

Urbanism and Social Capital
SOC604: Lecture V
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What is Social Capital?

- **Capital** is value accumulated or stored in physical objects—timber, coal, screwdrivers, etc.
- **Human capital** is value accumulated or stored in individual human beings—skills, training, knowledge, education, etc.
- **Social capital** is value accumulated or stored between and among individual human beings—social connections, norms, ties and networks of trust that facilitate individual and collective action in a given context or structure

Dominant Threads in Contemporary Social Capital Studies

- **Economic thread:** rational choice model found in Gary Becker and James Coleman and central to policy-oriented theories of growth and economic development such as those pursued at the World Bank
- **Marxist thread:** critical sociology exemplified by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, in which theories of social groups, stratification and conflict are applied in the empirical study of sociocultural practices
- **Democratic thread:** first intimated by Alexis de Tocqueville and popularized by Robert Putnam, in which civil associations—including sport associations—are considered crucial to making democracy work

City Life & Social Capital

Core Research Questions:

- How are social norms, networks, connections and ties created, deployed—and often frayed—in the context of processes of urbanization?
- What effects do core features of city life, such as human density, social complexity, inequality, cultural pluralism, ethnoracial diversity and division have on communities, associations, groups and networks that typically constitute urban civil society?

Cities & Urbanization

- Today half the globe's population lives in cities
- Nearly seventy percent of the populations of Latin America, Europe, and the US reside in urban centers
- The once primarily rural populations of Asia and India continue to urbanize
- Even some of the most conservative estimates and models suggest that the percentage of urban dwellers world-wide will increase to two thirds by the middle of this century

Global Cities of Today & Tomorrow

City	Current Population	Projected growth (2010-2025) in people per hour
Berlin	3.5 million	1
Bogota	6.8 million	22
Hong Kong	7.0 million	8
Istanbul	13.6 million	30
London	8.2 million	10
Mumbai	12.5 million	54
New York	8.2 million	26
Sao Paulo	11.3 million	27
Singapore	5.3 million	5
Stockholm	0.8 million	3

What is urban social capital?

- Social connections, norms, ties and networks of trust that facilitate individual and collective action in urban contexts

Two kinds of urban social capital

- Horizontal urban social capital: resources (connections, norms, ties and networks) that are accessible and appropriable *within* a specific socio-economic or cultural stratum in the urban milieu
- Vertical urban social capital: resources (connections, norms, ties and networks) that are accessible and appropriable *between and among* various socio-economic and cultural strata in the urban milieu

Urban Social Poverty in Sao Paulo, Baltimore, & Prague

- Urban social poverty is an absence or scarcity of vertical social capital. It is a lack or shortage of the kinds of social trust and connections that link individuals and enable freedom of movement and associational interactions *up and down* the socioeconomic and cultural ladder
- Examples of the challenges posed by urban social poverty include the walled communities of Sao Paulo, the problem of 'black social capital' in Baltimore, and the Roma of Prague
 - Sao Paulo: social poverty, class, and the built environment
 - Baltimore: social poverty, ethnicity, and public policy
 - Prague: social poverty, sport, and advanced marginality