measurement methods that might be useful in better understanding the ways in which community social organization contribute to economic and other development outcomes in developing countries. Conceptually, as a first approximation, our interests in youth development are not too dissimilar from those of The World Bank except that the developmental outcomes of interest to us relate to the quality of the skills, attitudes and experiences embodied by our young people.

As a consequence, the bulk of our discussion will focus primarily on whether and how we might better understand the social organization of communities in the U.S. using the

⁸ Hyman, Op. Cit. Pg. X.

⁹ Hyman, James B. (Forthcoming). *Not Quite Chaos: Toward a More Disciplined Approach to Community Building*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Bank's methodology. We will not attempt, at the same time, to make an additional transition to consider whether and/or what adaptations in their models might be made to accommodate any specific dynamics that might associate with our focus on young people. To the extent that the Bank's methods prove useful, further explorations can be conducted to determine how the consequent measures of neighborhood social organization co-vary with measure of youth outcomes.

THE WORLD BANK EXPERIENCE: The Social Capital Assessment Tool

In recent years, the World Bank has become increasingly interested in the role of social capital in development outcomes, both at the project level and at the macro level. However, efforts to integrate social capital considerations more systematically into World Bank-supported programs were hindered by significant conceptual and measurement problems. At the conceptual level, the literature on social capital had not led to a consensus on the definition of the concept. Not surprisingly, therefore, there was little or no experience with measuring social capital and no measurement instruments were available for application in the field in the context of development projects.

To help advance the theoretical understanding and the practical relevance of social capital, the World Bank launched in October 1996 the Social Capital Initiative (SCI), with financial support from the Government of Denmark. The Initiative had three objectives:

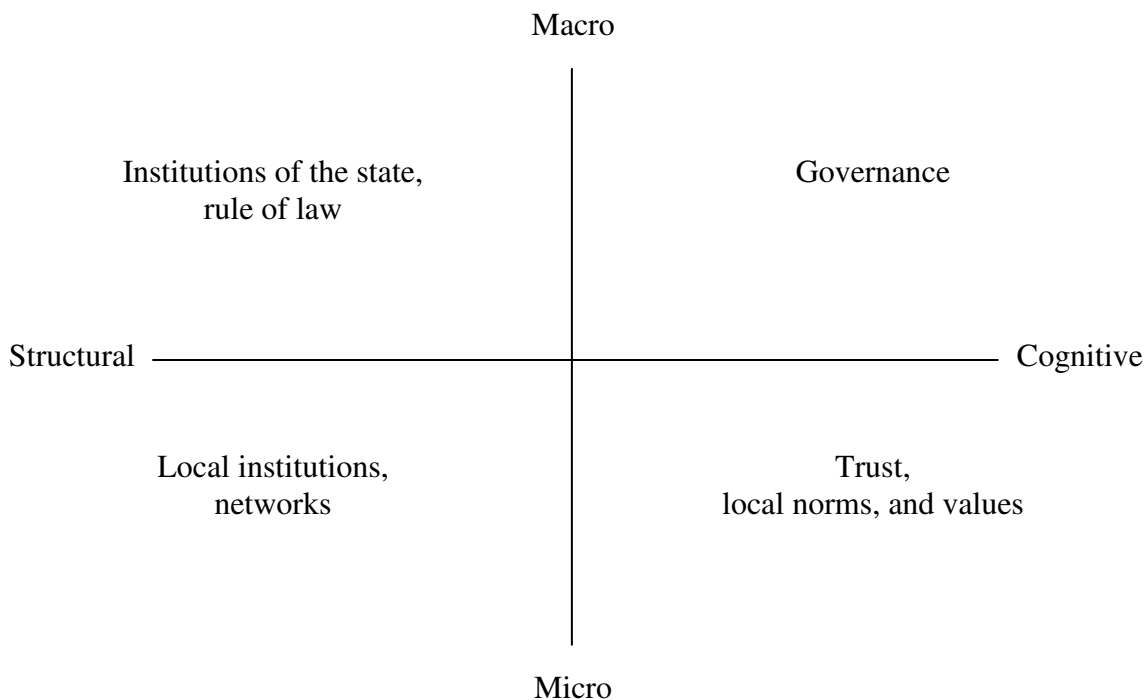
- (1) To assess the impact of social capital on project effectiveness;
- (2) To identify ways in which outside assistance can help in the process of social capital formation; and
- (3) To contribute to the development of indicators for monitoring social capital and methodologies for measuring its impact on development.

The Social Capital Initiative funded twelve proposals which either studied empirically the impact of social capital on specific development outcomes, or which studied the process of social capital formation and the role of outside support in it.¹⁰ The studies of the SCI have a wide geographic and sectoral coverage, and represent a broad methodological spectrum including quantitative and qualitative analysis. They examined the role of social capital at the micro, meso and macro levels. Six of the studies focused on demonstrating empirically the contribution made by social capital to the livelihood of households, either directly by increasing income or indirectly through improving access to services. Five studies focused on the process of accumulation and destruction of social capital, and aimed to identify the critical factors in this process and whether it can be affected by donor interventions and policy. One study brought together the lessons learned on measuring social capital, and developed the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT).

¹⁰ For a list of these projects and a synthesis of the findings, see Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2001).

The studies and the measurement tool use a common conceptual framework. In this framework, social capital is defined as the institutions and networks, and the underlying norms and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development. This makes it possible to investigate social capital along two key dimensions. The first dimension is the scope, or unit of observation, of social capital, which ranges from micro to macro. The second dimension is the forms or manifestations of social capital, which can be captured under the headings of structural and cognitive social capital. This framework is summarized in Figure 1.¹¹

Figure 1. Dimensions of Social Capital



Social capital exerts its influence on development as a result of the interactions between two distinct types of social capital: structural and cognitive. Structural social capital refers to roles, social networks, and other social structures, supplemented by rules, procedures, and precedents. This makes it a relatively objective and externally observable construct. Cognitive social capital refers to shared norms, values, trust, attitudes, and beliefs. It is thus a more subjective and intangible concept (Uphoff, 2000).

The ideal approach to measuring social capital would embody all four quadrants of Figure 1. In practice, the state-of-art has not advanced to that stage. Most of the SCI

¹¹ For a further discussion of this framework, see Grootaert and van Bastelaer (forthcoming — a).

studies focused on one or two of these quadrants. Most experience has been gained with measurement of social capital at the micro level. The Social Capital Assessment Tool thus focuses on institutions and norms that are relevant for households, villages, and communities.

The experience of the SCI studies has led to a number of lessons. First and foremost is the conclusion that it is in fact possible to measure social capital and its impact. This may seem like a trivial, or obvious, conclusion, but the possibility to measure social capital was highly questioned at the start of the Initiative. The extent of difficulty and complexity associated with measuring social capital was found to be roughly at the same level of that encountered in multi-purpose household surveys, such as for example, income and expenditure surveys or socioeconomic surveys. Second, it proved essential for obtaining relevant findings to examine social capital by means of both quantitative and qualitative studies. The analysis cannot be conducted strictly within the economic paradigm using quantitative methods, nor can it be investigated solely through anthropological or sociological case studies.

The SCI studies convincingly illustrate the need for and importance of methodological diversity and the SOCAT has attempted to capture that. The SOCAT is a multifaceted instrument design to collect social capital data at the level of the household, the community, and the institution. Structured questionnaires are used as well as open-ended participatory methods. As a result, a wide range of quantitative and qualitative analyses are possible using multiple units of analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. The Social Capital Assessment Tool

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Unit of Analysis</i>	<i>Type of Analysis</i>
Community profile interview guide	Focus groups, community mapping, institutional diagram	Community, institution	Qualitative
Community characteristics and services questionnaire	Key respondent interviews, focus groups	Community	Quantitative
Household questionnaire	Household survey	Household, individual	Quantitative
Organizational profile interview guide	Interviews with leaders, focus groups with members and nonmembers	Institution	Qualitative
Organizational profile score sheet	Scoring by field team	Institution	Quantitative

A third lesson of the empirical analysis is that both cognitive and structural social capital matter, and that the data collection and analysis needs to attempt to capture the complementarities between these two concepts. Several studies have suggested that the

presence of structural social capital is not a sufficient condition for achieving desirable outcomes of development project if trust or other aspects of cognitive social capital are absent. Vice versa, a trusting and inclusive community *per se* is not always adequate to achieve such outcomes either if the appropriate structures are not in place. Empirically, this calls for separate indicators of structural and cognitive social capital so as to be able to monitor their evolution and to measure their complementarity.

Fourth, it has to be recognized that social capital as an underlying social force for information sharing and collective action cannot be measured directly. For measurement purposes, it is essential to rely on proxy indicators. In this respect, social capital does not differ from human capital. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to measure human capital directly, and measurement typically relies on input indicators such as years of schooling or years of work experience. Direct output measurement through aptitude tests, performance tests, and the like, is imperfect at best. However, this limitation has not prevented the empirical literature on human capital from blossoming and leading to many extremely useful results for developing and implementing education policy.

Experience with the multitude of social capital indicators in the SCI case studies has suggested that measurement should concentrate on three types of proxy indicators: membership in local associations and networks, indicators of trust and adherence to norms, and indicators of collective action.

- *Membership in local associations and networks* is an indicator of structural social capital. It captures the density of associations and networks, and needs to measure various aspects of membership (such as internal heterogeneity) and institutional functioning (such as the extent of democratic decision making). Which associations and networks to include in the indicators is culture-specific. In the case of networks which are less formal, the key information is the scope of the network and the diversity of membership.
- *Indicators of trust and adherence to norms* measure cognitive social capital. This requires asking respondents about their expectations and experiences with behavior requiring trust. Key questions relate to the extent to which households received or would receive assistance from members of their community or network in case of various emergencies (loss of income, illness).
- *Indicators of collective action.* The provision of many services requires collective action by a group of individuals. The extent to which this collective action occurs can be measured and is an indicator of underlying social cohesion (at least to the extent that the cooperation is not imposed by an external force, such as the government).

As proxies, these three types of indicators measure social capital from different vintage points. Membership in local associations and networks is an input indicator since the associations and networks are the vehicles through which social capital can be acquired.

This indicator resembles perhaps most closely the use of years of schooling as a proxy for human capital. Trust can be seen as an input or output indicator, or even as a direct measure of social capital, depending upon one's conceptual approach. Collective action is clearly an output indicator. Because of their different perspectives, we recommend that these three types of indicators be measured and utilized together in order to provide a valid basis for the measurement of social capital and its impacts. The SOCAT was designed to provide all three proxy indicators.

These three sets of indicators constitute a helpful framework for designing a measurement instrument. Of course, the exact questions and indicators have to be adjusted to each social, economic, and cultural setting. Within the developing countries that were covered by the SCI, the experience made it clear that certain types of questions work well in some countries, while they work poorly in others. Likewise, certain types of associations exist in some countries but are not relevant for others. The SOCAT is therefore a prototype instrument which indicates to the prospective user the range of issues and topics that needs to be covered for a comprehensive and policy relevant measurement of social capital, but it is not an instrument that can be put in the field as is. It requires adaptation based on local knowledge of the relevant cultural, social and economic settings. *A fortiori* this is true when the tool is to be applied to a developed country, such as the United States. In the next section, we will address in more detail the challenges represented by this adaptation and the extent to which the experience gained with SOCAT in developing countries is relevant.

As Table 1 indicates, the SOCAT consists of three instruments: a community survey, a household survey, and an institutional survey. We now briefly discuss each in turn.¹²

Community Profile

The SOCAT exercise should begin with the construction of a community profile. There are two tools available for that purpose: a participatory interview guide and a structured survey questionnaire. The reason for starting with the community profile is to enable the research team to familiarize itself with the most important characteristics of the community and to identify its boundaries. Particularly in urban settings, the concept of community may be difficult to define as it may not always coincide with easily identifiable geographic areas, such as city blocks. It will generally not be possible to define the community a priori, rather it should be defined through group interviews with community members and community leaders, in order to identify a concept that subsequently is easy to grasp for all respondents.

The interview guide calls for convening a number of group meetings with community members. Typically, 2 to 8 group interviews can be conducted in each community. (A larger number of interviews may be required in communities that appear to be deeply divided). It is advisable to have separate group interviews with women and men and/or

¹² The following discussion of the components of the SOCAT is taken from Krishna and Shrader (forthcoming).

with different ethnic groups. The interview guide has six sections with the following objectives:

- (1) Definition of community boundaries and identification of community assets.
- (2) Identification of the main forms of community collective action; in other words, what are the issues which brings the community together and what are the main unresolved problems which would require collective action?
- (3) Description of the community governance and decision making process. Who are the local leaders within the community, and what is their relationship with various layers of government?
- (4) Identification of local organizations. This includes both formal and informal organizations, with an indication of how inclusive they are relative to the entire community.
- (5) Description of the relationships between organizations and the community at large.
- (6) Description of institutional networks. This includes the links between the different types of organizations working within the community, such as local government departments, NGOs, community groups, and other actors of civil society.

The SOCAT field test experience has indicated that each group interview (covering all six sections) can be completed within 1 to 3 hours.

When the group discussions within the community are completed, the data collection team administers a structured community questionnaire to key informants. The major objective is to identify community assets, services, and needs. The community questionnaire consists of the following sections:

- (1) Community characteristics: general information about the demographics and pattern of home ownership within the community.
- (2) Principal services: this identifies how well the community is served in terms of public transport, schools, recreation facilities, police and fire fighting services, etc.
- (3) Main community issues: this identifies the main concerns of the community such as unemployment, public health and safety, etc., and the extent to which community organizations address these concerns.

Household Survey

After completion of both parts of the community profile, work should start on the second element of SOCAT — the household survey. The survey needs to be administered to a random sample of households in the community. Depending upon the size of the community, the sampling process may need to be stratified with selective over-sampling of minority groups in order to ensure that the data can be tabulated and analyzed across all relevant characteristics of the community. Apart from the introductory section which records the identifying information of the interviewed household, the household questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section is the household roster. This is a standard module found in almost all household surveys. It lists all household members and records their basic socioeconomic data, such as gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, etc. The two other sections of the household questionnaire cover, respectively, the structural and cognitive dimensions of social capital.

The section collecting information about structural social capital consists of six subsections:

- *Organizational density and characteristics.* The main item of information here is a list of the household's current membership in different types of local organizations. Internal characteristics of each organization are described by asking questions about membership characteristics, decision making processes, and patterns of leadership.
- *Expectations regarding networks and mutual support.* This section contains a number of hypothetical questions intended to gauge respondents' expectations about how community members would act in situations of distress involving, for example, violence, economic crisis, etc. High social capital will be reflected by positive expectations about mutually supportive and collective behavior in the future.
- *Exclusion.* This section aims to establish the extent to which community actions are inclusive of all segments of the community, and to identify the reasons that may underlie exclusion.
- *Previous collective action.* Information about respondents' past participation in community activities supplements the information about the current situation collected in the three previous subsections. The literature has indeed documented that social capital may well take a long time to be created and that past positive experiences with community activities predisposes people favorably towards participating in new common activities.
- *Sector-specific participation.* This section identifies areas of specific concern in the community and the participation of respondents in community activities to address these issues. This section is especially useful in communities that are dominated by specific problems, such as unemployment or violence.

- *Conflict and conflict resolution.* The existence and persistence of interpersonal or intergroup conflict has detrimental effects on social capital. Organizations may fall apart and trust may be replaced by suspicion. This section aims to identify the extent of conflict in the community and the available mechanisms for resolving it. The focus is on community-based mechanisms, and not formal conflict resolution systems such as police and courts.

The third and final section of the household questionnaire collects information on the cognitive dimensions of social capital. This pertains to norms, values, and attitudes relating to solidarity, trust, and reciprocity. Because these aspects cannot be observed directly, the line of questioning probes indirectly by asking reactions to hypothetical situations that people in the community may face.

- *Solidarity.* This section addresses whether members of the community typically assist each other in times of need. This is determined on the basis of hypothetical situations, such as the death of a parent or the loss of a job. Obviously, the selection of these situations needs to be done so as to ensure that they are relevant for the community under investigation.
- *Trust.* There is a wide array of possible questions on trust: generalized trust (“do you think most people can be trusted?”), trust in specific types of individuals (“do you trust your neighbors?”), trust in organizations or institutions (“do you trust the police?”), or trust in the context of specific transactions (“do you believe that a merchant will not cheat you?”). Experience with questions on generalized trust and trust in institutions have been mixed. People mean different things by trust, and a concept such as trust in the police or trust in government is often interpreted differently by different respondents. Likewise, if respondents are asked whether they trust “people in general” they may not always think about the same people. These problems may be less severe within the context of one specific community but comparisons across communities must be done with caution. The questions included in this subsection are those that have proved to be most comparable across communities in the developing countries where the SOCAT was tested. Further experimentation with different types of trust questions may be needed in the U.S. context.
- *Reciprocity.* This subsection inquires about respondents’ belief about the extent of reciprocity and cooperation in the community. Where social capital is high, the common goods will be valued higher, and people will have greater willingness to cooperate.

Organizational Profile

The final instrument of SOCAT is the organizational profile which aims to delineate the relationships that exist among local organizations. This instrument should be administered to the most important organizations within the community, as identified in the community profile. The data are collected by means of semi-structured interviews with organization leaders, members, and non-members. The information covered in the interviews pertains to the origins and development of the organization, the extent and reasons for membership, organizational capacity, leadership qualities, and institutional linkages. Interviews should be conducted separately with leaders and other members of the organization because they may not necessarily have the same perspective and view on the functioning and effectiveness of the organization. Interviews with non-members aim to identify the outside perceptions of the organization and identify why people are not members of the organization.

When the interviews are completed, the enumeration team is asked to complete an organizational profile score sheet based on the information that they have gathered during the interviews. The objective of this is to quantify some of the information collected in order to make comparisons across organizations easier and to aggregate the information at the level of the community. The completion of the organizational score sheet is the last task in the administration of the Social Capital Assessment Tool.

CHALLENGES OF ADAPTING DEVELOPING EXPERIENCES TO U.S. CITIES

Adapting a data collection instrument such as the SOCAT, designed for use in developing countries, to a developed country context constitutes a two-fold challenge. At the first level, each question in the data collection tool needs to be reviewed for suitability and relevance. This could involve modifying the formulation of the question and/or the possible answers. The second level is more conceptual. The role of social capital in developing countries may differ from that in developed countries and thus the overall conception of the measurement tool may need to be adjusted accordingly.

The first type of adaptation is relatively simple and somewhat mechanical. Essentially, it involves reviewing each question or interview instruction in the SOCAT for relevance against the social, cultural and political setting represented by United States cities. For example, in the part of the questionnaire dealing with structural social capital, respondents are asked to list all associations to which they belong. These answers have been pre-coded into a number of categories of associations that include farmers' cooperatives, women's groups, informal credit groups, sport groups, etc. It is quite obvious that some of these are not relevant in urban American settings as one is not likely, for example, to find farmer cooperatives. On the other hand, other categories such as youth groups or sport groups may well be highly relevant. One might also find types of associations in the American setting, such as tenant associations, which are rarely observed in developing countries.

In the area of trust, the original SOCAT questions focus on trust among people in matters of lending and borrowing, because in developing countries, access to credit from formal institutions is usually very limited and thus informal credit groups, such as rotating saving and credit associations, play a very important role in the daily lives of poor people. This is not the case in urban America where a variety of formal lending institutions are available. Thus, the questions of trust need to be focused on another topic. This type of adaptation of the instrument is fairly straightforward and can be undertaken by any researcher with a reasonable knowledge of the relevant cultural, social, and economic setting where the instrument is to be applied.

The second type of adaptation is more fundamental and more challenging. It goes to the heart of why households and communities accumulate social capital. In developing countries, social capital is primarily used for three purposes: exchanging information and knowledge among the members of a group, organizing collective action, and providing improved access to various services.

Exchange of information in many developing countries is often a matter of direct person-to-person communication. Formalized channels of information, such as radio, television, the internet, newspapers, magazines, may be quite limited. Even if they are available, not everyone has the necessary literacy skills to take advantage of them, or electrical power may be insufficient for the reliable operation of televisions and computers. The spreading of technological improvements, for example, in agriculture often requires specific agricultural extension programs whereby extension agents teach groups of farmers new technologies. Social capital plays an important role in these types of information exchanges: agricultural extension is more effective in villages where there are high levels of trust and social cohesion.

In a developed country setting, this role of social capital may be less important since many types of centralized forms of information are available through libraries, government databases, the internet, etc. Also, accessing information is often an individual activity (reading a magazine, using a computer) not dependent upon being part of a network. Still, for some issues, networks are important even in American urban settings. For example, word-of-mouth is often the most important source of information for inner-city tenants to learn about the availability of government programs to assist them, or to learn which church or NGO provides assistance with specific problems. Clearly, the challenge for measurement is to identify the relevant types of information and the forms of social capital that help acquire it.

In most developing countries, social capital is essential to bring about collective action. Collective action is typically used for a variety of infrastructure improvements — building roads or community centers, maintaining irrigation systems, etc. — or to lobby the government for improved access to services. Collective action is also a relevant activity in the American urban setting, but it would typically not occur to obtain infrastructure improvements but rather for the lobbying function. One can think of lobbying the government to obtain bus routes and bus stops in poorly served inner-city neighborhoods, to get better street lighting, etc. Still, the underlying mechanism in using

social capital for collective action has a strong parallel across many cultures. The only difference is really in the identification of the specific activity for which the collective action is used, but the underlying social dynamics are very similar.

The third reason for which social capital is used in developing countries, is to improve access to services. This reflects the reality that in many poor countries the government is highly deficient in providing services such as health and education. Market mechanisms also do not exist to provide access to credit, insurance, and similar services. Thus people need to get together to build a school or health center and to assist each other with solving problems in these areas. The absence of credit sources in the formal market requires that people build informal networks that can assist in times of emergency. In the United States context, this particular function of social capital is likely to be relatively less important, since the federal and local governments are generally quite good in providing health and education services, whilst there are many private sources of credit and insurance available. However, urban residents in the U.S. do perceive shortfalls of certain services, such as effective protection from crime by the police, for which they often organize neighborhood watch groups to complement police services.

The amended SOCAT presented in the annexes includes a number of modifications undertaken to reflect the different functions of social capital in U.S. cities when it comes to the dissemination of information, the organization of collective action, and the provision of services. This draft instrument, however, needs to be seen as only a first effort at adaptation. A number of steps are needed to complete the process. First, the draft instrument needs to be discussed with a number of community leaders in American cities to obtain their views as to whether the questions and the instruments reflect the realities of these cities and capture adequately the role of social capital in the functioning of urban communities. Second, the modified SOCAT needs to be pilot tested in a few urban settings. Even though the original SOCAT was based on a dozen empirical studies, it was still pilot tested twice (in Panama and India), which led to a number of further improvements and refinements to the tool. Experience has indicated that this type of field test is essential before a data collection instrument should be widely applied. A proposal for such a field test is discussed later in Section 6.

In summary, the Bank's experience has clearly demonstrated that it is indeed possible to construct measures of social capital through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The principal challenge in any attempt to use these methods in the U.S. urban context is the skillful adaptation of the measurement tools to the social, cultural and economic realities that define the circumstances of urban Americans.

ADAPTING THE SOCIAL CAPITAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

Based on the considerations discussed in the previous section, we now briefly review the main adaptations that were made to each of the components of the SOCAT.¹³

The community profile in Annex 1 required relatively little adaptation from the original SOCAT. The six components of the mapping exercise remain the same:

- definition of community and identification of community assets;
- community collective action;
- community governance and decision making;
- identification of community organizations;
- relationships between organizations and the community;
- inter-institutional networks.

The main adaptation, which was required across all subsections, is to reflect that the nature of community assets obviously differs between United States cities and a typical area in a developing country. The particular issues of interest to communities would also likely differ. Specifically, there are less likely to be problems with access to services such health and education, while there might be additional problems relating to employment, crime, drugs, etc. With regards to leadership, it is not necessary to inquire about the formal leadership since the nature of the democratic process by which city leaders are elected is well known. But by the same token, it becomes more important to inquire about informal leaders, i.e. people who are active in the neighborhood, such as church ministers or NGO workers, and to identify people to whom members of the community can turn when specific problems emerge.

With respect to key community institutions, it can be expected that in the United States context, local organizations are less likely to be strictly local than is the case in developing countries. Many, like the Urban League, the NAACP and more likely to have ties with, or be affiliates of outside organizations. The nature of these ties and linkages needs to be made clear in the mapping exercise. It also needs to be explored whether there may be possible tensions between community organizations and NGOs from outside the community.

The community questionnaire in Annex 2 has been significantly adapted from the original SOCAT. A number of sections have been dropped, pertaining primarily to services such as electricity, public lighting, availability of drinking water and telephones, which can be expected to vary little across U.S. urban communities. Other sections, such as those relating to education and health, have been adjusted to reflect the priorities and problems that exist in the urban American context. Finally, a section on public safety has been added.

¹³ The text of the original SOCAT can be found in Krishna and Shrader (2000) or Grootaert and van Bastelaer (forthcoming — b).

The basic structure of the household questionnaire in Annex 3 has remained unchanged from the original SOCAT. It consists of three sections: the household roster, structural social capital dimensions, and cognitive social capital dimensions. The household roster has undergone some minor adaptations, primarily to adjust occupational and educational codes in line with what is relevant in the United States context. A few questions have been added to capture the dynamics of change in urban communities, by including a few questions on in- and out-migration.

In the section on structural social capital, the most fundamental change pertains to the pre-coded list of organizations to be considered. A number of organizations, such as farmer cooperatives and informal credit groups, were dropped, while others, such as tenant groups, were added. These changes permeate throughout this questionnaire module. A number of questions were added about the relationships between the different associations in the community and groups outside the community, to capture the higher likelihood of such linkages in a U.S. context. In the questions relating to exclusion, it is noteworthy that the criteria required very little adaptation. Apart from the deletion of caste, most of the potential criteria for exclusion that are relevant in developing countries also seem pertinent in U.S. cities: gender, race or ethnicity, social status, occupation, income level, religious beliefs, etc.

As discussed earlier, the section on cognitive social capital relies primarily on probing respondents about their expectations regarding the extent of community assistance they would receive in hypothetical crises or emergency situations. The choice of these hypothetical situations has been modified to those most likely to occur in an urban American setting.

A section on informal social interaction has been added to the household questionnaire to inquire about the frequency of social contact between people in the community (having meals with friends outside the house, visiting people in their houses, playing sports together, etc.). Finally, in view of the prevalence of crime and violence issues in many U.S. inner-cities, a section on violence has been added to inquire about people's perceptions of the trend of violence, and the extent to which they feel safe at home and walking on the street. The section is very brief and could be expanded where needed and appropriate.

The basic structure of the organizational profile in Annex 4 has remained unchanged. It consists of three interview guides to be used, respectively, for the interviews with organization leaders, members, and non-members. Each guide covers the origins and development of the organization, the extent and reasons for membership or non-membership, organizational capacity, and linkages with other organizations. The main adaptations consist of recognizing the different nature of organizations likely to be present in U.S. cities. For example, some organizations, like community development corporations, are not membership organizations *per se*. Likewise, the nature of leadership can differ, and it is important to inquire whether leaders are volunteering or paid, and what the nature of executive or administrative leadership is. An important role

of American urban organizations is to obtain information from the community about its priorities, as well as disseminating information to the community. These issues have been highlighted relative to the original SOCAT. The section on institutional linkages has also been expanded to recognize the higher importance of inter-institutional linkages in the U.S. context and to inquire whether such relationships are generally beneficial or rather conflictual.

The final component in the SOCAT is the organizational score sheet in Annex 5. Since this is essentially a tool to quantify some of the responses given during the organizational profile interviews, the same adaptations as for Annex 4 are relevant and have been implemented.

A final aspect of adapting the SOCAT to a U.S. context pertains to the processing of the information, after all interviews and surveys have been completed. Indeed, the collected information has to be prepared for analysis. In a typical developing country context, the field teams write down notes during the interviews on paper, and paper questionnaires are used for the community and household surveys. This implies that the interview notes have to be transcribed into computer using a text-processing program, and the information from the questionnaires will have to be entered by means of a data entry program. For applications of the SOCAT in developed countries, it is possible to provide the enumeration teams with laptop computers so that field notes can be entered directly into the computer. The questionnaires can also be pre-programmed into the computer so that data entry occurs in the field during the interviews.

THE NEED FOR VALIDATION

As authors of this report, we believe we have made a reasonable and defensible first attempt at suggesting both the utility of the Bank's SOCAT methodology and some of the more obvious ways in which it might be adapted for use in the United States. As we have suggested, however, the successful use of SOCAT in the U.S. requires that great care be taken to validate the instruments and measures in U.S. urban cultures. If this project is to move forward to an actual trial, we strongly urge that a more in-depth and comprehensive examination of these instruments be conducted involving prominent U.S. urban scholars and particularly urban ethnographers along with U.S. experts in survey work and other data collection.

Secondly, we would again emphasize the need for pilot testing. Corrections for cultural relevance, as we have said are crucial to success. Equally important however is language and comprehensibility. The application of adapted SOCAT instruments in real circumstances and their administration to real U.S. urban residents will prove invaluable to building confidence in our results and their use.

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