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# **A Framework for Social Capital**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation is concerned with enhancing the utility of social capital by developing and testing a comprehensive and measurable framework as a tool for researchers, policy-makers, and development theorists and practitioners. A framework was developed for measuring the degree to which different forms of social capital reside in a community and for distinguishing community-to-community variations. The Framework was also designed to identify the accumulation of social capital in relation to structural characteristics within a community, and to identify what advantages might be associated with variants of social capital.

The pursuit of the understanding of social capital has been convened within narrow disciplinary fields and has reduced the notion in definition, purpose, and utility. Much of the literature and past research has focused on approximations to identify social capital that are field-specific and representative of, at best, markers of social capital, rather than social capital itself. For this reason, this dissertation is concerned with developing a robust framework that has the potential to embrace the nature and extent of social capital across these disciplinary fields, while providing insight into the forms, influences, and trajectories of social capital.

The utility of the Social Capital Framework that was developed for this dissertation was examined by transforming the Framework into a survey tool for administering in two communities to identify applicability and sensitivity for identifying the degree to which variants of social capital reside. The results showed that the

Framework was able to distinguish the degree to which different forms of social capital existed, and how the social capital accumulates in relations to structural variables, in particular, gender. The Framework's utility was not universal across all forms of social capital and showed that further enhancements are required, particularly, if it is to enable social capital to be attributed to forms of advantage. The results also identified areas where future research would be of value, particularly, in examining the trajectory of people's forms of social capital.

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