Annotated Bibliography for Social Capital/Civil Society


Examines the recent growth of organized private nonprofit activity in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the importance these organizations can play in the processes of economic and political change. Includes detailed research in Brazil, Ghana, Egypt, India, and Thailand.


Social capital theory needs to specify the linkage that ties a community’s cooperative capacity to the achievement of good government. The authors offer five models that help to close this gap based on rational voters, rule compliance, civic virtue, bureaucratic efficiency, and elite accommodation.


Explores the impact of globalization on social work: purchase-provider split in service delivery, commodification of inter-personal relationships, creation of a technicist cadre. Calls for alliances with clients, professional associations, trade unions, and others to set a new welfare agenda to replace profit-making.


Examines the transformations of NGOs in Bangladesh, especially related to women.


Provides a history of the concept of civil society and social capital. As used in recent literature, civil society has three main virtues: socialization function (building citizenship), public and quasi-public functions (social services), and representative functions (public debate, participation).
The conservative side of social capital tends to exclude organizations associated with advocacy, but the oppositional conception of civil society in Eastern Europe and Latin America stress the importance of the political function of civil society.


Disputes Putnam, associations are heirs of Protestantism; decline in trust is due to family breakdown.


Uses New Zealand as an example of understanding public sector reform.


Provides explanations for the resilience for social capital in Britain.


Concept paper on the basis for a comparative research project on civil society and governance. “The contribution made by civil society to good government is essentially concerned with the means by which organized interests seek to influence and engage with state institutions. In doing so, they usually help to strengthen state legitimacy and relations of trust between public officials and ordinary citizens.”


Explores idea the civil society and the state are mutually exclusive. “The left is concerned about the effects of deinstitutionalization, deregulation, and devolution, advocating that nonprofit organizations fill the newly created gaps resulting from government funding withdrawal. The right seems convinced that the welfare state has crowded out voluntary action, and the answer to reconstituting civil society lies in fostering a diversified associational life and dismantling the state.” page 641.

Questions the trickle-down model of development and explores the value of human capital and social capital. Emphasizes the need for synergy to generate networks and enhance dialogue in society. Focus on harmonization between economic and social aspects of development generating a social economy.


Sever critic of current social welfare system=s contribution to dependency.


Reviews origin of social capital in writings of Bourdieu, Loury, and Coleman. Recent extension of concept from an individual asset to a feature of communities and nations.


Identifies a strong civil society with civic engagement. Associations tend to promote civic engagement through the social capital it produces.


Introduction to special issue on social capital. Provides good references to different perspectives on social capital.

Analyzes existing theories of third-sector development and presents a new theory based on social origins.


“Civil society is not just about the development of community activity. It is also about solidarity and social inclusion. Through strengthening families, neighborhoods, voluntary associations and self-help groups, participation in such effort is building the idea of democracy and human rights from the foundations.”

Provides a very brief analysis of the process in Russia, EU, and UK.


Examines the evolution of nonprofit and civil society organizations in Central and Eastern Europe under three main headings: Size and Economic Contribution; Structure and Composition: Culture and Recreation Dominance; and Revenue Structure.


Describes patterns of domestic violence in Albania and the development and nature of a program designed to address the problem based on a partnership between social workers and other professionals and members of NGOs.


Overview of development of social capital concepts including Coleman, Bourdieu, and Putnam.

The current prevailing definition in North American literature is: “___ the mutual relations, interactions, and networks that emerge among human groups, as well as the level of trust (seen as the outcome of obligations and norms which adhere to the social structure) found within a particular group or community.” (page 304).
“There is an implicit understanding that social capital will be useful for enhancing some other feature such as learning, social mobility, economic growth, political prominence, or community vitality.” page 304.

“Bourdieu and Coleman are both interested in transformations of social capital into increased individual status and economic position. Putnam does not focus on the individual consequences; rather he direct attention to the regional scale where social capital fosters democratic institutions.” page 312.

“For Bourdieu, the goal is one of sub-group or individual power over others; for Coleman the goal is increasing individual human capital and therefore socioeconomic prosperity; for Putnam, the goal is establishing democratic institutions.” page 312-313. Coleman focuses on re-affirming the nuclear family, and Putnam focuses on re-attachment to the community.


Communities of civil society require help from the same state that they are asked to rescue. The state is an indispensable agent.

The civic-republican model of communitarianism must have some reality over and above the pluralist solidarities of class, faith, ethnicity and neighborhood.


Discusses the relationship between families and social capital. Includes a concise review of the literature and explores what it is about family life that generates social capital and, in turn, strengthens civil society. The paper draws on “risk society” theory to construct family life and provide a framework for understanding why family-based networks and norms are undergoing change.