

What is Social Capital?



World Bank)

Social capital has been identified as an integral component of social and economic development on micro and macro levels.

Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, networks and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions.

These relationships allow actors to mobilize greater resources and achieve common goals. Such goals may be good for society or good for a select group of people.



Social capital describes the pattern and intensity of networks among people and the shared values which arise from those networks. Greater interaction between people generates a greater sense of community spirit.

Definitions of social capital vary, but the main aspects include citizenship, 'neighbourliness', social networks and civic participation.



(OECD)

Office for Economic Co-operation and Development defines social capital as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups



Why does social capital matter?



Applying New Concepts

Trying New Strategies

Gaining New Results

新思維

新策略

新成果

- **higher levels of social capital are associated with better health, higher educational achievement, better employment outcomes, and lower crime rates**
- **those with extensive networks are more likely to be 'housed, healthy, hired and**
- **All of these areas are of concern to both policy-makers and community members alike.**



Functions of Different Forms of Social Capital



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Bonding social capital

- **closer connections between people and is characterised by strong bonds**
- **e.g. among family members or among members of the same ethnic group;**
- **it is good for 'getting by' in life.**



Horizontal Associations

- a narrow view of social capital
- consisting of social networks and associated **norms** that have an effect on community productivity and well-being
- social networks can increase productivity by reducing the costs of doing business. Social capital facilitates coordination and cooperation.
- communities, groups or networks which are isolated, parochial, or working at cross-purposes to society's collective interests (e.g. triad, drug cartels, corruption rackets) can actually hinder economic and social development. (Portes and Landholt 1996)



Bridging social capital

- **distant connections between people and is characterised by weaker**
- **more cross-cutting ties e.g. with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, friends of friends, etc;**
- **it is good for 'getting ahead' in life.**



Vertical and Horizontal Associations

a broader understanding of social capital

includes vertical as well as horizontal associations between people, and includes behavior within and among organizations, such as firms

horizontal ties are needed to give communities a sense of identity and common purpose,

without "bridging" ties that transcend various social divides (e.g. religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status), horizontal ties can become a basis for the pursuit of narrow interests, and can actively preclude access to information and material resources that would otherwise be of great assistance to the community (e.g. tips about job vacancies, access to credit)



Linking social capital

- **connections with people in positions of power**
- **characterised by relations between those within a hierarchy where there are differing levels of power;**
- **good for accessing support from formal institutions**
- **it is concerned with relations between people who are not on an equal footing**
- **It also refers to capacity of individuals and communities to leverage resources, ideas, and information from formal institutions beyond the immediate community radius**



Enabling Social and Political Environment

social and political environment shapes social structure and enables norms to develop

importance of social capital to the most formalized institutional relationships and structures, such as government, the political regime, the rule of law, the court system, and civil and political liberties

the capacity of various social groups to act in their interest depends crucially on the support (or lack thereof) that they receive from the state as well as the private sector

the state also depends on social stability and widespread popular support

economic and social development thrives when representatives of the state, the corporate sector, and civil society create forums in and through which they can identify and pursue common goals



Suggestions for discussion:

- In what ways do different forms of social capital be complementary to each other?
- Think of a particular target group where the development of all the three forms of social capital is necessary and desirable...



Mechanism for Social Capital Building

- **Methods used to group participants**
 - Pairing up of individual participants with another individual
 - Connecting one group of participants with another group
 - Connecting groups of participants with the wider community
- **The Utilization of Groups to connect people/ communities**
 - Volunteer groups
 - Skills learning groups
- **Involvement of Different Community Sectors**
 - Professional volunteer groups
 - Business vendors
 - Non-government Organizations/other CIIF projects
 - Government Organizations



關鍵成功因素

- 員工的投入、熱誠和承擔
- 計劃的切入點和參加者的投入程度
- 執行機構的信譽和網絡的實力
- 對社會資本發展策略的掌握
- 促進跨界別合作的能力
- 基金的「品牌」效應



Relevance of Social Capital to Social Work Practice



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- **The development of social work practice model – deficit - asset**
- **The trend towards remedial practice**
- **The demise of community practice since the mid-1990s**
- **Social capital as a concept and practice framework bring back the community in social work practice**



Three sectors of a society

1st sector –government

2nd sector –market

3rd sector – civil society



**State/Government
(First Sector)**

**Civil Society
(Third Sector)**

**Market
(Second Sector)**



The shrinking 3rd Sector

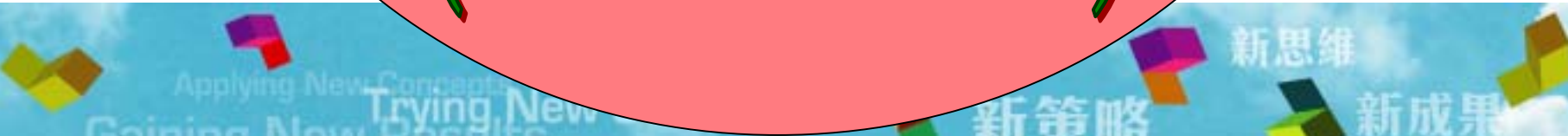
- **Historically, HK/Chinese has a tradition of self/mutual help**
- **The welfare state tradition – growing 1st sector**
- **The booming economy and the growing market**
- **The expanding 1st and 2nd sector squeezing out the 3rd sector in our society...**



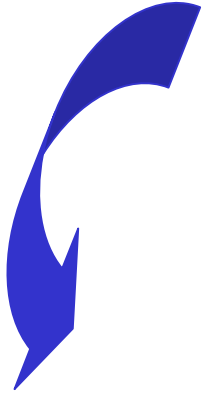
State/Government
(First Sector)

Civil Society
(Third Sector)

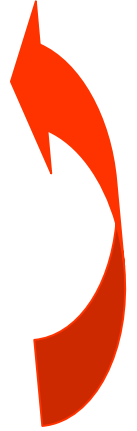
Market
(Second Sector)



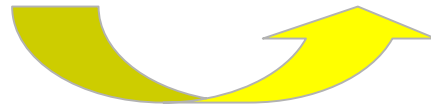
Government



Market



Civil Society



Interfacing Mainstream SW and SC projects



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In any given community...

Mainstream SW

- **ICYSC**
- **IFSC**
- **DECC**

**Provision of formal/
professional care to the
most needy, playing mostly
remedial function and
meeting immediate and
urgent needs**

SC Projects

- **Connecting different groups
of people in the community**
- **Promoting mutual aid and
cultivating voluntarism**
- **Provision of resources to
complement formal care**
- **Playing mostly
developmental/preventive
functions in the community**

